

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

**Summary of the March 10, 2010 Meeting**

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

**1. Introductions and Chair's Report** – *Walter Bonin, Co-Chair*

W. Bonin called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM. Members, guests, visitors, and staff introduced themselves (see the attached attendance list). There was no chair's report.

**2. Announcements**

- Abby Swaine of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced the annual meeting of the Northeast Association of Rail Shippers from April 21 to 23 in Newport, Rhode Island. The Transportation Border Working Group is meeting in Boston on Long Wharf on April 13 and 14. The second day of the meeting will focus on green trucking.
- Frank DeMasi, Co-Chair and representative of Wellesley, announced that meetings on the Statewide Freight and Rail Plan will begin March 23 in Worcester.
- F. DeMasi introduced Jack Hamm of ReRail America, a new non-profit organization promoting rail transportation.

**3. Approval of the draft January 13, 2010 Meeting Minutes** – *Walter Bonin, Co-Chair*

The minutes were unanimously approved.

**4. Briefing on SmartWay Transport & EPA Clean Diesel Program** – *Abby Swaine, US EPA New England*

Transportation produces about 28 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, and the emissions are growing at a faster rate than those from other sectors of the economy. Approximately 18 percent of transportation sector emissions come from medium- and heavy-duty trucks. Truck emissions grew by 70 percent between 1990 and 2005, while growth in the other freight modes was flat. During the span trucks lost efficiency with greenhouse gas emissions per ton-mile increasing by 12 percent.

SmartWay Transport is a voluntary nationwide program of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that helps freight carriers and shippers maximize efficiency (within each mode and in mode choice) in order to reduce emissions and fuel consumption. The program, launched in 2004, appeals to carriers that want to save money and shippers that need to respond to shareholder demands for carbon accountability.

The partnership currently has more than 2,400 members. To date, carriers and shippers have saved 1.5 billion gallons of fuel. There is a strong retail presence among the partners, and all of the major computer manufacturers are part of the program.

Funding for the program has increased due to American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act. Nationwide the EPA has \$21 million for upgrading and replacing fleets. They also have region-specific programs such as the Great SmartWay Rebate Program, and site-specific programs funded by the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act. The Great SmartWay Rebate Program offers rebates of \$100 to \$1,000 to owners of heavy-duty diesel trucks titled in the six New England states for equipment that increases their efficiency. Currently the EPA is working on upgrades to the SmartWay programs with a project called SmartWay 2.0. Other countries and the European Union have expressed interest in SmartWay and are developing similar programs.

Partners participate in the program by signing a three-year partner agreement with the EPA. This gives the partners access to the EPA's model, which analyzes operations and informs recommended strategies for improving efficiency and reducing emissions. Carriers can use the SmartWay logo once they reach medium efficiency level and shippers can use the logo once they move 50 percent or more of their freight with medium efficiency carriers. SmartWay also works with rail freight carriers encouraging electric engine heating, auto shutdown/start up, genset locomotives, and hybrid locomotives.

A. Swaine stressed the importance of local land use decisions. It's important to preserve the existing multi-modal infrastructure, work with short lines to make the connection between long-haul rail and the final destination, encourage the integration of freight with smart growth, promote freight villages, add rail spurs and sidings, use electrified truck parking, and provide shore power at loading docks.

### **Member Comments and Questions**

In response to members' questions, A. Swaine made the following additional comments:

- The Department of Energy has awarded \$115 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to improve the fuel efficiency of Class 8 long-haul freight trucks by 50 percent by 2015. This is referred to as the SuperTrucks program.
- The SmartWay program does not work with individual communities on improving the efficiency of their fleets. They work only with freight carriers and shippers. Other EPA programs, however, work with individual communities.
- EPA is working with the Maritime Administration to improve the efficiency of vessels and design short sea shipping facilities. They are also quantifying the efficiency of short sea shipping for models to be used by SmartWay partners.
- There is no national standard on idling. There is a five-minute standard in Massachusetts and a three-minute standard in Connecticut.

### **5. Development Patterns Related to Freight in the Boston Region – Tom Lisco and David Fargen, Central Transportation Planning Staff**

T. Lisco described a data set he collected through several years of field observation. The I-495 Coalition was pulled together in the 1990s to address problems on Interstate 495. T. Lisco drove the corridor and saw a lot of development on the major routes that bisect I-

495. This led to an effort to understand where development is in metropolitan Boston. T. Lisco spent eight years identifying trip generators in the region, inspired by Robert Moses who understood the New York City region by observing development from the sky. The patterns he found are very clear. Virtually all office parks, industrial parks, and major retail locations in the region are along the interstate highway system.

T. Lisco also has produced maps of each municipality in the region (with the exception of Boston and Brookline). T. Lisco talked about the map of Framingham that was displayed on the wall. The map shows some large parcels that are currently vacant or available for redevelopment, including the former General Motors plant, on which the town is encouraging economic development. The General Motors parcel lacks good express highway access making it difficult to attract investment.

### **Member Comments and Questions**

In response to members' questions, T. Lisco made the following additional comments:

- Most people use the highway infrastructure. This creates a problem for advocates of alternative forms of mobility because they are up against a lot of people that depend on the highway system.
- It might be helpful to see the trip generators with only highways or only rail lines, rather than both. This would make the patterns more clear.
- David Fargen can produce maps of the region and municipalities in the region. Mike Callahan can facilitate any request for a map. The maps are not currently available on line.

### **6. Discussion of the Next Regional Transportation Plan – Anne McGahan, Boston Region MPO Staff**

The process of creating a new Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Boston region began last month when the MPO approved its work scope. The LRTP must be updated every four years. JOURNEY TO 2030, the current plan, was approved in 2007 and was amended twice in the last year. Climate change, livability, and operations and management are going to be important topic areas in the next LRTP. The LRTP will also include an air quality conformity determination to show that the region is within the emissions budget for mobile sources of various air pollutants.

A different approach to the plan is being taken this time. Its development will be guided by a needs assessment for the region as a whole, and within corridors. A. McGahan described the radial and circumferential corridors. The radial corridors mirror those used in the MBTA Program for Mass Transportation. Circumferential and suburb-to-suburb travel will also be examined because not all travel is radial. The needs for all modes, including freight, will be examined using existing conditions and future conditions predicted by the model.

Staff will work with Paul Nelson and other staff from MassDOT to incorporate data and other relevant information from the Statewide Freight and Rail Study. This will inform the needs assessment for the freight system. The model is being updated to be more useful for examining truck travel. The model will produce truck vehicle miles of travel, which will help staff think about where freight might be moved by rail rather than truck.

Information about the financial resources expected to be available for the region between 2011 and 2035 should be available in July. The needs can then be considered in light of the financial resources, which will help the MPO prioritize projects and programs to address the needs. The LRTP will also include performance measures to track the MPO's progress towards achieving its goals.

The MPO is scheduled to send out a draft LRTP for public review and comment in January. It must be sent to the federal government by April 2011.

### **Member Comments and Questions**

In response to members' questions, A. McGahan made the following additional comments:

- This plan will emphasize the region's needs rather than projects. The needs will inform a course of action, which may include a project, a program, or another strategy.
- A. McGahan said she is not sure if the impact of the closing of Beacon Park Yards can be predicted using the truck model. A. McGahan said she is not sure how a truck is defined for the model.
- The Statewide Freight and Rail Study will be an important input to the LRTP.
- The MPO will decide later in the process whether or not to include a list of illustrative projects.

### **7. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 PM

### **Attendance**

#### **Agencies**

Lynn Vikesland, Massport  
Alison Felix, MAPC  
Louis Elisa, Seaport Advisory Council  
Ed Anthes-Washburn, Seaport Advisory Council

#### **Cities and Towns**

Walter Bonin, Marlborough  
Dom D'Eramo, Millis  
Frank DeMasi, Wellesley  
Steve Olanoff, Westwood

#### **Advocacy/Citizens Groups**

Jenna Venturini – Eastern Mass. Freight Rail Coalition  
Marilyn Wellons, Riverside Neighborhood Association

#### **Guests and Visitors**

Bob Gentile, Framingham  
Jack Hamm, ReRail America  
Jo Hart, Worcester  
Ed Lowney, Malden  
Arnold Pinsley, Natick  
Doug Low, Rail America  
Pam Mann, Go-21  
Marilyn McNab, Boston  
Paul Ruscio, Fore River Transportation

#### **MPO Staff**

Mike Callahan  
David Fargen  
Tom Lisco  
Anne McGahan