



Freight Advisory Committee Meeting #5: Summary

December 8, 2017, 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM

Clark University, Jonas Clark Hall – Room 218, Worcester, MA

Purpose

The fifth meeting of the Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) was held to review the draft Freight Plan, and discuss members' comments on the plan. The presentation can be downloaded from the Freight Plan website: www.mass.gov/massdot/FreightPlan

Freight Advisory Committee Attendees

Name of FAC member	Organization	Present	Sent Designee
Jonathan Gulliver, Chair	Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Highway Division	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Ed Anthes-Washburn	Port of New Bedford		
Chris Atwood	Unistress Corp.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Joe Barr	City of Cambridge		
Pierre Bernier	Maritime International	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Matthew Burwell	Legal Sea Foods	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Joe Carter	SBA Global		
Tom Cosgrove	NFI Industries		
George Fournier	Cumberland Farms		
Charles Hunter	Genesee & Wyoming Railroad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Colleen Kissane	Connecticut Department of Transportation		
Mark Marasco	Maple Leaf Distribution Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Gary Roux	Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Lisa Wieland	Massport		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Brandon Wilcox	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)		
Kevin Young	Global Partners		

The following designee attended on behalf of an FAC member:

Name of Designee	Organization
Laura Gilmore	Massport

MassDOT Attendees

Gabe Sherman and Ethan Britland, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (OTP).

Meghan Haggerty, MassDOT Highway Division.

Project Team Attendees

Nathan Higgins, Cambridge Systematics (CS).

Sarah Paritsky, Regina Villa Associates (RVA).

Public Attendees

No members of the public attended.

Welcome and Review

Gabe Sherman, MassDOT Project Manager, thanked everyone for attending the FAC meeting. He introduced Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver, who said the Draft Massachusetts Freight Plan (Draft Plan) is very important to MassDOT. He said the state has already started to leverage the Draft Plan to apply for federal funding. He led a round of introductions.

G. Sherman reviewed the updated schedule and explained that MassDOT decided to release the Draft Plan in two formats: a downloadable PDF and a more interactive online version of the plan. He welcome feedback on the formats. The online version was intended to help engage the public, including people who are not normally interested in freight, but it took some extra time to put together. G. Sherman said the public comment period closed on December 6th and thanked those who submitted written comments. He noted that anything discussed at this meeting will also be considered. After the project team reconciles comments, a revised Draft Plan will be submitted to FHWA, who is ultimately responsible for approving the plan, for a 60-day review period. After MassDOT addresses FHWA's comments, it will release a final Freight Plan, likely in early spring 2018. The project team will notify the FAC and the public via email once the final Plan is available.

Draft Freight Plan and Discussion

Nathan Higgins, CS, reviewed the robust decision-making process, which involved identifying three possible futures and a variety of strategies with FAC feedback. The strategies were organized into various categories: immediate, robust, deferred, hedging, shaping, and dropped. N. Higgins summarized and highlighted the strategies outlined in the Draft Plan (below).

Immediate Strategies

N. Higgins outlined the immediate strategies, which are worthwhile ideas today, no matter what the future holds:

- Infrastructure – State of good repair is a priority of Secretary Stephanie Pollack, Governor Charlie Baker, and MassDOT Highway Division. The FAC and public provided feedback on truck stops and the dearth of truck parking facilities, particularly on I-495 north of I-90. Other strategies include 286k rail, better port/terminal access, and modernized container terminal facilities.

- Policies and People – The Draft Plan states the need for improving the workforce (e.g., by providing training and education for driving in congested areas). There is also a desire to standardize the oversize/overweight permitting across New England. Other strategies include reducing emissions and coordination with neighboring states.

N. Higgins requested feedback on these strategies. Pierre Bernier, Maritime International, referred to an electronic logging regulation that will be implemented on Dec. 18. He expects the logging to change how drivers treat their hours of service, potentially resulting in long distance truckers parking on the side of the road when their service hours expire. N. Higgins said there is an abundance of data sources, so planners can use cell phone/device data to see where trucks are parking. P. Bernier said a driver will go Montreal to Boston three times in a week now, but with the new regulation, a driver can make only two trips because he or she needs to stop and sleep. Drivers often ask where to stop and sleep in Massachusetts. Chris Atwood, Unistress Corp., concurred, adding that parking on the roadside might be illegal, but if the driver continues to drive, he or she would also be in violation. C. Atwood noted this is a great opportunity for the local revenue stream (drivers' food/lodging). In New York, there are more amenities for trucks than cars because of the revenue opportunity.

Robust Strategies

N. Higgins said the robust strategies address issues that are expected to arise in the future but should be appropriate in any future, for example:

- Infrastructure – Resiliency to protect freight facilities from the impacts of climate change.
- Operations – Technology, including Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and Active Transportation and Demand Management (ATDM), can help support truck parking. N. Higgins said C. Atwood had recommended this technology because sometimes drivers cannot see when a spot is available at a truck stop, forcing them to park illegally. C. Atwood added that when more information is available, there should be less distracted driving.

Hedging and Shaping Strategies

N. Higgins explained that hedging strategies might not be needed or useful, but if they are MassDOT will need to start implementing them now. Shaping strategies influence - and hopefully direct - trends for the future. These are strategies that MassDOT will pursue only after the immediate and robust strategies are addressed:

- Infrastructure
 - Build “right size” distribution centers that respond to the need for more rapid delivery in the urban core. G. Roux asked about the definition of “right size” and N. Higgins explained it will depend on the location and community context. Within the Route 128 belt there is limited real estate so the need and size are different. G. Roux asked about communities that make decisions that work against freight. N. Higgins noted that some communities want distribution centers. G. Sherman added that freight can be seen as an economic driver, and the draft Freight Plan makes the case to communities that distribution centers can create jobs. G. Roux said regional planning agencies can play a role, but the real challenge is educating the community about how everything fits together.
 - Truck stop electrification can increase the comfort, usability and customer service of a truck stop.
 - Identifying and preserving industrial land is important so there is still a dedicated place for freight. Mark Marasco, Maple Leaf Distribution Services, said part of the process is

multimodal (intermodal yards, rail facilities, logistics center etc.). He said a developer told the Western Mass. Economic Development Council that there are not enough rail service sites available. There are advantages to collocating freight modes just as there are for collocating passenger modes (e.g., rail and bus terminals located together in Springfield).

- Using underutilized infrastructure at ports and airports – for example, using Worcester Airport for freight since Logan Airport is at capacity.
- Urban delivery areas – N. Higgins said the City of Cambridge currently is studying urban freight delivery issues. Matthew Burwell, Legal Sea Foods, said the Commonwealth is committed to Complete Streets and asked about best practices for balancing Complete Streets with urban freight delivery. N. Higgins referred to the Complete Streets guide that has some guidance for designing for truck freight movement. Admin. Gulliver said Complete Streets is a relatively new initiative that Massachusetts is pushing with its cities and towns, and there is a learning curve to develop best practices for freight. The state is continuously working with communities to improve this. Freight is very heavily considered in many projects, for example, a Seaport project which MassDOT and Massport are coordinating. Laura Gilmore, Massport, said there is an industrial Complete Streets guideline and she is excited to see how it works. Massport is very interested in this issue and deals with it regularly for industrial and development properties. She noted there is a smaller “back of house” delivery option for properties on the waterfront. She expressed interest in continuing the conversation. N. Higgins said the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) DesignX startup incubator hosted a weekend design charrette on the curb of the future, indicating that it is a new topic at the forefront of people’s minds.
- Operations
 - Improve the efficiency of air cargo processing. Since there is limited additional physical space for freight handling at Logan Airport, the draft Freight Plan recommends technology and operational improvements to do more with less.
 - Better integrate supply chain information to reduce administrative and regulatory delays that can happen. N. Higgins said he spoke to a food producer whose corn was held up by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) due to a shortage of inspectors.
 - Leverage connected vehicle technology. N. Higgins said C. Atwood shared an idea to use this technology in congested areas, so truck drivers know which lanes to use to avoid auto traffic near merge/diverge/weave areas.
 - Encourage the use of truck side guards to protect cyclists.
- Policies and People
 - Provide collaborative guidance and support to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and local governments.
 - Encouraging private industry to adopt short-sea shipping has been important to the FAC. P. Bernier said it is a challenge for the U.S. because of ships, ownership, crews, and loading locations. He said this has been discussed for 10 years but hasn’t started yet. He explained that some trips can be shorter by sea by avoiding congestion on I-95, and may be competitive due to the new electronic regulations for drivers. N. Higgins said studies historically found that cost was high, but given the new electronic log rules discussed earlier, the cost differential may change.

G. Sherman asked G. Roux to discuss the regional MPO freight planning process. G. Roux said the Pioneer Valley region was interested in developing a regional freight plan, but decided to wait until the state plan was completed. Currently, G. Roux said his region is trying to identify where freight is, which can be difficult because the federal data does not have the local perspective. The MPO does not have good truck counts; data is a challenge. He said it is hard to engage people from the industry. He believes

many rural areas might be prime for future distribution sites. The region needs to identify more truck parking areas and how to make multimodal freight a possibility for developments. He also indicated that he was waiting for the State Freight Plan to be developed before starting work on the Regional Freight Plan. His region can use the state's Plan to identify local bottlenecks and places where more information is needed. G. Sherman said there are other ongoing freight planning activities at the regional and local levels. G. Roux said all of the regions need to update their regional transportation plans in the next year and a half and can incorporate the Freight Plan. Now is a good time to advocate to the MPOs and to integrate freight needs into their long-range plans.

L. Gilmore said alongside the development of this plan, each MPO has dedicated new miles of Critical Urban Freight Corridors and Critical Rural Freight Corridors. She asked how closely that process is tied to the Plan. G. Sherman said they are technically separate processes, but it made sense to coordinate them since MassDOT was already developing the Freight Plan. There was a discussion of how miles are designated to a new corridor. N. Higgins referred to the map in the plan.

Deferred

N. Higgins explained that deferred strategies might be necessary, and it is safe to wait and see what happens.

- Infrastructure – Build standardized package drop. N. Higgins explained this refers to package delivery at homes and other endpoints. If a robot delivers a package to a house, where does it leave it? A package box or roof landing spot for drones are ideas that can wait for now.

G. Sherman said MassDOT will review comments received from FAC members and others, but does not expect the strategies to change.

M. Marasco said there are some differences between the two plan formats. He said the online portal has a section about the benefits of trucking and rail, but he didn't see that in the PDF. M. Marsco did not agree with the statement in the online plan that said rail service tends to be more consistent than truck service, but he didn't see it in the PDF. He noted that a link to the state's Rail Plan did not work. G. Sherman said the facts should be consistent between formats and thanked him for pointing out the inconsistencies. He noted that FHWA will review the PDF version. G. Sherman explained that the entire state has migrated to a new website, so many links are broken. Before anything is published, the team will verify that all links are working.

Implementation

G. Sherman said MassDOT recently started a few initiatives to keep freight planning at the forefront. Three strategies from the draft Freight Plan will be pursued in more depth over the next 9 to 12 months. A study of Statewide Truck Parking Improvements will look at where new or expanded locations are needed, types of technologies (roadside, app based, or other) to assist truckers in finding parking, and places that could be piloted for truck stop electrification. He asked attendees to let him know if they are interested, and he would provide more information and discussion.

MassDOT is also studying Freight System Climate Change Adaptation, to see which are the most vulnerable freight assets. This study will look at existing work in climate change adaption for the transportation system, but focus specifically on freight assets.

A technology study will look at ITS, ATDM, and Operational Issues for Truck Movement. This will involve looking at ways to disseminate data and actively manage roadways and other freight system components to improve operations. M. Marasco suggested looking beyond the borders and integrating with existing technologies; he referred to the Fast Lane to E-ZPass transition. Trucker apps now provide parking

information and users provide feedback. Administrator Gulliver asked if truckers use Waze or other navigation. M. Marasco said the FreightWise app is like Uber Freight. It is a national online broker that provided information on parking to get the attention of truckers. Admin. Gulliver said Massachusetts was one of first states to get on board with Waze and partner with them to specify vehicle type in its data collection. It does not currently incorporate trucks but there may be an opportunity to do so. He noted that navigation apps do not always warn trucks of roadways with restrictions. G. Sherman encouraged others to email him with those kinds of ideas over the next few months.

Closing Thoughts

G. Sherman said he will let FAC members know once MassDOT hears from FHWA about finalizing the Freight Plan after the two-month review period.

Admin. Gulliver thanked attendees for participating in this important initiative. He said getting FAC members engaged now and in the future is very important. MassDOT will continue to work with FHWA to implement some of these initiatives going forward. G. Sherman said at the previous meeting there was a discussion of having an annual check-in on this plan and other initiatives of interest. He said MassDOT always welcomes feedback from the industry on an ongoing basis and making meaningful changes to operations.

C. Atwood said the state of Kansas did a truck parking plan for the state. He encouraged MassDOT to reference that plan and incorporate any relevant ideas.

G. Sherman said the new FHWA representative did not attend, but he was interested in presenting about a study FHWA and MIT are doing together. The study aims to gather better information from the freight industry to figure out freight flows in the state. G. Sherman may follow up an email that includes a link to that information.