

01.14.13 Governor Patrick's Remarks on "The Way Forward: a 21st Century Transportation Plan"

AS DELIVERED:

Governor Deval L. Patrick

MassDOT's presentation of "The Way Forward: A 21st Century Transportation Plan"

Campus Center Ballroom, UMass Boston

Monday, January 14, 2013

Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for coming.

Thank you, Secretary Davey, for that important presentation. Secretary Davey, Chairman Jenkins and their team at MassDOT prepared a very thorough and very thoughtful Plan. I encourage everyone to take the time to read it all and to reflect on it. It is available online on MassDOT's website. Take some time with it. They've taken a lot of time with it. (www.massdot.state.ma.us).

Everyone knows that a comprehensive transportation system is vital to supporting and growing our economy. Workers need it to get to their jobs. Students need it to get to school. Tourists need it to get to the sights. Police and firefighters need it to get to emergencies. Business people need it to get to their appointments. People need it to get to the doctor, to the grocery store, to the movies, to the gym, the rink. Whether it's good roads, reliable commuter rail, frequent bus or subway service, a nearby airport or a convenient ferry, transportation is about more than moving from Point A to Point B. It's about quality of life, economic activity and growth. It's about opportunity.

We have people in our Commonwealth whose opportunities are constrained by substandard service and people in our Commonwealth whose opportunities are constrained by lack of access. Improving our transportation system is key to meeting our economic potential.

This is not the view of just the transportation experts. It's the view of businesses and the employer community. It's the view of economists. Most of all, and most important of all, it's the view of the general public. In 17 public forums all across the Commonwealth, and in countless encounters frankly that any one of us can have, and can recite, thousands and thousands of people have weighed in. What they tell us, as the Secretary said, is that they want more transportation, not less. They want subways that run

later into the evening. They want regional buses that run on the weekends. They want bridges that are safe. They want projects that are built more quickly, like the Fast 14 experience we had just recently. They want safer, smoother roads that are more comfortable to drive on and bring less wear and tear on their cars and trucks. They want access -- to jobs, affordable housing, and recreation.

What the public wants -- a modern, convenient transportation network -- and what the Commonwealth needs -- accelerated, sustained economic growth -- are exactly aligned.

The presentation we just saw is stark, clear-eyed, non-partisan and, above all, fact-based. Fact-based. The results confirm two things: that there is not sufficient funding to support the system we have today and second that there is not sufficient funding for the system the public wants and the Commonwealth needs.

We have known that for years, even after the many efficiencies and reforms MassDOT has captured, we would need new revenue. Now we know just how much. It will take a total of \$1.02 billion in new revenue annually both to properly operate the system we have today, and to make the modest, strategic expansions we should have to accelerate economic growth.

The other stark fact this Plan reports is that if we do nothing, the public will have to pay more and get less, and our economic growth will slow in Greater Boston and stall out in other areas of the state.

So I accept the Plan the Board has presented today as a necessary stimulant for growth. And I welcome the debate on how we make this vision for a 21st century transportation network reality. Thanks to this report, we can and should look forward to a fact-based debate.

MassDOT has given us a menu of different means by which to make the necessary investments. At the State of the Commonwealth on Wednesday and in my budget proposal next week, I intend to submit my preferred means. Whatever funding mechanism we ultimately choose, I believe it must be comprehensive, dedicated and competitive.

First, it must be comprehensive. What do I mean by that? We can't settle for a solution that just stabilizes the T, as important as that is. We have to pay the bills we have already accrued for the Big Dig, fix and modernize what's broken and old, and invest in ways that unlock economic potential. I cannot see myself supporting any so-called "solve" for transportation that doesn't make investments in each of these kinds of areas.

Second, the mechanism we choose must be dedicated. MassDOT has given us a 10-year roadmap to a 21st Century transportation network. We need a revenue source they and their successors can depend

on, and that won't be diverted to other good ideas before this agenda is complete.

Third, it must be competitive. We know we will have to raise new revenue. Let's do it in a way that keeps any tax or fee within range of what other competitor states also charge.

These are the principles that will be reflected in my own proposal on Wednesday. These are the principles that I will look for as we exchange ideas and work together toward a good solution.

What's as plain as day is that we have choices to make. We can choose to invest in ourselves, to invest in a growth strategy that has proven time and again to work. Or we can choose to do nothing. But let's be crystal clear and honest with each other: choosing to do nothing is a choice, too. That is a choice. And that choice has consequences. It means longer commutes, cuts in services, larger fare and fee increases, and a continuation of the self-defeating economics that leaves large parts of our population cut off from opportunity and growth.

I choose growth. I hope you will, too. I choose shaping our own future rather than just letting it happen to us. I hope we're all ready to make that choice, and I look forward to working together with each and every one of you to do so. I want to invite the lieutenant governor to make a couple of comments, and then all three of us or others would be happy to take any questions you may have.