



## Freight Advisory Committee Meeting #4: Summary

May 24, 2017, 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM

New Bedford Free Public Library, 213 Pleasant Street, New Bedford

### Purpose

The fourth meeting of the Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) was held to review the conversation from the third FAC meeting, discuss the draft recommendations in the draft Freight Plan, and review examples of how strategies can be implemented. The presentation can be downloaded from the Freight Plan website: [www.mass.gov/massdot/FreightPlan](http://www.mass.gov/massdot/FreightPlan)

### Freight Advisory Committee Attendees

Name of FAC member	Organization	Present	Sent Designee
Tom Tinlin, Chair	Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Highway Division		
Ed Anthes-Washburn	Port of New Bedford		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Chris Atwood	Unistress Corp.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Joe Barr	City of Cambridge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
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)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Kevin Young	Global Partners		

The following designees attended on behalf of an FAC member:

<b>Name of Designee</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Tim Brennan	MARPA
Jacob Gonsalves	Port of New Bedford

#### **MassDOT Attendees**

Gabe Sherman and Trey Wadsworth, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (OTP).

#### **Project Team Attendees**

Nathan Higgins, Cambridge Systematics (CS).

Regan Checchio and Sarah Paritsky, Regina Villa Associates (RVA).

#### **Public Attendees**

The following members of the public also attended: Jillian Bukhenik, Massachusetts Motor Transportation Association; Paul Mission, Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD); Mayor Jonathan F. Mitchell, City of New Bedford; Katherine Saucier, City of New Bedford Office of the Mayor; Bill Veno, Martha's Vineyard Commission.

#### **Welcome and Review**

Gabe Sherman, MassDOT Project Manager, thanked everyone for attending the final FAC meeting and reviewed the agenda.

Mayor Jonathan F. Mitchell welcomed everyone to the City of New Bedford. He provided some feedback and distributed a packet of materials (i.e., Letter dated March 24, 2017 from Mayor Mitchell to Lieutenant Governor Polito; Port of New Bedford fact sheet; and the Economic Impact Study of New Bedford/Fairhaven Harbor) to FAC members. Mayor Mitchell spoke to the packet of materials and described the significance of freight to New Bedford. He said New Bedford is the largest commercial fishing port in the country. He explained that demand is growing, and there are a number of improvements needed to the North and South Terminals. He said New Bedford Regional Airport is growing to become a commercial airport for passenger and freight service. Mayor Mitchell added that the Port of New Bedford needs to be dredged as it has not been dredged since the 1950s.

G. Sherman thanked the Mayor for speaking and led a round of introductions. G. Sherman said Administrator Tinlin was unable to attend this meeting due to medical reasons. G. Sherman reviewed the project schedule which was updated to allow for the Draft Freight Plan to be reviewed by MassDOT, the public, and FHWA.

G. Sherman reviewed the Freight Plan completion schedule and said any feedback discussed at this meeting will be incorporated into the draft Plan. It will be reviewed by MassDOT and then shared with the public and FAC members for comments. Finally, MassDOT will submit the draft plan to FHWA for its review and acceptance.

#### **Draft Freight Plan and Discussion**

Nathan Higgins, CS, said he will present the Plan in presentation format for discussion. He described the vision and said the only change since the FAC last reviewed it is a rephrased bullet about maintaining

assets. He explained the goal is to improve the condition of assets and not just maintain state-of-good-repair. N. Higgins welcomed feedback on the vision (there was none).

N. Higgins reviewed the guiding principles which show how MassDOT wants to deliver the Plan. He said the Plan needs to work for truck drivers, rail operators, port facility workers, distribution facilities, and customers, among others. The team added a bullet to be responsive to trends as they unfold based on discussion at the third meeting. N. Higgins said the other principles did not change since the previous meeting, and welcomed feedback on the guiding principles.

- Joe Barr, City of Cambridge, suggested adding a principle about partnerships with the private sector. He said this is a unique characteristic of the freight sector. N. Higgins said the team will consider incorporating this suggestion.

N. Higgins described the purpose of the plan: it is required by FHWA, but freight is also an important piece of the transportation network. The public often does not consider this hidden part of the transportation system and economy. N. Higgins said the plan organizes the freight network by category: gateways, corridors, distribution and en-route, first and last mile, and the network. He walked through an illustrative example of a product made in a factory in China, shipped to a gateway in Korea, then shipped to a destination gateway in Boston, sent to a distribution center in Massachusetts, and finally shipped to restaurants, homeowners, and shops.

N. Higgins shared a preview of the Key Freight Network Elements Map, which MassDOT is developing with municipalities and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations. G. Sherman said this map will be rolled into the plan after the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) vote on May 25. N. Higgins noted that there are other state network lines that need to be added to the map. Trey Wadsworth, MassDOT, said the map can be adjusted at any time. While many DOTs designate the networks and share the results with the MPOs, MassDOT asked the MPOs to designate the networks themselves. G. Sherman explained that each region has a limited allocation of miles for where projects can use the federal freight funding. He said MassDOT is aware that freight is traveling on routes not included in the map. The elements included in the map are eligible for \$20 million over five years from FHWA.

- Lisa Wieland, Massport, confirmed that the green segments on the map were selected by MPOs and that the miles available were limited. G. Sherman said there are separate, limited mileage allocations for urban and rural areas. As projects are completed, this can change over time.

N. Higgins said the planning context describes the economy, jobs, industries, policies and regulations that are important to freight users. He said the details of these can be found online in Technical Memoranda 1 and 2. He said the drivers of global change were discussed in the second FAC meeting.

N. Higgins reviewed the recommended strategies which are organized into various categories: immediate, robust, deferred, hedging, and shaping. He referred FAC members to the complete list of strategies on the handout and reviewed the list in detail.

N. Higgins said the team will highlight some of the strategies listed to provide examples of how they will be treated in the final document. N. Higgins welcomed feedback on each category of strategies and encouraged FAC members to share ideas for more future-looking strategies.

- Pierre Bernier, Maritime International, said he thinks short-sea shipping should be a hedging strategy instead of a shaping strategy. He said he deals with short-sea shipping and it has been talked about for the last 10 to 15 years. He said short-sea shipping is done in Europe and Asia very efficiently. Some trips require longer distances by road than by sea. N. Higgins explained that as a shaping strategy, short-sea shipping is something the state can encourage as part of a

potential future. P. Bernier encouraged the plan to consider infrastructure in Boston, Fall River, and New Bedford.

- In response to a discussion about using standardized mailboxes for automated deliveries, George Fournier, Cumberland Farms, said he has noted traffic in his neighborhood increase due to frequent deliveries.

## Implementation

N. Higgins said the Plan focuses on strategies, but it will outline ways in which the strategies will be implemented. J. Barr asked if the implementation examples discussed at the FAC will be included in the Plan. N. Higgins said he thinks they will be added to the Plan. The plan also will include a list of projects to address strategies, drawing from the Capital Investment Plan (CIP) projects.

T. Wadsworth said the implementation examples will help paint a picture of what to expect. He added MassDOT will try to initiate projects that directly speak to the strategies. J. Barr suggested the Plan should be referred to as a “strategic plan.” L. Wieland said some of the projects and policies are predicated on the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and require the plan to be in place to make them eligible for funding while others can be addressed in other ways.

N. Higgins described the project development process for highway projects, included in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), or the state’s list of projects that have federal funding. For highway projects, the steps include:

- Project Need Form (submitted to the Highway District);
- Project planning with District’s guidance;
- Project initiation;
- MassDOT’s decision-making process, which includes targets, scoring, and evaluation;
- Funding priorities;
- Design and permitting; and
- Construction.

P. Bernier asked how long it normally takes a project to go from project need to construction. T. Wadsworth said it can take many years and Tim Brennan, MAPRA, agreed about five years is average and said the timelines are growing due to the high number of projects and reduced funding amounts. N. Higgins noted that design can take time because of environmental and public processes.

N. Higgins said MassDOT, other state actors (including railroads and Massport), and municipalities can initiate projects. Project concepts can come from MPOs, businesses, and the public. L. Wieland reiterated the importance of the private sector in making projects happen and used the dredging of Boston Harbor as an example. She said the private sector said the dredging project is very important for businesses and jobs. In her experience, L. Wieland said projects are better and happen faster when the private sector partners with state actors. She encouraged other FAC members to take a leadership role implementing projects that are important to them. T. Wadsworth noted that it can be hard to identify who the implementing agency is and who should take ownership of the project.

Paul Mission, SRPEDD, asked how the Freight Plan will relate to the regional transportation plan which is updated every four years. He said it can be difficult to incorporate freight and freight needs information into the regional plan. He invited anyone who wants to participate in the updates to contact him. P. Mission typically coordinates with the Port of New Bedford, and the New Bedford Mayor and City Planner. He said public outreach will take place over the next year or two.

N. Higgins provided an overview of various funding sources, including federal aid; state taxes, fees and tolls; public-private partnerships; and local tax revenue. He explained how the value to freight is reflected in prioritization with MassDOT's two stage prioritization process, including the Project Selection Advisory Council (PSAC) scoring system.

T. Brennan suggested underscoring in the Plan that a lot of freight projects are private investments (undertaken by a railroad company, for example). L. Wieland referenced the compensatory model for airlines. N. Higgins said he will add private sector to the list of those who manage projects and assets.

N. Higgins walked through the following examples of how strategies will be implemented:

- Truck Stops – This could be proposed by MassDOT; paid through a Public Private Partnership (PPP); funded through the national freight program, or the one-time Volkswagen settlement that could be used for truck stop electrification. Benefits could include cost-effectiveness, economic impacts, safety, environmental and health, and policy support. Could be managed by a private operator and the municipality. There were no questions or feedback on this example.
- 286K Rail – This could be proposed by railroads or railroad customers, and/or Economic Development Councils (EDC). The improvement could be funded by MassDOT and/or a private owner, depending on what improvements are needed. Benefits range from economic impacts to safety and policy support. The project would be managed by the owner (MassDOT or a railroad).
  - P. Bernier agreed there is a need for 286K rail.
  - Mark Marasco, Maple Leaf Distribution Services, said other benefits could be the connection to national network and to help prevent obsolescence.
- Workforce Support – Support could be proposed by labor groups, employers, and schools, and would likely be paid for by the Commonwealth's Department of Labor (as opposed to MassDOT) with support from employers, schools, and labor groups. Benefits could include economic impacts, social equity and fairness, and policy support. MassDOT could manage some aspects, such as commercial driver licenses. Labor groups, employers, and schools would need to manage it, too. T. Wadsworth said the implementing agency would be the advocate.
- Loading Dock Plans in a municipality, such as Cambridge – These could be proposed by municipalities and developers. A developer could pay for the loading dock when building the project. Benefits include economic impacts, safety, and policy support. The municipalities and developers would manage this. It could be built for an individual building or a neighborhood.
  - J. Barr said loading dock plans would also have congestion reduction and mobility benefits as trucks can create roadway blockages in urban areas.

N. Higgins requested feedback on these examples and asked if there are any other strategies that FAC members would like to see as examples in the Plan.

- J. Barr suggested adding an example for the standard bridge that is structurally deficient and needs to be rebuilt. Normal infrastructure updates could be added to help explain the process to the public. N. Higgins described MassDOT's bridge program to evaluate bridges and prioritize replacements.
- Brandon Wilcox, FHWA, asked if this will be the framework for implementation steps in the Freight Plan. N. Higgins said the team developed the examples for this presentation and is still figuring out how to incorporate them in the Plan. The framework helps tie together actors and funding sources, and would likely be useful for priority strategies. G. Sherman said FAC members asked about how strategies would be implemented at previous meetings. These are illustrative examples to show complications and the need for industry support. T. Wadsworth said the examples communicate the various paths that anyone can take to move the strategies forward.

- L. Wieland said the Plan could be more explicit about an intentional policy that preserves and enhances freight routes and corridors. She said in addition to improving freight assets, local and state actors need to show they value this. N. Higgins agreed the concept is in there and the team will make sure it is more explicit in the plan. T. Wadsworth said that when the freight network is an existing condition, developers should accommodate freight, instead of perceiving freight as a nuisance. L. Wieland said this is also a guideline for policy makers to consider as they approve developments.

N. Higgins encouraged FAC members to submit additional comments via email.

### Closing Thoughts

G. Sherman thanked the FAC members for traveling across the state and attending the four FAC meetings. He said the FAC was set up to help inform the freight plan. The plan will be revisited every five years, and he assumes a similar body will be engaged in future plans. G. Sherman requested feedback on this process and asked if FAC members see a need for this body to reconvene periodically and if so, what issues could be discussed at periodic meetings. G. Sherman said the project team will also distribute a survey for anything that members would prefer to share outside of this meeting.

- T. Brennan suggested looking for a way to carry out the Plan to the regions since freight doesn't receive as much attention as other modes.
- J. Barr said he thinks there is a role for a group like this to continue meeting regularly to move some of the strategies forward as coordination is required. He said he thinks the FAC has been very valuable. He asked if FAC members can review the Draft Freight Plan before it is released to the public, but acknowledged this could be problematic from a schedule perspective.
  - T. Wadsworth said Secretary Pollack would like this plan to use the same online format as the CIP. Depending on how that impacts the schedule, G. Sherman said the Plan will be shared with FAC members before the public, if possible. G. Sherman said he wouldn't anticipate any surprises as the plan has been pulled into the FAC meeting presentations.
- B. Wilcox said he believes MassDOT has had a freight advisory group in the past. He encouraged MassDOT to continue this body or a future body.
- N. Higgins suggested meeting annually to discuss how things have changed in the industry and how trends are evolving.
- J. Barr said the City of Cambridge is about to launch a local freight delivery study. He could present to this FAC about that study.

G. Sherman said at a minimum, the team will email FAC members as soon as the plan is available for review. T. Wadsworth added that there is a CIP meeting at UMass Dartmouth later in the evening and encouraged members to attend.