



MA FREIGHT PLAN 23

PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING #2

SUMMARY

Date: March 30, 2023, 06:00 PM ET

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

MassDOT Attendees: Makaela Niles (Project Manager), Kristen Pennucci

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

Public Attendees: Joel Barrera, Lloyd Mendes, Karl Allen, Amy Borezo, Sarah Lee, Clete Kus, Martin Nee, Barbara Alexander, Olivia Lemmon, Alan Butler

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Makaela Niles, MassDOT Project Manager, welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the second Public Information Meeting for the 2023 Massachusetts Freight Plan. M. Niles reviewed the meeting's agenda which included Welcoming Remarks, a Recap of the First Public Information Meeting, a Presentation of Draft 2023 Freight Plan, Questions and Answers, and Next Steps.

RECAP OF THE PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING #1

M. Niles provided an overview of the first Public Informational Meeting held on January 12, 2023. This meeting discussed the role of the Freight Advisory Committee and provided background on the 2017 Freight Plan and findings

from the COVID-19 Freight Study. As a part of the discussion, the Q&A of the first meeting covered a range of topics including military freight considerations and freight investments. M. Niles explained that since the last meeting, the project team has been working on a variety of efforts to put together the draft plan, including assessing existing conditions and trends, planning freight-focused scenarios, and developing draft recommendations.

DRAFT 2023 MASSACHUSETTS FREIGHT PLAN

Rachel Chiquoine (Cambridge Systematics), Katie Kirk (Cambridge Systematics), and M. Niles jointly presented an overview of the main elements of the draft 2023 Massachusetts Freight Plan. R. Chiquoine covered Chapter 1 through Chapter 4, K. Kirk highlighted key information within Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, and M. Niles reviewed Chapter 7 through Chapter 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, which were vetted by the Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) at the beginning of the planning process. Chapter 2 describes 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.

The vision of the Freight Plan is to support a safe, resilient, and secure multimodal freight movement throughout Massachusetts, through investing in key freight assets to improve economic competitiveness, to provide efficient and reliable freight mobility, and support healthy and sustainable communities throughout the Commonwealth. This is supported by five goals that cover system conditions, safety and resiliency, mobility and reliability, economic competitiveness, and equity and environmental sustainability.

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 Massachusetts' multimodal freight assets, demand, and needs. Chapter 5 reflects current freight system conditions while building upon findings of previous studies such as the COVID-19 Freight Study, truck parking study, and truck bottleneck analysis.

Chapter 5 covers a high-level commodity flow analysis. In 2017, 253 million tons valued at nearly \$502 billion moved to, from, and within Massachusetts. Freight is expected to approach 351 million tons valued at \$888 billion by 2045. Trucks moved 83% of freight tonnage and 71% of total value in 2017.

This Chapter also includes modal profiles for Massachusetts highways, freight rail, ports and waterways, and air cargo facilities. Roadways represent the most commonly used infrastructure for transporting all types of goods over distances ranging from cross-country to within New England to first- and last-mile local delivery. The road infrastructure modal profile examines a variety of topics, including truck volumes and congestion, bottlenecks, truck-involved crashes, truck parking, oversize/overweight vehicles (which have significant impact on infrastructure wear and tear), and safety of hazardous cargo movements.

Although rail represents a relatively small percentage of total freight in Massachusetts compared to highways, rail provides a critical and efficient method to move certain goods over longer distances (typically over 500 miles). Rail freight must travel through Massachusetts to reach most of New England from the rest of the U.S., making it important to both the Commonwealth and the region. The draft Plan 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.

Ports are vital for the import and export of many consumer goods. In Massachusetts, seaport and airport activity is essential to the seafood, construction, and energy sectors. Chapter 5 evaluates key infrastructure demand at specific port 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 the COVID-19 impacts on volumes.

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, similar to the framework used for the 2017 Freight Plan, which are intended to assist in prioritizing the 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 Freight Plan include three types of recommendations: infrastructure improvements such as specific freight projects and investments; operational innovations including planning, engineering, and public works improvements; and policies and people, which includes programming, coordination, initiatives, and policies.

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, are 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 one question, included with the response from facilitators below.

1. Question #1 (Barbara Alexander): I'm in North Adams, MA, which is near Albany, and I use the Albany airport a lot for personal travel. It seems like such an underutilized area. Since I am interested in regional cooperation issues and more efficient use of our areas. Are there any regional cooperation efforts between these two states that might compete a little more than is socially optimal?

K. Kirk: In general, it benefits air cargo providers economically to consolidate in major facilities like JFK or O'Hare airports. It is also more efficient to coordinate the ground logistics at fewer facilities rather than spread it out regionally. In terms of regional coordination, there generally is a lot of competition. Airports are typically operated by a port authority, which are quasi-public entities, and they have tenants, which are private companies, doing these logistics. It is a nature of private operations to choose how they do their operations. When it comes to surface transportation and trucking activity that happens beyond the airport facilities that may spill into other states; in terms of Albany, a lot of that would be coming from the lower New York region.

NEXT STEPS

M. Niles described the next steps and schedule for the coming months. A draft of the 2023 Massachusetts Freight Plan will be soon released for public comments. A notification will be sent out via the Freight Plan email distribution list to announce the release and 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.