



SMART GRANTS LEAD TO CLEAN ENERGY INITIATIVES FOR MASSACHUSETTS INFRASTRUCTURE

MassDOT's Aeronautics and Rail and Transit Divisions were awarded Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grant Program funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation in April 2023, totaling \$4 million for the construction of cleaner Massachusetts transportation systems.

SMART grants are deployed to projects that advance technologies or systems for their community. Smart devices, systems, sensors or other devices must be able to provide some type of integration, coordination, or monitoring service. All of the SMART Grant Program funding distributed to the Commonwealth in the latest round of disbursement is going toward projects and initiatives that are clean energy or climate-related.

"These grant awards will help us take steps forward in Massachusetts with initiatives to support the reduction of harmful emissions and expand clean energy options," said former MassDOT Transportation Secretary and CEO Gina Fiandaca in a press release from April 2023. "As Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll have stated, the climate crisis is our biggest challenge, and we need to meet this moment with innovation and urgency to make Massachusetts a world leader in combating the climate crisis and driving our clean energy economy."

The MassDOT Aeronautics Division was awarded \$2 million from the SMART grant award specifically for its work with the Cape Cod Gateway Airport in Hyannis and the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority to bring clean energy to the Cape Cod Airport and surrounding communities. The proposed project would create a smart microgrid that would generate clean and renewable energy to charge electric vehicles, buses, and eventually the entire airport, reducing emissions and making it sustainable in the long-term. Plans for the microgrid system are still in early design and planning phases in the Aeronautics Division.

"MassDOT Aeronautics is thrilled to announce our search for consultant services to plan for the installation of a smart microgrid at Cape Cod Gateway Airport," MassDOT Aeronautics Administrator Jeff DeCarlo said in a press release from August 2023. "This underscores our focus on integrating electric air and ground vehicles into a multimodal system powered by renewable energy, advancing efficient, clean transportation in the Commonwealth."

The Rail and Transit Division of MassDOT also received approximately \$2 million in SMART grant funds to improve rail safety near embankments in the Cape Cod area. To achieve this, the project will install sensors to analyze

and monitor rail infrastructure that is placed near bodies of water and are at a high-risk area for collapse if water levels were to drastically change. The project will also use drones to work in sync with the sensors and develop an early warning system for any potential hazards. These modifications will improve the safety of the rail and put in place a detection system that could potentially avoid costly repairs.

In addition to the primary grant funds, a smaller \$1.5 million grant was allocated to the City of Brockton for its Downtown Brockton Transportation Technology Project. The project aims to install smart traffic signals at its intersections and streets that are capable of detecting conditions in the area. The smart traffic signals will have sensors to monitor road temperature and air quality, increasing the amount of information that can be learned in real time. The City hopes these devices can lead to safer roads and improved conditions for pedestrians in the future.

"The City of Brockton is very thankful for this grant for the traffic management system," Brockton Mayor Robert Sullivan said in a press release from April 2023. "This grant will enable us to enhance quality of life along with pedestrian safety for our citizens in Brockton."

Finally, the MWRTA received \$985,000 to install solar panels and power banks as part of its Blandin Energy and Sustainable Storage Technology (BESST) project. The installation of the new equipment will be used to power the transit authority's electric vehicle fleet. The MWRTA and MassDOT have been working together as the Commonwealth continues to transition to more clean energy alternatives.

This round of SMART grant funding will help Massachusetts communities, agencies, and municipalities advance and innovate the safety conditions of both motorists and pedestrians near school zones.

“ THIS GRANT WILL ENABLE US TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE ALONG WITH PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FOR OUR CITIZENS IN BROCKTON. ”

- BROCKTON MAYOR ROBERT SULLIVAN