March 2023

MA FREIGHT PLAN 23

FREIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #3 SUMMARY

Date: March 23, 2023, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM ET

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) Attendees: Jonathan Gulliver (Chair), Thomas Cosgrove (NFI Industries), Charles Hunter (Genesee & Wyoming Railroad), Pierre Bernier (Maritime International), Joseph Morris (Massport), Sarah Lee (Massport), Gordon Carr (Port of New Bedford)

MassDOT Attendees: Makaela Niles (Project Manager)

Project Team Attendees: Rachel Chiquoine (Cambridge Systematics), Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics), Joe Sgroi (City Point Partners), Ece Smith (City Point Partners)

Public Attendees: Travis Pollack, Ray Guarino, Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan, Mike Burns, Ross Reese, George Snow, Alex Tetreault, Kareem Kibodya, Laurel Rafferty, Jong Wai Tommee, Craig Della Penna, Sean Hilton

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Makaela Niles, MassDOT Project Manager, introduced Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver, Chair of MassDOT, who thanked everyone for attending the FAC meeting. M. Niles began by reviewing the meeting agenda, which included welcome remarks, a recap of the second FAC meeting, a presentation of Draft 2023 Freight Plan elements, a Q&A period, and next steps.

RECAP OF THE FAC MEETING #2

M. Niles provided an overview of the second FAC meeting, which was held in February 2023. The second FAC meeting included a presentation by Derek Krevat (MassDOT) on the ongoing statewide long-range transportation plan *Beyond Mobility*. This was followed by Katie Kirk (Cambridge Systematics) discussing scenario planning and the framework for recommendations, as well as potential strategies. The meeting concluded with a Q&A that covered a range of topics including rail safety and coordination with neighboring states.

DRAFT 2023 MASSACHUSETTS FREIGHT PLAN

Rachel Chiquoine (Cambridge Systematics), Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics), and M. Niles jointly presented an overview of the main elements of the draft 2023 Massachusetts Freight Plan. R. Chiquoine covered Chapters 1 through 4, A. Aeppli highlighted key information within Chapter 5, and M. Niles reviewed Chapters 6 through 9. R. Chiquoine began by describing how the 2023 Freight Plan is organized into nine chapters, along with appendices with supporting information. Additionally, there will be a web-based StoryMap using the Esri platform with the core content from the Plan. The project team is also currently developing a graphics-rich Executive Summary document highlighting key findings and recommendations.

Chapter 1: Introduction

R. Chiquoine presented on the introduction chapter, which links Massachusetts' economic vitality and quality of life to the performance of the freight transportation system. Chapter 1 also explains how the freight network supports economic development, particularly for the Commonwealth's key industries (such as biopharmaceuticals, clean technology, and fishing). The first chapter connects the Freight Plan to MassDOT's family of modal plans, including the *Massachusetts State Rail Plan*, *Massachusetts Statewide Aviation Plan, Massachusetts Bicycle Plan, Pedestrian Transportation Plan, Focus 40*, and the statewide long-range transportation plan *Beyond Mobility*.

Chapter 2: Vision, Goals, and Regulatory Context

Chapter 2 presents the vision and goals, while also describing how the Plan aligns with federal and state policies, goals, and requirements for freight plans. Chapter 2 also captures key freight performance measures for Massachusetts, which directly align with the Plan goals and incorporates several new metrics to evaluate the efficiency of the various freight modes.

Chapter 3: Stakeholder Outreach

Chapter 3 summarizes the stakeholder outreach activities conducted as part of the Plan process. Outreach methods include FAC meetings, public informational meetings, interviews with neighboring states, focus groups and surveys. There will also be a 30-day public comment period once the draft 2023 Massachusetts Freight Plan is released. Within the Plan, an Appendix will supplement this chapter with an archive of FAC and public meeting materials.

Chapter 4: Key Industries and Recent Supply Chain Developments

Chapter 4 profiles four key freight-intensive industries in Massachusetts: the fishing and seafood industry; the biomedical industry; the computer and electronics industry; and the chemicals and material industry. Each of these has experienced profound change since the 2017 Freight Plan, most notably since the onset of COVID-19. Within Chapter 4, the discussion focuses on recent supply chain developments in these industries and discusses the economic contributions of these industry in Massachusetts.

Chapter 4 also provides an assessment of recent trends and developments impacting supply chains using the latest available research, findings from recent plans and studies, FAC member feedback, and stakeholder interviews. Topics include COVID-19 impacts, intermodal shipping, e-commerce, technology and automation, supply chain redundancy and resilience, and employee access to freight jobsites.

Chapter 5: Freight Assets, Demand, and Needs

Chapter 5 features a detailed assessment of multimodal freight assets, demand, and needs. In addition to a high-level commodity flow analysis, the subsections include detailed modal profiles for highways, freight rail, ports and waterways, and air cargo facilities within Massachusetts.

This chapter addresses a variety of highway topics, including truck volumes & congestion, safety, truck parking, oversize/overweight vehicle movements, and hazardous cargo.

The draft Plan also incorporates the latest available information on railroad ownership and facilities, and assesses the latest trends in rail tonnage, grade crossing safety, rail equipment incidents, and hazardous material releases.

In Massachusetts, seaport and airport activity is essential to the seafood, construction, and energy sectors, as well as the import and export of consumer goods. The section on port activity evaluates key infrastructure and demand at specific facilities. The airport section focuses primarily on demand needs at Boston Logan International Airport, which processes over 99 percent of all air cargo in Massachusetts. Chapter 5 also analyzes regional competition and tonnage trends at other airports, particularly since COVID-19.

Chapter 6: Futures for Freight in Massachusetts

Chapter 6 details the scenario planning process and results, which integrates uncertainty and risk into the planning and decision-making process. The process used scenarios and variables that aligned with those elements used in *Beyond Mobility*, customized to focus on freight elements and considerations. The goal of scenario planning is to better inform the Plan recommendations and ensure Massachusetts has a robust and resilient response to uncertain changes in freight demand and needs in the future.

Chapter 7: Recommendations and Strategies

Chapter 7 presents the Plan recommendations and strategies developed through a diverse variety of sources, including research and technical analyses, MassDOT priorities documented in ongoing or prior studies such as *Beyond Mobility* and the *COVID-19 Freight Study*, priorities from other Massachusetts agencies and organizations, public engagement activities, and national best practices.

The draft strategies are grouped into five categories, which assist with prioritizing implementation:

- **Immediate Strategies** address a current or near-term need. They are worthwhile ideas today, no matter what the future holds.
- **Robust Strategies** address issues that are expected to arise in the future and will likely be appropriate across all possible scenarios.
- **Hedging Strategies** might not be needed, but if they were, we would need to start implementing them now.
- **Shaping Strategies** allow Massachusetts agencies to influence – and hopefully direct – trends for the future.
- **Deferred Strategies** might become necessary and should be monitored without immediate action.

The draft 2023 Massachusetts Freight Plan includes both new recommendations and strategies and some carried over from the 2017 Freight Plan. Themes from the 2017 Freight Plan include improving the condition of freight network assets, truck parking, addressing congestion and bottlenecks, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. Some of the themes new to the 2023 Freight Plan include safety on roadways and at grade crossings, real-time and new data sources, and improving and preserving freight connections to and from freight facilities.

Chapter 8: Implementation Plan and Chapter 9: Fiscally-Constrained Freight Investment Plan

Chapter 8 presents the implementation plan, which summarizes how each strategy may be advanced towards implementation, outlining the strategy type (infrastructure, operational, or policy), project proponents (who are the stakeholders and champions of this strategy), funding sources, and the entities who could manage the resulting project and strategy. Potential funding sources, including federal and non-federal aid, may be outlined in the draft 2023 Massachusetts Freight Plan as well.

Chapter 9 presents the fiscally-constrained Freight Investment Plan (FIP), which is a list of priority projects funded by the National Highway Freight Program. The FIP is an evolving document that may be updated as projects using National Highway Freight Program funds are identified and programmed. Potential future project types could include Intelligent Transportation Systems and other freight technology, truck parking facilities, and highway, bridge, and freight flow improvement projects.

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

There was a Question-and-Answer period following the presentation with a total of four questions and/or comments, included with responses from facilitators below.

1. Question #1 (Pierre Bernier, Maritime International): With the growth of port traffic of Boston and more trucks of the road, how do you assess the implication for other modes of transportation? How do you measure the effect of growth into the road system in Boston?

   A. Aeppli: The Freight Plan is a high-level effort that will utilize the Federal Highway Administration's Freight Analysis Framework for forecasts to link modes; therefore, if you have growth in maritime, that translates into highway demand, making it both a waterside and a landside segment. Additional research may be performed in the future about specific traffic flows around facilities and implications of facility growth.

2. Question #2 (Gordon Carr, Port of New Bedford): Everything is transported on a truck at some point, yet there is great competition for those roadways. We need to find a way to ensure there is room for trucks through the freight network. Furthermore, a challenge the Port of New Bedford faces as the number one commercial fishing port in the country (in terms of value) is how fishing products are federally defined: fishing outputs are not considered cargo for federal funding purposes. Currently, fishing is between the jurisdictions of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA, within the U.S. Department of Commerce). Definitions and how ports get federal funding is something to keep in mind for the new freight plan. For another example, I don't think offshore wind is considered as cargo for purposes of USDOT federal funding definitions. This should be fixed because the federal government will need to be involved to sustain the future offshore wind business. Additionally, I am interested in figuring out how much of seafood imports goes to South Boston or New Bedford and then back out. I think seafood is the number one belly cargo in terms of pounds and number two in terms of value coming in and out of Logan Airport and am curious about how much of it goes to New Bedford and back out. I think it's an underappreciated element of the amount of freight that moves around and the number of jobs that are associated to it.

A. Aeppli: The issue around project cargoes like offshore wind is whether it is documented by any federal data collection efforts. Seafood is an interesting commodity because it's very bidirectional. It's actually one of the top air-to-rail interval commodities too, both inbound and outbound. And there's a huge amount of capacity in New England to process seafood, which is one of the reasons why we see so much import to Massachusetts coming from the West Coast as well as an overseas.

3. Question #3 (Mike Burns): As part of this this effort, is there any information online regarding truck travel time reliability, either as a performance measure for the state or to detect where underperforming areas are?

   M. Niles: Truck travel time reliability is one of the performance measures that we have. It's part of our regular reporting to Federal Highway and is posted on the Federal Highway website for Massachusetts and all state DOTs.

4. Question #4 (Jong Wai Tommee): I'm happy to see that you're addressing truck parking in the plan. That's long been a sticky situation in the Commonwealth and they would be eager to read what recommendations are included.

   M. Niles: Truck parking has certainly been a topic of conversation and this plan will address that.

NEXT STEPS

M. Niles described the next steps and schedule for the coming months. There will be a public meeting on March 30, 2023. In addition, in the next 30 days the team will be working to release a draft of the 2023 Massachusetts Freight Plan for public comment. Following the close of the 30-day public comment period, the team will work to respond to comments, document them, and update the draft plan as needed ahead of submitting the draft to FHWA for review and approval.