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Governor Baker Signs Legislation Investing in Local Transportation Infrastructure
Establishes $50 million small bridge program, broadens Complete Streets authorization, leverages $750 million in federal highway funding

BOSTON – Governor Charlie Baker has signed legislation supporting major new investments in the Commonwealth’s local transportation infrastructure, including a $50 million Municipal Small Bridge Program, the broadening of the Complete Streets Funding Program to support projects in more municipalities, and a $750 million authorization for federal highway aid.

“We recognize the important role transportation infrastructure plays in the strength of our communities and economy,” said Governor Baker. “I am pleased to sign this legislation providing additional support for our cities and towns to focus on important local projects and accessibility.”

The legislation, An Act providing for the financing of certain improvements to municipal roads and bridges (H. 4424), authorizes $50 million in investments over five years for the Municipal Small Bridge Program, first introduced by the Baker-Polito Administration earlier this year to support approximately 1,300 bridges on municipal roads across Massachusetts spanning lengths between 10 and 20 feet. The program targets small bridge projects not eligible for federal aid under existing replacement or rehabilitation programming and are at high risk for full or partial
closure due to present condition, at up to $500,000 per year, per municipality for administration, design and construction.

“Since taking office, we have prioritized local investments and flexibility and thank the legislature for authorizing funding for critical small bridge repairs and municipal improvements,” said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. “Consistent with the Community Compact Program, I have been proud to champion on behalf of the administration, the expansion of Complete Streets encourages cities and towns to plan and adopt best practices for safe travel across all modes of transit.”

The bill broadens the authorization of the Complete Streets Funding Program. Launched with $12.5 million in funding by the Baker-Polito Administration earlier this year, Complete Streets provides up to $50,000 for technical assistance and up to $400,000 in construction costs for communities to plan and incorporate best practices into the design and build of safe modes of travel for the public, including pedestrians, cyclers, drivers and users of mass transit.

“Some projects can be game changers for citizens, and the Baker-Polito Administration aims through these programs to help communities preserve, refurbish, and rebuild small bridges or invest in accessibility for the people who live, work and attend school nearby,” said Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack. “These programs are among the many examples of the administration’s partnership with cities and towns to ensure positive local impacts and vitality.”

“This legislation enables us to continue to make important investments in infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner,” said Executive Office of Administration and Finance Secretary Kristen Lepore. “The legislation expands on the already strong relationships the Baker-Polito Administration has with our municipalities and will greatly assist communities across the state address their deferred maintenance needs.”

“These bridges are critical pieces of infrastructure and posting or closing them can have major impacts on the lives of residents and business owners,” said MassDOT Highway Administrator Thomas J. Tinlin. “We look forward to continuing our work with community partners on repairs to local infrastructure and investments that can prioritize these projects.”

The legislation signed by the governor includes a $750 million authorization request for the federal aid highway program of which the Commonwealth will be responsible for $135 million and a change bringing bonds issued for the Rail Enhancement Program in line with similar projects like the Accelerated Bridge Program by making
them exempt from the statutory debt limit.

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