

criteria considered in the recommendation above (#1 under Restraint & Diversification).

The Central Artery/Tunnel (CA/T) project finance plan relies in part on revenues from disposition of MassDOT parcels. MassDOT cancelled an ongoing competitive RFP process for CA/T Parcel 25 in Boston in 2013, the proceeds from which had been built into plans to pay down Big Dig debt, and offered the parcel instead to the City of Boston for \$1 for construction of a new \$260 million middle/high school, notwithstanding Boston's surplus of high school and middle school property inventory. The deal fell apart because the school was too expensive. Another pending MassDOT land deal concerns development of Parcel P-3 in Roxbury on which MassDOT has proposed development of 800,000 square feet of office space. All MassDOT developable land parcels should be reviewed for potential to pay down CA/T debt. MassDOT should assess the status of Parcel 25 and all of its developable land parcels, including remaining CA/T parcels, and maximize proceeds to pay down Big Dig debt.

EXPANDING GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY

Massachusetts is known for many things. It is not, however, known for open and transparent government.

No one said it better than Justice Louis Brandeis. "Sunshine is said to be the best of disinfectants, electric light the most efficient policeman." Pioneer Institute has been a leading voice for open and accountable government in Massachusetts. One of our major initiatives was to give citizens direct access to government spending data and documents. At Pioneer, we believe that Massachusetts taxpayers deserve a thorough account of how tax dollars are spent and how decisions are made.

Citizens ought to have access to what government is doing – and ample information so that they can form their own opinions. Transparency is key to an accountable public sector and a diligent electorate.

In turn, an engaged citizenry is essential to a healthy democracy. If public input is sought only after minds have been made up and so called public meetings become explanations of what will happen rather than essential components of the decision-making process, the people have lost their power. We wholeheartedly disagree with legislative and bureaucratic attempts to limit the public's ability to better understand the actions of all three branches of government. While it may be expedient for government officials to exclude the public from its doings, it undermines democracy and erodes public trust.

While initially some of the proposals here might have budget implications, they can be structured to minimize costs. Moreover, the effects of these policy changes could, over time, save taxpayers significant sums through a better run and more accountable state government.

Public Records & Open Meeting Laws

Sunshine laws were passed to give the public insight into how government policy is created and, in this way, to hold governments accountable. At its most basic, transparency starts with public records and open meeting laws, which offer a window into elected and appointed officials' decision-making and create a trail by which to audit and, ultimately, measure performance. Exemptions from these laws should be few. In Massachusetts, though, exemptions are claimed far too often.

Enforcement of the laws must be strict and consistent. Laws that are on the books but lack enforcement create only the semblance of transparency.

The recommendations that follow are grounded in two fundamental assertions: