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 22, 2014

Opening Remarks

As you are all aware, on Friday, October 31, I am stepping down as Secretary and CEO of MassDOT.

It has been the greatest joy and honor of my career serving as Transportation Secretary over the last three years. I am deeply appreciative of the Governor for giving me the opportunity to serve and for being so supportive of our work. He is proud of how far MassDOT has come. And you should be proud too. We've stood up to the challenges of hurricanes, tornados, blizzards and a terrorist bombing. Together, we've shaped a new, reformed department focused on safety, customer service, our employees, fiscal responsibility and innovation. And, we've renewed the public’s confidence in transportation by investing wisely in projects and initiatives all across the state - projects and initiatives that are creating jobs, improving the quality of life for our fellow citizens and are ultimately leaving the Commonwealth better off than when we found it.

In my place, Frank DePaola, currently the Highway Administrator, will serve as Acting Secretary until the end of the Administration.

I have often said that Secretaries come and they go, but the planes, trains and buses still run, our highways still get fixed and plowed, and our Registry customers are served. And such it will be on November 1st and beyond, thanks to the dedicated and hard working women and men at MassDOT.

I look forward to the opportunity to thank many of you in person over the next few weeks, and urge you to continue the tremendous work we started during the Governor’s tenure. I am grateful for you and humbled by your service to the people of the Commonwealth.

Employee Recognition Program
This month, we recognize two important groups as our Employees of the Month.


To celebrate National Safety Month this past June, this group of employees from across MassDOT, the MBTA, Keolis, and the MassDOT University Health & Wellness Committee teamed up to organize an agency-wide “Safety Takes All of Us” initiative and traveling road show.

Designed to help our employees recognize the importance of safety in all aspects of their lives, this initiative resulted in five safety inspired outreach events across the state, a capstone event at 10 Park Plaza, a safety video, an employee art contest and the dissemination of information to help employees stay safe and healthy both on and off the job. Working together, this group engaged our employees and got them to look at safety from a different perspective; getting out the message that safety is everyone’s responsibility and benefits all of us.

The second group is **The Wellington Carhouse Rescue Team**: Dave Campbell, John Chan, Andrea Ferguson, John Kerr, Tom McHale, Roland Tyler and Mike Veno.

This group of employees is being recognized for their extraordinary teamwork in helping to save the life of Shane Bechtel at Wellington Carhouse. An employee of our vendor, Tennant Company, Shane was cutting open some packaging when his knife slipped and slashed his thigh. Seeing that Shane was bleeding profusely, Foreman Tom McHale called 911 and Radio Technician John Kerr and Repairer Dave Campbell fashioned a tourniquet out of rope, lay Shane down, and raised his leg. Carpenter Mike Veno and Repairer John Chan relieved Dave and John, and Radio Technician Andrea Ferguson and Foreman Roland Tyler kept Shane talking until the ambulance arrived. Doctors at Mass General
informed Shane he had severed his femoral artery and lost 20 percent of his blood. In their opinion, if not for the quick actions of these T employees, Shane could have bled to death.

In both these cases, it goes to show that we cannot place enough emphasis on safety in the workplace, and on quick thinking when action that could potentially save a life is needed.

**Closing Remarks**

In other news, pending this Board’s approval today, we will take a major step toward upgrading our fleet of Red and Orange Line vehicles, that are now well into their 30s and 40s respectively.

In many ways, the age and condition of our MBTA fleet represents the value that previous Administrations saw in transportation improvements, which was to say, very little.

Moreover, old, patched up train cars in use for years long after their expected life represent the difficulty inherent in untangling the notion that transportation investments only benefit a small group of people.

Today’s Board vote to approve the contract with CNR MA does just the opposite. In this day and age, transportation improvements are viewed with great value for their potential to spark economic growth and create new opportunities. And that’s what is before us today.

In addition to the production of new Orange and Red line vehicles – which we know are desperately needed – this contract also requires the cars to be assembled in Massachusetts. To that end, CNR is pledging to build a brand new 150,000 square foot facility in Springfield, which will create hundreds of construction and manufacturing jobs for that city and region.

Since transportation reform in 2009, we here at the DOT have worked hard to ensure that we take a statewide approach in making transportation investments. We have also worked hard to bring new thinking to the way investments like this are made and that the public – our customers – understands the value in them.
Like you’ve heard me say: our customers don’t want less transportation, they want more. And by appreciating the value these investments have and the benefits they produce, we can continue taking major steps forward.

Some of those steps include: All Electronic Tolling on the Tobin Bridge; the resumption of design and construction on Blue Hill Avenue Station on the Fairmount Line; implementation of weekend service on that line, and restored weekend service on the Greenbush, Kingston, and Needham lines.

In September, we opened the doors of our new flagship RMV branch at 136 Blackstone Street. The new branch provides improved, more efficient, customer services, and is more centrally located to major T stations on the Green and Orange lines and is also near major bus routes.

We’ve released real-time Highway and T data to developers to create their own smartphone applications, and we’ve implemented mobile ticketing to allow the purchase of commuter rail tickets right on your phone.

We’ve assisted many of our 39 general use airports in leveraging federal funds and grant money to make upgrades to their infrastructure because, now, we know the positive economic impact airports have on their respective regions.

These are in addition to our robust Accelerated Bridge Program and Highway maintenance plan, our utilization of Highway right of way to build solar energy generating facilities, the extension of T service on Friday and Saturday nights, restoration of the Knowledge Corridor rail line for passenger service; rebuilding or realigning the viaducts that carry I-91 through Springfield and I-90 through Allston; creating or extending our network of bike infrastructure to meet growing demand; moving employees and other operating costs off our capital budget, and giving serious consideration to projects like widening Route 3 on the South Shore, and construction of a new Cape Cod Canal crossing using a public-private partnership method of financing.

I could go on, but I think I’ve made my point. While I’m happy to check off a number of items on the list of accomplishments during my tenure as Secretary, it’s far more gratifying to see what we’ve only just set in motion, and that really, this is just the beginning.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That concludes my remarks.