

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION – OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING**

**STATE FREIGHT AND RAIL PLAN**

**SOUTHEASTERN REGION MEETING NOTES**

**LOCATION OF MEETING:** Pomodores Function Room  
2424 Cranberry Highway, Wareham, MA

**DATE/TIME OF MEETING:** November 5, 2008 –3:00 p.m.

**MEETING ATTENDANCE:**

**Public attendees who signed in:**

Robert Davis	Steamship Authority	Gil Lopes	G Lopes Construction
Diana Barth	Enterprise	Richard Scafer	Taunton Development Corporation,
John Kennedy	Mass Coastal Rail.	Dan Wahle	Mass Coastal Railroad
Charles D. Hunter	NE Central Railroad	Al Peterson	Nantucket Airport
Raymond Jack	Falmouth Pub.Works	Karen Winger	Old Colony Planning Council
Daniel T. White	Medfield	Walter Sullivan	Sandwich
Robert Angell	So. Yarmouth	Jack Healey	Middleboro
Leighton Peck	Middleboro	Jed Cornock	Old Colony Planning Council
Micheal Trojano	Trojan Recycling	Marilyn Fifield	Barnstable
Andre Yelle	SEMASS	Chris Adams	Office of Congressman Delahunt
Tom Cipolla	SEMASS	Pat Ciaramella	Old Colony Planning Council
Wayne Tessin	Ocean Spray Co.	Kristin Decas	New Bedford Harbor Devel. Comm.
Clay Schofield	Cape Cod Comm.	Ed DeWitt	New Bedford Regional Airport
Priscilla Leclerc	Cape Cod Comm.	Susan Rohrbach	Office of Senator O'Leary
Frank Gitts	Gitlin Industries	Ed Maroney	Barnstable Patriot
Jack Haworth	Gallo Construction	Buddy Rocha	Mass Office of Business Development
Christina Fanfara	Fairhaven	Charles Kilmer	Old Colony Planning Council
Adam Isherwood	Acushnet	Mike Burns	Nantucket Plan & Econ. Dev. Comm.
David Smith	Wareham		
Roland Hebert	Southeast Regional Planning & Economic Development District		
Adam Recchia	Southeast Regional Planning & Economic Development District		

**Executive Office of Transportation Staff:**

Thomas Cahir, Deputy Secretary  
Ned Codd, Office of Transportation Planning, Study Project Manager  
Paul Nelson, Office of Transportation Planning

**Consultant Team:**

Ronald O'Blenis, HDR, Project Manager  
Daniel Hodge, HDR  
Jonathan Lee, HDR  
Marissa Witkowski, HDR  
Jill Barrett, Fitzgerald & Halliday  
Laurel Rafferty, Portscape  
Jim Stoetzel, Transit Safety Management

**HANDOUTS:** Summary of purpose of Massachusetts State Freight and Rail Plan

**PURPOSE/SUBJECT:** This was one of five regional public stakeholder meetings that were held in October and November 2008 to provide information on the Massachusetts Freight and Rail Plans being developed, and to receive input from stakeholders about needs and priorities.

**BACKGROUND:** The Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation has begun a comprehensive evaluation of the Commonwealth's freight and rail transportation system their operations, and effect on economic development and quality of life. The evaluation will conclude with the publication of two separate documents. The first is a State Freight Plan that will be multi-modal (includes air, rail, truck and maritime transport) and intermodal (transportation by more than one mode, e.g. truck and rail) in its scope, analysis, and recommendations. The second is a comprehensive State Rail Plan that will include a detailed analysis of all rail infrastructure and operations, both freight and passenger. The study began in the spring of 2008 and will conclude in the summer of 2009. To date the study team has researched existing conditions, interviewed numerous stakeholders including shippers, receivers, transportation managers and operators of all transportation modes and intermodal facilities, regional planning agencies, economic development officials and freight trade representatives.

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Mr. Ned Codd, Project Manager for EOT, thanked everyone for attending the meeting and reviewed the purpose of the Massachusetts Freight and Rail Plan. Mr. Codd also expressed gratitude to the Cape Cod Commission and Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District for their assistance with planning and outreach for the meeting. Mr. Thomas Cahir, Deputy Secretary for EOT spoke about his agency's current involvement in the proposed transaction between EOT and CSX Railroad in Massachusetts. The transaction will result in expanded commuter rail service to Worcester; will improvement vertical clearances on CSX to accommodate unrestricted movement of double stack commuter trains to the Worcester area, and sets out a plan for acquisition by EOT of secondary CSX freight lines in eastern Massachusetts. Mr. Ronald O'Blenis, Project Manager for the HDR Consultant Team, made a presentation that covered the topics of freight movement and trends, truck freight, maritime ports, airports, freight rail and passenger rail. He noted a copy of each regional presentation would be posted on the study website: [www.massfreightandrailplan.com](http://www.massfreightandrailplan.com). Mr. O'Blenis paused at the end of each topic and asked attendees to comment on issues and ask questions. He encouraged people to let the study team know if the information presented on trends, freight characteristics and movements reflected their views on freight in their region and to provide local information they would like the Consultant Team to consider. Meeting attendees provided input throughout the meeting.

## **Summary of Public Comment and Questions**

### **Freight Movement and Trends**

*[Please note questions or comments made by members of the public are in italics]*

*Can freight flow data be broken down into more specific regions?*

Data is available at the county level, and the report will present freight flow data at various geographic levels. We are able to help respond to specific questions or ideas regarding how best to present the freight flow trends.

*Will the plan show freight flows between the states?*

Yes.

*What falls under secondary traffic?*

The movement of the majority of consumer goods is considered secondary traffic. A simple way to think about it is the primary move of a consumer good is when it moves to a distribution center, the secondary move is from the distribution center to the store.

*Will the plan address state regulations across all agencies? Sometimes one agency countermands another. For example, we've been frustrated when trying to develop the last large rail development opportunity in the region and have found it challenging to work within the regulatory and environmental permitting to obtain approval and a grade crossing.*

The study includes an assessment of the regulatory environment related to freight and rail, to help understand and better address regulatory issues.

## **Truck Freight**

*Are you considering specific areas in the region for transfer sites?*

We will be looking at where intermodal traffic is moving and how it is moving, where improvements could be made. Land in Massachusetts is scarce – if there are sites with land zoned industrial where intermodal movement takes place, those sites will be considered.

*How many transfer sites have already “gone away” due to initiatives such as Rails to Trails?*

We are trying to focus on present day and future scenarios rather than on what has been done in the past. Sites adjacent to exiting rail lines will be evaluated

*Are you looking at long haul, large freight initiatives or local connections too? You should break data into county level in the southeast region to look at different needs for Cape Cod, the Islands and mainland regions.*

We will follow up with the regional planning agencies to get input about specifics and agree that there is a need to present data trends at a more detailed level in the report to distinguish trends and issues for the Cape, Islands, and mainland.

*State constraints on rail activity are a problem when you are trying to develop the last large tract of land in the southeast region with rail access. What will you do about state restrictions?*

Looking at state regulations and making improvements to them are part of this study.

*How do you take into account the time sensitivity of certain commodities such as perishable materials when looking at freight issues?*

Commodity specific assessments, including modal choice (e.g., truck, rail, water) are part of this study and will consider sensitivity to time, cost, and reliability, for example, what is time/opportunity for product delivery if perishable? Part of the study is the future analysis of freight movement by rail. Perishable freight delivery may remain a commodity most readily delivered by truck freight even with congestion delays since rail delivery may not be as time-sensitive.

*Trucks and the need for truck rest areas due to regulations enforcing driver safety are a nationwide issue. Is Massachusetts at the end/beginning of the truck freight pipeline so the need for rest areas is not as much of an issue here? There are no truck rest stops in Southeast Mass.*

*At the Taunton Industrial Park, drivers often need to stop and rest. Is there any knowledge of other truck rest stops in the I-495/I-95/Route 24 area?*

*There used to be a truck rest stop in Plainville but there were issues of diesel idling; electrical hook-ups were wanted there – not sure if it is still there.*

Truck rest stops are recognized as an important issue in this study and consideration should be given on major routes for this issue.

*Driver turnover is an issue as they are hard to retain and it has caused some shippers to provide more amenities on site to improve conditions for truckers.*

Are there any freight transport bottlenecks in the southeast region?

*Route 24, especially north of 495*

*Route 44 at the Middleborough Rotary, and from Plymouth traveling west*

*Interchange at 495 and 24*

### **Port - Maritime**

*On the national level there is a new name for Short Sea Shipping – America’s Marine Highway.*

*The plan should address freight movement to Nantucket and Martha’s Vineyard.*

*We would like to see a freight connection between New Bedford and the Islands again.*

*The Nantucket Commission asked that the Hyannis to Islands freight path be preserved as they are interested in the shortest, most efficient connections.*

*The importance of roads that serve ports needs to be emphasized especially since some are in poor condition and are not commuter friendly. Please look at the roadways leading to ports in this study as this planning needs to be more integrated (in the past, planning for ports and landside access often has been done separately).*

*Landside connections to port facilities are a key consideration in this study.*

*Are you factoring in external marine freight factors such as the Panama Canal expansion?*

*The study will incorporate external factors such as the Panama Canal and Long Beach, CA land bridge freight delivery as part of an assessment of broader national and global freight trends and how it affects Massachusetts.*

*How do you determine the value of freight for study purposes?*

*By the value of the goods being shipped and various data sources such as customs data provide such estimates.*

### **Port - Air**

*What is the potential for future air freight expansion services at the New Bedford Regional Airport?*

*There is a great deal of potential for the New Bedford Regional Airport in the future, but it is going to take time to develop the infrastructure. Current freight demands are not significant enough to warrant the cost of infrastructure development (example given of infrastructure development required to accommodate one additional freight delivery per day for FedEx). Currently, Rhode Island and Boston airports are regionally available to serve air freight needs. [Response by Airport Manager Edward DeWitt]*

*Most air freight uses FedEx or other shippers and do not directly ship from the company.*

*Providence Airport is often the preferred option for businesses in southeastern Mass.*

### **Rail – Freight**

*Comment: The added safety and savings to the roadway infrastructure of taking truck freight from the highways and getting it onto rail is significant and cost effective. It is critical to look at improving rail freight delivery systems from 263,000 to 286,000 or 315,000 standards to meet current rail freight demands.*

*The study is specifically examining constraints due to weight limits, and assessing the market opportunities and benefits of removing weight on rail constraints.*

*Rhode Island is putting a great deal of money into rail infrastructure and has examined weight on rail issues. It's a good example of freight investment and should be considered in the Massachusetts Freight and Rail Plan.*

*We need to build double track rail capacity wherever we can to facilitate both freight and passenger rail, in particular on the South Coast rail line.*

Passing sidings can be a cost-effective first step to increase rail line capacity. Capacity needs may require double-tracking. To provide for future capacity needs it is important to preserve space for a second track. Additionally, space needs to be considered for sufficient yard and terminal functions.

*Regarding the Middleboro alignment option for South Coast Rail, the current five days/week freight service is valuable to state freight delivery and needs to be carefully considered.*

*Capeway Rail Terminal in Middleboro, MA is a new 60-acre private rail terminal now in construction in South Middleboro, MA. Its freight service capability should be included in the study. ( Contact information for follow-up discussion off-line was provided.)*

*We may not need to double-track now, but infrastructure improvements need to design for an eventual double-track in the future and leave room for it rather than limiting improvements to only suit a single-track system.*

*What is the intention for operators for efficiencies of newly purchased lines from CSX?*

The recent purchase agreement was recently signed that included provisions for purchase of the CSX freight lines in southeastern Massachusetts. EOT has until June 15, 2009 to outline a plan for completion of the transaction. EOT is giving due diligence to make sure the transaction occurs. The local community should watch for updates. The study will consider the effects of purchasing the rail lines in southeastern Massachusetts.

*We are encouraged by EOT involvement but we add a caution regarding the CSX deal – if most rail service on CSX will now end at Worcester, will that require new regional/shortline service to reach rail customers in Southeast Mass? If so, there is a concern that rail service for the approximately 12 major rail customers in the Southeast region could worsen.*

### **Rail – Passenger**

*Freight lines could be used for passenger rail.*

*Will we ever forgo passenger service for freight-only service?*

In Rhode Island, a third rail was built to respond to freight needs. The ultimate goal is to achieve a balance between freight and passenger rail needs.