

## Memorandum

To: Laura Wiener, RTAC Chair

From: Walter Bonin, Dom D'Eramo, Freight Committee Co-chairs

The RTAC Freight Committee has developed over the last half year a considerable roster of freight and freight-related projects and initiatives. As preparation of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) gets underway, the Freight Committee was invited to recommend some of these projects for inclusion in the LRTP. At the April 13 Freight Committee meeting, five criteria were suggested for informing the selection of projects for recommendation to the LRTP. A candidate project ideally should:

- 1. enjoy agency support**
- 2. be mentioned in the state freight and/or rail plan**
- 3. be well defined at a planning level and potentially fundable**
- 4. offer synergy with other projects or initiatives**
- 5. result in beneficial economic and environmental externalities**

On April 19, co-chairs Dom D'Eramo and Walter Bonin, together with RTAC member Frank DeMasi and MPO staff Bill Kuttner, met to discuss and select a group of candidate projects to be included in the LRTP. Four projects appear to most closely satisfy the five criteria listed above.

### **South Boston Roadway Improvements**

This project, outlined in the State Freight Plan, includes the construction of a new Conley Terminal freight Bypass Road, and upgrades to E and Cypher Streets. These improvements would move traffic away from residential areas and reduce truck traffic on neighborhood streets. This project would support the eventual deepening the navigation channel to Conley Terminal in anticipation of service by larger, post-Panamax container vessels.

### **Track 61 Rail Improvements**

This project would upgrade as required the existing freight rail track to the Boston seaport area, and extend it into the Boston Marine Industrial Park (BMIP). The project involves upgrading over a half mile of existing track, as well as construction of over a mile of new track. Initially, it would provide on-dock rail access to an envisioned bulk cargo facility at the North Jetty. Once built, it would be available to support additional, emerging logistics activities, thereby supporting economic development in the BMIP as well as the region.

### **Framingham Subdivision Improvements**

The CSX freight line between Framingham and Mansfield has the potential to play a greater role in Eastern Massachusetts logistics. Upgrade of the line to the new national 286,000 pound weight standard, as well as eventual implementation of full-sized "Plate H" railcar clearances will prepare this line to support increases in freight traffic envisioned between now and 2035. These improvements might best be achieved through some manner of public-private partnership.

In conjunction with Framingham Subdivision improvements, the addition of a third track along the Northeast Corridor between Mansfield and Attleboro is recommended. This will allow rail freight from Southeastern Massachusetts to connect with an improved Framingham Subdivision with minimum presence on the Northeast Corridor passenger tracks.

### **New Truck Rest Facilities**

Truck rest facilities with plug in power should be constructed on I-495. This improvement will allow interstate truck drivers to rest in heated cabs as they adhere to new, stricter time-of-service regulations.