

**FREIGHT COMMITTEE**  
of the  
**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Summary of February 11, 2009 Meeting**

This meeting was held in Conference Room 4 at the State Transportation Building.

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 PM.

**1. Introductions and Chair's Report** –Walter Bonin, *Chair and City of Marlborough*

**2. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of December 10, 2008, and January 14, 2009, were approved unanimously.

**3. Member Announcements**

The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources recently announced a series of alternative vehicle grants. The Plug-In Hybrid Funding Program promotes the commercialization of plug-in hybrid vehicles through funds available for private Massachusetts-based companies to help purchase these vehicles. The CNG Van Funding Program promotes the use of compressed natural gas vehicles through funds available for private Massachusetts-based companies to help purchase CNG commuter vans. The Heavy Duty Hybrid Funding Program promotes the use of heavy-duty hybrid vehicles through funds for Massachusetts based companies and public entities to help purchase these vehicles. The deadline for proposal submission is February 27. More information about these programs is available at the Department's website. (Abby Swaine, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)

The Federal Highway Administration's *Talking Freight* webinar series will continue on February 18 with "Moving Size and Weight Enforcement to the 21st Century". More information about this and archived webinars is available at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/freightplanning/talking.htm>. (A. Swaine)

EPA's SmartWay Program has added new partners. The program continues to gain popularity among shippers and carriers. (A. Swaine)

The Massachusetts Infrastructure Investment Coalition will soon release a final report on rail freight needs in the state. The Coalition will soon file a bill relative to a State Infrastructure Bank. (Dom D'Eramo, Millis)

A bulk freight facility may remain in Boston at a Massport facility when the State relocates Beacon Park Yards. Harvard is filing Environmental Notification Forms (ENF) piecemeal. Proposals to close and relocate Beacon Park Yards should involve an Environmental Notification Form to assess the potential for environmental and transportation impacts of this proposal, including congestion in any proposed rail yard site. (Frank DeMasi, Wellesley)

Harvard University's plans for expanding in Allston have so far not considered the potential increase in greenhouse gas emissions. An expansion of this magnitude should require an assessment of anticipated emissions. (F. DeMasi)

This Committee must go through the Advisory Council. Individuals may comment on environmental documents independently, but not as representing the Advisory Council. (D. D'Eramo)

The I-95 Corridor Coalition's Intermodal Committee is looking at strategies to integrate landside and seaside shipping. Kristin Decas, Executive Director of the New Bedford Harbor Development Commission, is participating on the Committee. (F. DeMasi)

The region is losing jobs as a result of Harvard buying up the infrastructure of Beacon Park Yards. There is a machine shop with 365 jobs that will be closed. (F. DeMasi)

The MetroWest Growth Management Committee is concerned that congestion will increase if the State relocates the Beacon Park Yards transloading facility. The Environmental Impact Study considers local issues but does not consider regional issues. The Freight Committee is concerned that the State will make decisions about Beacon Park Yards before the Massachusetts Freight and Rail Plan is completed. The Freight Committee should plan to raise this issue in its February Committee Report to the Advisory Council. (W. Bonin)

The State Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs lays out requirements for the scope of an Environmental Impact Report. An Environmental Impact Statement is a federal document. The Committee might draft a one-page statement discussing our concerns that indirect impacts are not being adequately addressed by the ENF as proposed. If the Advisory Council agrees, this could then be sent on to the MPO Chair. (D. D'Eramo)

The Northeastern States Coalition is concerned that localized traffic at the ports is not being adequately addressed. (A. Swaine)

#### **4. Discussion of Final Freight Committee Charter**

This discussion was tabled. The Freight Committee and the Advisory Council chair will review and discuss the redlined version of the charter at the February 11 meeting.

#### **5. Discussion of Statewide Freight and Rail Plan**

Although there is a lot of enthusiasm for the progress of the Massachusetts Freight and Rail Plan, there is concern that it will ultimately need greater regional coordination between local authorities and State officials. (W. Bonin)

The work done is excellent. The Plan may lag due to the appointment of a new Secretary of Transportation and Public Works who may want some time to evaluate the work done prior to his taking office. (D. D'Eramo)

The Plan's website offers a good deal of material about the State's recent outreach for this Plan. The Plan's website address is <http://www.massfreightandrailplan.com/>. (F. DeMasi)

The State's transportation priorities should follow from the State's economic development priorities. The State should be primarily concerned with economic growth, and transportation investments should support that growth. (W. Bonin)

The Committee should prepare a paper on our concerns with the current MPO Regional Transportation Plan and the Statewide Freight and Rail Plan. (F. DeMasi)

MetroWest has not commented yet on the Freight and Rail Plan, but is concerned that there is no land use planning in the studies. (W. Bonin)

We need to bring manufacturing back to the United States and to Massachusetts. The replacement of Harvard-area industries at Beacon Park Yards is not in the State's best interest. (W. Bonin)

F. DeMasi presented a video about South Coast Freight Lines and the benefits of short line railroads. The movie exhibited short line's potential for freight movement around New Bedford and Fall River, including the preservation and rehabilitation of freight infrastructure, improved fuel efficiency, lower highway maintenance costs, a lower consumer costs. Short line rail freight focuses on bulk commodities while trucks move freight that is higher cost and time sensitive; Short lines could take trucks off of the highways. The current infrastructure needs maintenance and improvement; the branch lines are currently have 10 mile per hour speed limits, which should be greatly improved to get maximum efficiency. There should also be transloading facilities.

Mass Coastal Railroad is a short line that transfers trash from Cape Cod communities to a SEMASS facility in Rochester. Mass Coastal has added routes to other facilities for transporting more valuable recyclables and wants to move construction and other bulk materials, too. EOTPW has been good to work with; it has committed to making some capital improvements to the lines. We keep our railroad at Class 2; we inspect the lines to Class 1 standards. (Chris Podgurski, Mass Coastal Railroad)

I would like the Advisory Council to provide a friendly reminder to the Massachusetts Freight and Rail Plan that there should be capital investment in rail infrastructure. (F. DeMasi)

Are you suggesting projects for the Economic Stimulus Package? (A. Centore)

*We gave Wendy Stern, EOT, our ideas for freight capital needs.* (F. DeMasi)

*We were asked for a list.* (C. Podgurski, Mass Coastal Railroad)

*The Economic Stimulus projects will be mostly state-managed.* (S. Olanoff)

Legislative and executive initiatives to refine and consolidate the State's transportation system should be coordinated with the Freight and Rail Plan and other existing studies. New initiatives should take advantage of what is already on the ground. (F. DeMasi)

## **6. Discussion of New MEPA Emission and Protocol Policies**

The Freight and Rail Plan should recognize and follow the State's new environmental regulations. The Plan's intentions are to encourage transloading in MetroWest runs against these policies. (W. Bonin)

A. Swaine will speak with colleagues at the EPA for guidance on these policies.

## **7. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM.

### **Attachments:**

1. Freight Committee Charter – Red-line Version
2. Freight Committee Charter – Final Version

## **Attendance List for February 11, 2009**

### **Agencies**

Paul Nelson, Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works

Lynn Vikesland, Massachusetts Port Authority

Abby Swaine, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

### **Cities and Towns**

Walter Bonin, Marlborough

Frank DeMasi, Wellesley

Steve Olanoff, Westwood

### **Citizens Groups**

John Businger, Northeast Corridors Initiative

### **Guests and Visitors**

Pamela Mann, GO21

### **MPO Staff**

John Hersey

Sean Pfalzer

Pam Wolfe

**Freight Committee Charter:  
(Draft Revision for FY 2009)\***

**Charter:**

•Emphasize to MPO the need for a Multimodal Freight Transportation System by providing RTAC with the tools, documents, etc. to support RTAC goals of enhancing the multimodal transportation system (MTS) in the region, reducing dependence on trucking and fossil fuel, and reducing the Green House gas emissions. Consideration of the improvement of the Multi Modal Freight Transportation System (MFTS) should seek to avoid adverse impacts.

•Focus MPO on freight in regional transportation planning and priorities as above and in relation to RTAC, and assist the MPO to integrate the MFTS into the MTS.

• Inform RTAC about FHWA freight planning guidelines and priorities.

• Inform RTAC about State legislative initiatives in regional transportation programs and funding, land use, economic development, and policy programs as they affect freight transportation.

**Scope:**

•Catalogue, develop, present findings on transportation studies and planning to RTAC.

• Bring to the RTAC issues regarding operations to enhance pipeline, air, truck, rail, intermodal freight, and sea movement of goods.

•Provide information such as non-proprietary strategic and short term plans of rail roads operating in Massachusetts to the RTAC. Coordinate with RTAC to promote such information and its possible impact on our Regional Transportation System.

• Identify to RTAC opportunities for integrated public/private studies, partnerships, freight planning and project funding

•Address congestion and environmental improvements by diversion of freight from truck to intermodal rail and/or Sea (Coastal Shipping). Consideration of improvements should identify opportunities to address congestion and avoid adverse effects.

•Encourage studies to establish land use scenarios for best locations of trans-loading facilities. Consideration of the best locations and designs should avoid adverse affects on our communities in the near term and long term.

•Suggest preservation of freight rail ROW for future freight and passenger use (rail/port/industrial sites). Such preservation should take into account the practicality of preserving or activating rail lines and alternative uses for rights-of-way.

•Assess the need and viability of accommodation for access of modern heavy weight, high, wide, equipment over existing freight and commuter rail lines.

**Strategy:** In accordance with RTAC Freight Committee Charter and RTAC Bylaw:

•Advocate for freight transportation by review and evaluation of policy, plans, and programs to further existing efforts by the MPO using FHWA guidelines and best practices and reporting results and suggestions to the RTAC for action.

•Advocate the need to emphasize the importance and needs for improved highway and rail freight access to logistics terminals and ports by review and evaluation of policy, plans, and programs to further existing efforts by the MPO using FHWA guidelines and best practices and reporting results and suggestions to the RTAC for action.

•Advocate for inclusion of Freight Mobility and modal choices by review and evaluation of regional policy, plans, and programs to:

- reduce congestion
- manage urban sprawl - effecting land use/smart growth
- enhance economic development/job creation
- reduce Green House Gas Emissions
- conserve energy
- otherwise protect the environment

By reporting results and suggestions to the RTAC for action.

**Tactics:**

•Initiate action using, “Identification of Massachusetts Freight Issues and Priorities ” (Nov 99) - FHWA Freight Planning Guidelines, Boston MPO Freight Study, Regional Transportation Plan, Massachusetts Rail Trends and Opportunities Report (July 2007)

•Meet periodically, on behalf of RTAC, with public and private stakeholders to be informed of freight issues and priorities

•Provide RTAC with necessary information and data to inform MPO on the importance of freight transportation, links to economic development, conservation of energy, environment, infrastructure, and congestion

•Follow approach of Freight Advisory Council established by EOT/MassHighway in advocacy for Freight Issues and Priorities Study outcomes

•Use technical/statistical data, issues of concern to shippers/freight providers to formulate recommendation to the RTAC

•Keep current with industry trends, public policy and legislation regarding freight transportation issues and priorities through monthly meetings

\* The Freight Committee, formed in August 2003 was chartered to emphasize sufficiently the importance of Freight Transportation Systems and the view of some RTAC members that freight issues weren't receiving attention deserved in regional transportation planning/priorities. The committee charter emanated from conclusions reached by a Regional Freight Issues Panel and unanimous vote of the Council at the February 12, 2003 RTAC meeting.

The mission of the freight committee is to bring issues regarding freight movement and the planning and funding of an intermodal transportation system through the RTAC to the Boston Region MPO. RTAC provides comments to the MPO as part of the 3-C process for the Regional Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), and Unified Planning Work Program.

End

## Appendix:

Freight Committee background, guidelines, tools, best practices, Targets/Goals for improvements

### FHWA Freight Planning Guidelines

- Freight template for MPOs Defined by FHWA Freight Planning Guide lines
- Used in conjunction with the freight report issues of concern.
- Used to assess freight accessibility, mobility, and safety.
- Applied to MPO goals, objectives, policies, strategies, actions.
- Consistent with statewide plans, corridor plans, airport, seaport plans, relevant policy/planning

### MPO/State DOT (EOTPW) roles in freight planning

Many SDOTs and MPOs systematically incorporate freight movement issues into planning activities by

- Define elements of MPO transportation system critical for efficient movement of freight
  - Identifying measures of system performance in terms of freight movement
  - Developing freight-oriented data collection models to identify problems and potential solutions
  - Create freight movement advisory committees to identify bottlenecks in the freight network
- Federal legislation promulgates:
- MPO is responsible for freight movement to be considered in the transportation planning process
  - 
  - Statewide/MPO planning processes to specifically include "freight shippers" and "providers of freight transportation services"
  - 
  - Provide reasonable opportunity to participate in the development of plans and programs as well as all stakeholders, the public, and interested parties

### Freight mobility

- Freight
  - important part of fully-functioning transportation system
- Efficient movement of freight
  - critically important to industry, retail, agriculture, international trade, terminal operators
- Metropolitan areas (particularly w/ports) are especially affected by freight movement issues:
  - air cargo airports
  - intermodal freight yards
  - large trucking terminals
  - shipyards

### Freight Ton-Mile Trends by Mode

- U.S. domestic freight moved in 1980 were 3.4 trillion ton-miles; by 2004, 4.5 trillion ton-miles
- Growth occurred in three modes – air, truck, rail

- Air freight ton-miles grew 3.5 times 1980 despite sharp decline in 2001- 2002
- Truck freight ton-miles grew over 2 times 1980 level
- Rail Freight ton-miles grew over 1.75 times 1980 level
- Water declined in ton-miles since 1980

#### **Traffic Congestion Rising and Costly**

##### **Texas Transportation Institute Congestion Statistics:**

- 1982 - 29 % peak travel period congested compared to 63 % -2005 - 48% major road systems congested - 2005, compared to 29% in 1982 - number hours of day congestion grew 4.2 hrs to 7.0 hrs
- Cost of congestion, value of extra travel time, extra fuel consumed by vehicles traveling at slower speeds is \$14.60 per person-hour and \$77.10 per truck-hour in 05
- Congestion results in 4.2 billion lost hours - 2.9 billion gallons of fuel wasted annually - For Boston, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, 45.1% daily travelers experience congestion, 51% travel congested in peak periods, 29% congested in off-peak periods.
- Multiple strategies for traffic operations, transit, freight Mobility /Modal choices available now can lessen problem

#### **Intermodal Rail Issues/Goals**

- Goal 1: Improve the Movement of Goods in Eastern Massachusetts**
- Goal 2: Create a Balanced System for Goods Movement in Eastern Massachusetts**
- Goal 3: Improve Environmental Quality**
- Goal 4: Promote Economic Development**

**Freight transportation provides goods/services the economy depends on and people rely on. Cost of consumables/manufactured goods/raw materials are more expensive in this region**