

**FREIGHT COMMITTEE**  
**of the**  
**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Summary of September 10, 2008 Meeting**

This meeting was held in Conference Room 4 of the State Transportation Building.

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM.

**1. Introduction** – Walter Bonin, *Chair and City of Marlborough*

**2. Charter Discussion** – Frank DeMasi, *Vice Chair and Town of Wellesley*

F. DeMasi provided a summary of a conversation held on June 11, 2008, in which Kristina Johnson, Advisory Council Chair and City of Quincy, discussed with members of the Freight Committee the Committee's role and responsibilities as an entity of the Advisory Council and the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Advisory Council Chair had asserted that the Committee must focus its activities on the business and process of the Advisory Council. The Committee, because of its relationship to the Advisory Council, is often seen to represent the Advisory Council; it does not have the approval of the Advisory Council to do that. The Committee had seemed sometimes to act as an independent body. The Chair had said that the Committee must refrain from being involved in activities outside the scope of its purview. She also suggested that it might wish to consider as one option establishing an independent freight advocacy group that could continue to pursue its statewide interests and seek membership on the Advisory Council, where it could continue to advocate for freight within the context of the MPO.

K. Johnson reviewed the issues:

- The impetus for the discussion is that:
  - The Freight Committee regularly discusses matters beyond the geographic and political purview of the MPO. As a committee of the Advisory Council, which is an MPO member, the Freight Committee must work within the interests of the MPO and as guided by the Chair of the Advisory Council.
  - The Advisory Council and the MPO benefit from the Committee members' knowledge, comments and interest in freight, but the Committee must keep the Advisory Council better briefed on its activities
- For these reasons, members of the Freight Committee have options to consider, one of which is establishing a new freight advocacy group, independent of the Advisory Council, but remaining involved in the Advisory Council as a member. An independent group would offer

current members the latitude to pursue a variety of freight issues that are outside of the purview of the MPO.

- Current Freight Committee members would of course continue to participate in the Advisory Council as designee of the member they represent.
- There will be greater scrutiny for the work of all Advisory Council committees to ensure that work conducted in committee serves to further the mission of the Advisory Council as an entity of the MPO.
  - MPO Staff will work more closely with all committees to develop memoranda, agendas and minutes as well as to circulate material to committee members.
  - Chairs of all Advisory Council committees will be expected to provide brief summaries of their respective committee's work as detailed by the chair of the Advisory Council.

#### *Point and Issues Raised During Discussion*

- There is a lack of communication between the Advisory Council and its Freight Committee. (W. Bonin)
- There should be more time for committees to summarize their work at Advisory Council meetings. (F. DeMasi)
- The Freight Committee followed from a similar group at MassHighway in the 1990s in order to attend to freight issues at the MPO level, issues that otherwise lacked attention. (F. DeMasi)
- The Freight Committee is different from other committees of the Advisory Council as it is proactive whereas other committees are reactive. (Dom D'Eramo, Town of Millis)
- The State is better suited than the MPO to consider freight issues, because of the inter-regional and often inter-state character of freight. (John Businger, National Corridors Initiative)
- There are MPO-related freight matters, but those matters should first follow from statewide planning. (W. Bonin)
- The Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works (EOTPW) should employ a freight manager to support consideration of freight in statewide transportation planning work. (D. D'Eramo)
- EOTPW would be more likely to establish freight leadership if there were a statewide freight advocacy group to urge for the attention. (J. Businger)
- It is advantageous for the MPO to better understand statewide freight issues and the MPO's familiarity with freight would have implications for federal funding. EOTPW's coordination with the MPO, notably as chair of the MPO, provides for consideration of freight in MPO work. (Ned Codd, EOTPW)
- The work of the Freight Committee must be requested by the Advisory Council and, consequently, must be related to the MPO. The members of Freight Committee should form

an independent group for freight advocacy to gain greater allowances but should also remain a committee of the Advisory Council to retain its connection to the MPO and the formal access to resources that the connection confers. Perhaps there are other organizations that members of the Freight Committee could join, allowing us to enjoy greater flexibility for advocacy while retaining some formality. (D. D'Eramo)

- The Freight Committee should look into the opportunity to tweak the MPO's guiding regulations to develop an inter-MPO statewide committee to address freight issues. (J. Businger)
- There are groups working on freight issues at the state and federal level. (Lynn Vikesland, Massport)
- There are 16 SMARTWAY partners with headquarters in MA. These partners may want to participate in a statewide freight group. (Abby Swaine, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)

### **3. New Business – W. Bonin**

Kevin Dooley, Tighe Warehousing, presented information about his company's work with CSX and Pan Am. Tighe Warehousing:

- has 2 warehousing operations with Pan Am, who has improved service recently and has increased traffic in Massachusetts.
- works with Stop & Shop, BJ's, and other large retail chains, and it seems that these business are hesitant to ship products via rail because of potential congestion with transit service and because shipping rates are increasing.
- is a partner in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's SMARTWAY program, a branding effort to distinguish manufacturers whose shipping methods reduce emissions.
- has approximately 3,000 rail cars in Mansfield and 600 to 800 cars in Woburn.

#### *Point and Issues Raised During Discussion*

- Does Massachusetts support a rail diversion program? (F. DeMasi)
- Rail diversion would be addressed in the Statewide Freight and Rail Plan; the market for rail diversion may not work well in a consumer-driven market. (Tim Doherty, EOTPW)

Neil Fitzpatrick, Boston Freight Terminals, discussed his company's work at the Marine Industrial Park in South Boston:

- There is no rail access to his site, but the site is intermodal in the sense that cargo comes in via ship (mostly inbound) and some plane as well as truck.
- Boston Freight Terminals is a partner in the Massport Marine Terminal, a 33-acre site – 7+ acres devoted to break bulk cargo – with a 1,000-ft. berth, to which the City of Boston is looking into extending rail.

- A cement company has set up operations at the port, while other industries (frozen cargo, fumigation facility) have shown interest in the site if it accommodated rail service.

*Point and Issues Raised During Discussion*

- As the seaport district develops and congests the area, freight rail at Readville Rail Yards near I-95 will be more sensible. Ocean freight containers can move from ship to rail to Readville, where it can be loaded for regional and interstate destinations. (F. DeMasi)
- The zoning codes for the Marine Industrial Park require industrial and commercial development; the area shouldn't push out industrial uses. Also, while rail service to Conley Terminal is efficient, the benefit of rail to the Marine Industrial Park has not been measured, and rail service there is unlikely in the foreseeable future. (N. Fitzpatrick)
- Halifax operates a world-class transloading facility on only 72 acres; why can't Boston pursue a similar project, especially when federal funding like Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds would be available to expand rail access to the Park? (F. DeMasi) There is a political reluctance to fund a freight project in light of a myriad of other transportation issues. (N. Fitzpatrick)

A field trip to the Logan Freight Terminal is planned for Wednesday, October 8. Interested members should meet at the South Boston Fish Pier. A Massport shuttle will bring attendees to the Terminal. The Freight Committee meeting will follow at 1:00 PM as scheduled.

**4. Update on Statewide Freight and Rail Plan – Ned Codd, Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works**

Ned Codd, EOTPW, provided updates on the Statewide Freight and Rail Plan activities:

- The program is conducting outreach to stakeholders, including port professionals, railroad representatives, Massport, and trucking groups.
- Data collection is underway for existing conditions and freight trends (regional, state, and international).
- There was a meeting with New England Association of Rail Shippers in New Hampshire.
- Meetings are being scheduled with MPO representatives, shippers, and rail and truck operators in the state's four regions – Southeast (Cape), Eastern (Boston), Central (Worcester), and Western (Springfield).
- The study team will meet with RTAC Freight Committee at the October meeting to give a briefing and get feedback.

**Attachments:**

1. Handouts Related to Transloading
2. Field Trip to Logan Freight Terminal Flyer
3. Charter of the Freight Committee

## **Attendance List for September 10, 2008**

### **Agencies**

Tim Doherty, Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works  
Ned Codd, Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works  
Lynn Vikesland, Massport

### **Cities and Towns**

Walter Bonin, Marlborough  
Frank DeMasi, Wellesley  
Dom D'Eramo, Millis  
Kristina Johnson, Quincy

### **Citizens Groups**

John Businger, Northeast Corridors Initiative  
Marilyn Wellons, Riverside Neighborhood Association

### **Guests and Visitors**

Alessio Campi  
Kevin Dooley, Tighe Warehousing  
Neil Fitzpatrick, Boston Freight Terminals  
Robert LaJaemouille, FOWG  
Ed Lowney  
Marilyn MacNab  
Abby Swaine, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

### **MPO Staff**

John Hersey  
Bill Kuttner  
Anne McGahan  
Pam Wolfe