

MassDOT Cape Cod Canal Area Transportation Study

Cape Cod Canal Area Transportation Study

RE: Third Working Group Meeting

Date and Time: September 10, 2015, 4pm-6pm

Location: Sandwich Town Hall, Sandwich

Attendees: [Sign in names attached]

Meeting Notes:

MassDOT Project Manager, Ethan Britland, welcomed Working Group members and thanked them for attending the meeting. He asked the attendees to introduce themselves around the room.

Mr. Britland reviewed the agenda (slide #2 in attachment) and then turned over the meeting to Ed Hollingshead of FST. Mr. Hollingshead reviewed the study process and framework. The project is in Step 2: Existing Conditions. This step is very important as it provides the foundation for the rest of the study. Specifically for today's meeting, the existing economic conditions will be reviewed, together with an introduction to the Future Conditions analysis. Mr. Hollingshead also briefly discussed the study's goals and objectives. The goals and objectives were covered in detail at the Working Group's first meeting.

Mr. Hollingshead introduced Frank Mahady of FXM Associates to present the existing economic conditions and trends.

Mr. Mahady noted his experience in the region and presented data on the Focus Area, the Study Area, and Barnstable and Plymouth counties. This included existing demographics, population, households, and distribution of employment. Projections of growth of office, industrial, flex, and retail space to 2020 were also presented. The conclusions were that the long-term historic pattern of growth of population and jobs is not sustainable; some industries have shown growth and some additional development is possible, but the market is intensely competitive between regions, and overall growth of the state as a whole is only projected to be 0.26%/year through 2040.

Rep. Randy Hunt asked why Plymouth County was doing better than Barnstable County.

Mr. Mahady answered that he did not have a definitive answer but some factors come in to play such as land area available and land costs, proximity to Boston and general market accessibility, different economic development outreach programs and permitting processes.

Ed DeWitt asked how the second home market was integrated in the analysis.

Mr. Mahady answered that this information is being presented later in the meeting but the people coming to their second homes are considered 'visitors.' He noted that 25-30% of retail sales are attributable to visitors in Barnstable County.

Mr. Lee asked how commuters from the region going to Boston jobs were considered.

Mr. Hollingshead answered that journey to work data is included in the regional travel demand model. Sudhir Murthy of Trafinfo provided an introduction to the Regional Traffic Demand Model and noted that the vehicle trips the model generates are calibrated based on actual traffic counts for 2014. He

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noted that automatic traffic recorders and manual turning movement counts collected the information on actual traffic counts for summer and fall conditions. The calibration process adjusts parameters within the regional travel model to adjust the model's projection of trips (which are based on the socio-economic data projected by state agencies) such that the projected trips more closely match the actual traffic counts on a given roadway. As pointed out this calibration process resulted in acceptably close matches between actual traffic counts and model-projected trips.

Mr. Hollingshead reviewed the data that is informing the 2040 projections for visitor trips. While the socio-economic data predicts a certain number of trips based on the typical trip generation for school, shopping and jobs, it does not project trips generated by visitors. Consequently, the actual traffic counts are somewhat higher than the model's total number of generated trips. The 94,950 trips actually counted on both the Sagamore and Bourne Bridges on a fall 2014 weekday were compared to the 83,370 trips projected by the model's socio-economic data based trip generation. This 11,580 or 12% difference in daily traffic volumes on a fall 2014 weekday is attributed to 'visitor' trips.

Mr. DeWitt questioned whether the regional socio-economic data was wrong instead and validation of the data has not been considered.

Mr. Hollingshead answered that while there are some limitations to the accuracy of the data, this is a recognized approach and supplements the trips generated based on socio-economic derived trips. Mr. Britland added that the model predicts typical conditions. Mr. Murthy noted that the calculation of visitor percentage varies from 60% in the summer weekend peak to 12% in the off-season, which is reflective of variations in visitation.

Having estimated the volume of visitor traffic for a fall 2014 weekday the next step was to estimate how much visitation would change between 2014 and 2040.

To address that question, Mr. Mahady reviewed the historical trends in employment for "accommodations and food service" which are hotels and restaurants, a proxy for tourist visitations used by the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, the National Travel Data Center, professional analysts and many Chambers of Commerce--with the intention of utilizing historical and projected changes in this and other visitor-related indicators to estimate potential future growth rates for visitors that can be used in the traffic modeling. Using hotel and restaurant employment in Barnstable County as well as other indicators, including historical peak monthly traffic across both bridges and statewide employment changes, FXM developed a regression model that estimated average annual growth rates ranging from 0.12% to 0.69%/year. Mr. Mahady noted that statewide overall employment growth through 2040 has been estimated by MassDOT, and used in statewide traffic modeling, at an average annual rate of 0.26%/year.

Paul Tilton noted that 25% of daily traffic trips are related to sports, and that a Sandwich Sports Center is being proposed.

Mr. Murthy replied that trips from the Sports Center would be accounted for as part of the visitor trips in the 2040 travel demand model.

Susan Moran asked if improving the access across the bridge would increase traffic generation.

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Mr. Mahady answered that there is little evidence in the transportation literature that capacity improvements to roadways, alone, has induced regional population and employment growth since the interstate highway program became mostly built out in the 1970s.

Glen Cannon stated that predictability and reliability in the numbers used in the model are needed.

Mr. Hollingshead and Mr. Mahady noted that there has been discussion, and some disagreement, between the Cape Cod Commission on the Donahue Institute's growth projections used by the state to predict future conditions in the model.

Ms. Flynn noted that truck delivery traffic through Falmouth destined to Martha's Vineyard could be diverted elsewhere in the region and reduce traffic across the bridges.

In response, Mr. Mahady reviewed past efforts, including construction of a RO-RO (roll on-roll off) facility in New Bedford, as a partial solution to this issue, for Nantucket as well as Martha's Vineyard destined trucks. This solution was not implemented by the Steamship Authority, although technically and economically feasible.

Wendy Northcross asked if driverless cars would make a difference and how would lane restrictions be calculated in 2040.

Mr. Hollingshead noted that some trips might increase if older drivers could gain mobility through new technology. Mr. Britland noted that future land use regulatory changes, changes in lodging accommodations and other complications make the model very complex, but these and other factors will be considered by the project team before the next Working Group meeting.

Heather Ostertog of FST presented the VISSIM model using existing traffic counts, which were animated to show current flows and congestion during the peak summer period; a Saturday from 11am to 1pm.

Mr. Britland noted that the team will look at improvements to address transportation problems that occur during the '10-month' period from after Labor Day to mid-June. The study will make informed choices, which require evaluation of summer and non-summer traffic and potential solutions. However, the goal is not to automatically solve for the peak occurrences.

Ms. Moran remarked that building to the peak may be a small percentage increase and would solve all problems.

Mr. Reed and Mr. Britland noted that with limited resources, infrastructure project choices are made with recognition that building to the peak demand requirements is not always practicable.

Mr. Britland said the next meeting in the study process would be a Working Group meeting in October to review traffic projections from the model in preparation.

With no additional questions and the meeting time elapsed, Mr. Britland closed the meeting.

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Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Ed DeWitt	Association for the Preservation of Cape Cod
Tom Baron	
Melvin P. Holmes	
Stephen Mealy	Town of Bourne
Denise Kammerer-Cody	US ACE
Mathew Lee	Cape Cod Chamber
Bill Travers	MassDOT Dist. 5
Rodney Venable	6 SWS
Chris Anzuoni	Plymouth & Brockton Bus
Carter Hunt	MassDevelopment
Mary Pat Flynn	County Commission
Paul Rendon	JBCC
Glenn Cannon	Cape Cod Commission
Jim Cerbone	MassDOT
Paul Tilton	Town of Sandwich
Steve Mellin	6 SWS
MAJ Jerrime Oliver	HQ Camp Edwards
Wendy Northcross	CC Chamber
Susan Moran	Falmouth Selectmen
Tom Leonard	Cianbro Corp
Mike Walsh	US ACE
Laura Reckford	CCB Media
Randy Hunt	MA House of Representatives
Lance Lambros	Senator DeMacedo's Office
Sallie Riggs	Bourne FDC
Mimi McConnell	Citizen
Donald Ellis	Bourne Selectmen
Charles LaFlaff	
Hardy Patel	MassDOT
Leah Sirmin	FHWA

Also in attendance were the following team members:

Ethan Britland, Mass DOT
Ed Hollingshead, FST
Bill Reed, FST
Heather Ostertog, FST

Ken Buckland, The Cecil Group
Frank Mahady, FXM
Sudhir Murthy, Trafinfo