



## Meeting Notes

Attendees: Attached

Date/Time: October 14, 2008 2 PM - 4 PM

Project No.: 10640.00

Place: CMRPC  
Union Station, Worcester

Re: Worcester Regional Mobility Study -  
Advisory Group Meeting 1

Notes taken by: VHB

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### AGENDA

- Introductions
- Purpose, Advisory Group Guidance
- Study Overview
- Group Input
- Comments on Material Presented
- Next Steps
- Public Comments

### INTRODUCTIONS

D. Cooke (VHB) opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda. This is the study kick-off meeting for the Advisory Group which will introduce the study to the group and allow for group discussion on transportation issues which will help focus the study effort. The study will conclude two products - a Mobility Report and an Operations and Management Plan for the area transportation infrastructure.

### PURPOSE, ADVISORY GROUP GUIDANCE

D. Cooke provided an overview of the purpose of the Advisory Group and provided guidance for the conduct of the group meeting for the 18-month study. Key points included:

- Purpose of the Advisory Group:
  - Provide guidance and feedback throughout the process
  - Forum for stakeholder discussion of key issues
  - To ensure that all area stakeholders are current with the study and can provide guidance before public meetings occur
  - Review study documents
  - Help identify study recommendations
- Guidance for meetings:
  - Agree to follow agenda - Start and end on time

- Dialogue rather than long speeches – agree to disagree when necessary
- Cell phones off or silenced
- Look for promising future solutions
- Respect the opinions of others
- Be willing to seek consensus

## STUDY OVERVIEW

D. Cooke reviewed the study area which was determined by overlaying maps of high density population/employment areas, the transportation network, and key congested corridors. The study area includes Worcester and the 10 towns surrounding Worcester which form the urban core for Central Massachusetts.

J. Wanat (VHB) reviewed the goals and objectives for the study, noting that the study will include a 2030 forecast of traffic conditions using the regional travel demand model:

- Overarching Study Goal - Improve the movement of people and goods through the urban core of Central Massachusetts
- Specific Goals/Objectives
  - Reduce congestion
  - Improve safety
  - Improve transportation choice
  - Develop environmentally sensitive solutions
  - Develop transportation strategies that support economic development
  - Encourage consensus through an open and inclusive process
  - Develop recommendations that target demonstrated needs
  - Develop a range of project-specific recommendations for priority areas that have long-term benefits
  - Develop an Operations and Management Plan for the region

J. Wanat reviewed the study's Public Participation Plan. The plan includes four Public Informational meetings, monthly Technical/Advisory Group meetings, and small group focus sessions targeting specific issues throughout the study. A study website has also been developed which will include general information on the study, meeting schedule, and key documents including meeting notes and study reports to ensure transparency in the overall process. The website address is: [www.vhb.com/worcesterregionalmobility](http://www.vhb.com/worcesterregionalmobility).

D. Cooke reviewed the 15-month study schedule, which is expected to be completed by September 2009. The schedule is largely driven by the public outreach process. Advisory Group meetings are expected to occur before Public Informational Meetings. The first public meeting is set for November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, date and time to be determined. Subsequent public meetings are expected in December 2008/January 2009, May/June 2009, and August/September 2009.

## ADVISORY GROUP INPUT

The Advisory Group was asked to discuss their top transportation issues in the urban core of Central Massachusetts. Key points included:

- Multimodal options need to be enhanced to reduce reliance on automobiles

- East-west connectivity and mobility through Worcester is lacking
- Need an east-west corridor to serve development and growth, including to/through the airport and related development around the airport
- Need to ease congestion in the evening peak period
- Adjacent communities are negatively affected by lacking east-west mobility (e.g. Paxton)
- Confluence of Routes 122/31/56 in the center of Paxton is a problem
- Route 122 through Tatnuck Square is a problem
- There are safety issues and recurring congestion on the Pleasant Street corridor, Route 9, and Route 122
- Look at growth of towns outside study area and opportunities for traffic flow improvements
- Need for public transportation improvements and better multimodal connections
- Need more public transportation options for the disabled
- Improve non-motorized transportation (pedestrians, bicyclists)
- Study potential for a new interchange on I-90 at Route 56 in Oxford
- Route 20 through Millbury is inefficient
- Look for enhancements to public transportation and bicycle paths (e.g. Providence to Worcester Bikeway) to reduce the carbon footprint
- Consider freight rail improvements to ease demands
- Enhance access in and around the City of Worcester, study local/secondary roads that serve cut-through traffic but are not as efficient or safe as primary routes
- Better serve college students and workforce demands
- Assess economic development corridors, both new corridors and enhancements to existing corridors
- East-west mobility and I-290 to the west of Worcester are the biggest issues; realistic solution is likely an operations and management plan for existing roads rather than building new roads
- Secondary roads and local roads need improvement
- The area is not pedestrian-friendly; need to encourage pedestrian accommodation
- Private developers need to contribute more to infrastructure and transit funding through mitigation commitments
- Encourage more transit-oriented development; link transit to economic development
- Improve and increase connections between transit modes (i.e. payment systems, transfers)
- Improve park-n-ride options
- Comprehensive and frequent public participation is key for this study
- Key concerns revolve around public transportation improvements and poor pedestrian mobility
- Improve linkage between City neighborhoods, there is "silo" effect in Worcester where neighborhoods are not well linked together
- Need to address Route 9, I-290, and Route 70 (Lincoln Street) peak hour congestion to some extent

- 11 of 13 colleges in the consortium are in the study area; need to remain sensitive to the transportation needs/desires of students - pedestrian accommodations; bicycle lanes; transit (including air travel); car sharing (e.g. zipcars); and payment systems (e.g. one ticket systems)
- Congestion relief and safety improvements are needed throughout the study area
- Consider the economic landscape and development trends for the 2030 forecast
- Area needs a comprehensive maintenance and operations plan that would establish a strategy for efficiently managing the needs of the existing infrastructure
- Identify public transportation enhancements to improve service reliability and frequency
- Align transportation infrastructure investments with needs of major employers in the region
- Improve access from I-395 northbound to I-90
- The Worcester Airport catchment area is regional and needs to be better connected with the regional transportation system

#### COMMENTS ON MATERIAL PRESENTED

The Advisory Group was asked to comment on any material presented thus far. There was a follow-on discussion regarding the format of the first public meeting and confirmation that time would be allocated to allow a discussion of transportation issues. No other comments were voiced.

#### NEXT STEPS

D. Cooke reviewed the next steps for the study, including:

- continue the Existing Conditions Assessment
- calibrate the CMRPC model 2030 growth projections for population and employment
- hold the first Public Informational Meeting mid-November (date/time/location to be confirmed).

The next Advisory Group Meeting will be scheduled at a later date, likely Dec 2008/Jan 2009 in advance of the next public meeting.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

The meeting was opened for public comment. The following comments were voiced:

- East-west connections are lacking
- Worcester Airport is not well tied to the regional system; need to take a proactive approach to improved airport access, including considering limited access connections to the regional system and the possibility of a rail link
- Airport access improvements would help east-west mobility
- Look at the potential for a new interchange at I-90/Route 56

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 PM.

**CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
Meeting Sign In Form



DATE: 10/14/08      MEETING: WRRMS ADVISORY GROUP MEETING - 1

Name	Organization	Phone	E-mail
Sujatha Mohana Krishna	CMRPC		
Joe Wanat	VHB Inc.		
Don Cooke	VHB Inc.		
John Krige	Shrewsbury		
James O'Day	State Rep		
Douglas Campbell	EOT Planning	617-973-8239	douglas.campbell@eot.state.ma.us
Michael J. Szafranski	Town/Paxton	508-757-6441	GMW5267@CHARTER.NET
BOB FREY	MASS. E.O.T.	617-973-7449	BOB.FREY@EOT.STATE.MA.US
Andrew B. Opere	Self	781-42-1424	andrew@operecharterent.net.com
Eric Denoncourt	Shrewsbury	508-871-8502	edononco@th.ci.shrewsbury.ma.us
Mary Annan	CMRPC		
Brad Fawcett	Concord Pathways	508-853-2835	VBL@615.NET
ADAM BURNEY	Town of Auburn	508-852-7704	arburneyf2@gmail.com
Karen Marston	Consortium	508-754-6829	Kmarston@curc.org
Jeff Turgeon	CMREB	508-799-1509	turgeoj@ci.worcester.ma.us
David Mangion	Town of Oxford	508-887-6045	dmangion@town.oxford.ma.us
Mary Ellen Blunt	CMRPC		
Paul Mahoney	FHWA	617-494-3610	

**CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
Meeting Sign In Form



DATE:		MEETING:	
Name	Organization	Phone	E-mail
Bob Spillane	State Rep	772-2220	
Devin Neal	WZTA	791-2389	
Robert Brian	WBDC	755-5734	
Tim Greene	Senator Moore	617-222-1420	Timothy.Greene@State.ma.us
BARRY LORION	MASS HIGHWAY	508-929-3170	
John BECHARD	VHB	508-752-1001	
Diane Walker	MHD	617-973-7477	Mon.walker@MHD.state.ma.us
John Fugère	Musapunt	617-568-3502	
Bob Reyes	Massport	781-665-9018	BOBRJFF@AOL.COM
Laurie Connors	Town of Millbury	508-865-4751	lconnors@townofmillbury.net
D A WEN CLARK			
Andrea Biggs	MASS DEP	508-767-2734	andrea.biggs@state.ma.us
Marie Angelini	Gov	508-755-4000	mangelini@govr.com
Jodie Jackson	City of Worcester	799-1400 x249	
Stephanie East	State Rep	617-222-2419	Paul@paulfrosts.com
Stephanie Krolowski	Rep. Frosts office	617-722-2497	Stephanie.Krolowski@HOU.STATE.MA.US