

Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Secretary's Report
Meeting of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Board of
Directors
Board Room, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Massachusetts
Wednesday, October 23, 2013

Opening Remarks

Yesterday, we took a major step forward in our continuing efforts to engage our customers in a dialog about the challenges we face, how those challenges impact the services we provide, and what we can do to make improvements.

With the promise of new revenue, we are beginning the process of demonstrating the return on our investment. Yesterday, Governor Patrick announced we are starting the procurement process for new Orange and Red Line cars. Additionally, we're beginning the planning process of straightening the curve on the Turnpike in Allston-Brighton.

We're building on our strong record of rapid bridge replacement projects like the "Fast 14" project in Medford and the River Street "Heavy Lift" project in Hyde Park with the upcoming replacement of the Clayton Street Bridge in Dorchester.

We're also expanding our outreach to the private sector and enlisting its help in realizing shared goals to reinvent our air space over the Turnpike between Kenmore Square and Audubon Circle, partnering up on the construction of new Commuter Rail stations there and in Brighton at the New Balance headquarters.

This is to say nothing of our plans to expand rail capacity at South Station, the impending completion of the first Orange Line station in some 25 years in Somerville, mixed-use developments either under way or near to it along the Greenway, and three new – soon to be four – Commuter Rail stations on the Fairmount Line.

What is this all about? This is a recognition of the critical role our transportation system plays in our daily lives, our economy, and our economic future. This is about reinvesting in what we have to strengthen

our position in the future, and to demonstrate that we value our customers and that we view our core business of providing a transportation network with the utmost seriousness.

Employee Recognition Program

With a staff of only 10, the Aeronautics Division definitely needs to be organized as a team in order to keep pace with their ongoing projects. To better accommodate their increasing needs as well as the needs of their clients (airport managers and consultants), the staff decided the project management filing system they had in place would require a process change.

Over time a new system was developed and Lorraine stepped up as project leader to ensure that a timely and accurate transition would take place. She coordinated the review of every airport project file, both hard copy and electronic, developed a master list of missing file documentation and reorganized each project file into a standard folder format. Lorraine's past workplace experience and strong organizational skills were critical factors in the success of this project. Office productivity and morale have improved and requests for information (grant funding status, payment voucher documentation, grant assurance compliance, vendor contract agreements) are now met with ease.

Lorraine's dedicated efforts have positively impacted the Aeronautics Division staff and enabled them to deliver on one of MassDOT's overall goals: superb customer service that both anticipates and responds to the needs of our customers.

For her efforts, and her continued commitment to the upkeep of the Division's new project management filing system we are pleased to honor Lorraine Bohannon as this month's Employee of the Month.

Customer Notification System

Since we last met, we launched a new Customer Notification System that provides timely information by email to our customers about upcoming events and updates on some of our major bridge and transit projects, traffic information such as planned overnight work, ramp closures, and other travel restrictions.

As part of our continuing commitment to improve customer service, this new system provides useful information so that people can be aware of the progress for some of our more major projects and can also make informed travel decisions.

Through the system, subscribers receive notifications through our partnership with GovDelivery, a leader in digital communications that has already proven itself to be effective through our existing system of T alerts.

Now that all five of our “mega projects” funded through the ABP are in full swing, we are certain this new service will prove to be valuable to our customers.

EZ Pass Transponder Sign-Up Sessions

Beginning in the end of September, we took our efforts to persuade toll-road customers to sign up for an EZ Pass transponder to a whole new level: instead of *asking* them to sign up, we brought the transponders *to* them.

Today, was our eighth of eight very successful sessions to get more transponders out into our customers' hands.

Since June, more than 45,000 EZ Pass accounts have been opened and more than 60,000 transponders have been issued, and those figures will continue to climb. And while October 15 marked the day tolls for passenger vehicles were restored for Turnpike exits 1 through 6, drivers of the Turnpike, the Callahan and Ted Williams tunnels, and the Tobin Bridge have our word that a new day for tolling that is smarter and more efficient is coming – beginning with the Tobin next year.

Lastly, as we try to think about our transportation system as one whole unit, we announced our new directive that requires all state transportation projects to provide options to increase walking, cycling, or access to public transit.

While we have made tremendous progress in thinking about new ways to incorporate walking and cycling into our projects, we need to take it one step further.

This policy directive is the next step in putting into daily practice our commitment to build a healthy, sustainable transportation system that meets all our customers' needs.

Thank you Mr. Chairman. That concludes my remarks.