

Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force

Minutes of September 19, 2006 at SEED Corporation, Taunton at 4:00 PM

Members Present:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| John Bullard, Vision 2020 | Norman Thidemann, Easton |
| Robert Overholtzer, OCPC | Bill Roth, Fairhaven |
| Dr. Susan Peterson, SRPEDD | Heather Graf, Norton |
| Peter Kortright, Fall River Chamber | Richard McCarthy, Raynham |
| Chris Cooney, Metrosouth Chamber | Lou Gitto, Stoughton |
| Richard Shafer, Taunton IDC | Kevin Shea, Taunton IDC |
| Kate Kilguss, TRWA | Steven Ouellette, Westport |
| Linda Grubb, Lakeville and FARE | |

Others Present:

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Kyla Bennett, PEER | |
| Ed Coviello, OCPC | Pat Ciaramella, OCPC |
| Nancy Durfee, SRPEDD | Greg Guimond, SRPEDD |
| Louise Daley, SRPEDD | Stephen Smith, SRPEDD |
| Michael Mattos, Taunton | Jerry McDonnell, Stoughton |
| Edgar Adams, Roger Williams University, with students | |

Item #6 taken out of order:

6. Handout of draft Chapter 4 – Lessons learned from the Old Colony Line Restoration

Ed Coviello distributed copies of OCPC's draft Chapter 4 report.

1. Call to Order

Chair John Bullard called the meeting to order at 4:23 PM.

2. Acceptance of Minutes

It was VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to accept the minutes of June 14, 2006.

3. Massachusetts Transit Fund Proposal

State Representative Antonio Cabral, new Bedford was invited to speak but was unable to attend.

4. Analysis of proposed station locations and TOD Suitability

Greg Guimond made a presentation and distributed a handout of criteria with which to review the MBTA proposed station sites, alternative sites, and TOD potential of sites. The criteria include infrastructure, environmental features, zoning and land use, and type of station. He invited additions to the list of criteria. Mr. Guimond noted that the Travel Time Zones map on the SRPEDD website shows the amount of parking and ridership by station. He noted that some MBTA stations are very small, yet with good ridership. Those are the stations with good TOD

elements. Mr. Guimond noted that some of the MBTA proposed station sites are already being developed.

Mr. Guimond reviewed the MBTA proposed station sites in Easton and Raynham and one of two sites in Taunton, as the first of a two-part review of the extension. The MBTA proposed site for Easton is located on Route 138 at the Stoughton line. Mr. Guimond reviewed two other possible sites in Easton: 1) the North Easton Station at Oliver St. and Sullivan Ave.; and, 2) off of Route 123 at Church Street.

John Bullard noted that the Town's official position is that they do not want anything at all. He noted, however, that the group could recognize the needs and wants of the Town in addressing the question of, if there is to be a station, where is the best location for it?

Norman Thidemann, the interim Town Administrator, reiterated that the Town is opposed to the extension, but if the project is inevitable, the Town wants to be at the table to mitigate its effects.

Mr. Guimond reviewed the potential station sites in Raynham. The MBTA had originally proposed the dog track, but then moved it to the Ryan Industrial Park, where a new industrial building has been built, but there is still some space for parking. Mr. Guimond noted the existing land uses at the dog track property include storage of telephone poles and a solid waste transfer station is proposed. Richard McCarthy added there is a septage and grease plant onsite too. A third site is adjacent to I-495 and Trucchi's.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the Town's concern as a whole is growth generated by rail. He said that the Town does not want the rail, but realizes it is in a desirable location. Mr. Bullard said it would be useful to get the Town's feedback about which site they prefer and what type of development would be helpful to the Town. Mr. McCarthy said he may get feedback for the next meeting.

In Taunton, the MBTA has proposed 642 parking spaces at the Dean Street site. Mr. Guimond noted it could only fit about 300 spaces. The MBTA proposes to bring in fill and cover over the currently contaminated site. Mr. Guimond suggested that shifting the platform north of what is proposed opens up areas for development. A second option is to add an east-west at-grade connector and shift the existing ballfields. The MBTA proposal puts all the traffic at the Arlington intersection where there is an at-grade rail crossing. The connector road would split the traffic to two streets. The City Council is investigating a TOD district in this area. It is a ½ mile walk to downtown.

Ms. Bennett suggested an addition to the matrix--the potential for TDR to tradeoff development around stations; otherwise, it is just speeding up growth. Mr. Guimond illustrated the main problem with TDR is the cost of buying transfer rights for a property. It works best when one major landowner can transfer the rights within their own property. Sue Peterson noted the potential of cleaning up environmental problems, such as Dean Street and the dog track. Within the site, the open space would have higher value than what currently exists. Mr. Guimond added that a 40B or 40R proposal can come along at any time.

5. Land Use changes and growth in the study area

Nancy Durfee presented maps showing land development in the study area for the years 1971, 1999 and 2004. The maps show that the I-495 corridor is already heavily developed. She also showed a map from the Woods Hole Research Center that projects 2030 unmanaged growth regardless of the train. The most growth potential exists in the towns of Dighton, Berkley and Freetown. Ms. Durfee then explained SRPEDD's efforts to show an alternative to the 2030 unmanaged growth pattern, using Dighton as a test case. She highlighted areas that are important to the Town for protection, taken from the Open Space Plan, Master Plan and previously identified Priority Protection and Development areas. A second map shows areas of development as of 2004 and existing protected open space (only 0.3% in Dighton). Combining the two maps identifies areas for permanent protection and areas to focus development. SRPEDD plans to do the same methodology with all of the study area communities.

Ms. Bennett asked how to protect land in Dighton. Mr. Guimond said the Task Force can still recommend TDR. He suggested that the State develop a bank and pricing guideline for TDR. Mr. Bullard asked why the Town could not do that itself. Mr. Guimond responded that the burden is on the developer to find property to transfer rights with since there is no planning staff in Dighton. Mr. McCarthy added that Raynham has had TDR on the books for three years. Two proposals have been denied. The reality is that it is implemented at the local Board level, where it is stalled for various reasons. The local Board is skeptical that the density being shown is plausible to transfer out and that the sending area is even developable at all. It is also difficult to establish the value of TDR. Mr. Guimond said that a list of recommendations for protection will include cluster zoning, acquisition, and Open Space plans (which half of the communities do not have). With Vision 2020, many communities did complete Master Plans.

7. Future meetings

Mr. Bullard suggested that the October meeting be in combination with Vision 2020. At that meeting, the staff could layout a selected menu of tools and policies that a new Governor ought to consider in dealing with growth, and have the group react to it. Then, at the November meeting the group could invite the new Governor-elect. Mr. Gitto agreed, with a caveat—that the meeting be led by Vision 2020, not the Task Force. Vision 2020 is a planning process for the entire area and not just along the rail line. It is also interested in all RPAs having enough funding. Mr. Smith agreed but suggested that a request be made to the Co-Chairs of 2020 to have Mr. Bullard facilitate the meeting. Mr. Gitto agreed as long as the Co-Chairs were OK with that. Mr. Bullard agreed to talk with them. It was agreed to hold the October and November meetings jointly with Vision 2020 to deal with issues of growth, transportation and infrastructure with the idea that at the November meeting, a member of the new Administration will be invited to hear ideas from a united group.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:04 PM.