

Notes from 1st Advisory Committee Meeting

A meeting was held with the Advisory Committee on November 16 in Framingham as part of the Tech Park Area Transportation Management Plan project. The Study Area for the project includes both the Framingham Technology Park (Tech Park) and the 175 Crossing Boulevard - 9/90 Corporate Center (9/90 Corporate Center).

Following a presentation on the project's purpose and data collected to date, a discussion was held among members of the Advisory Committee. The following are comments that were provided during the discussion:

- Key roadway corridors connecting to the Study Area are I-90/Massachusetts Turnpike (MassPike), Route 9 and Route 30.
- There is a single track freight line that connects through the Study Area.
- A piece of land owned by Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) that is adjacent to Tech Park has potential for use in transportation improvements.
- There is the potential for direct access to Tech Park from MassPike via Pennsylvania Avenue.
- There is often a queue of cars on the ramp from the MassPike to Route 9.
- Finding parking in Tech Park can be a challenge.
- There is the potential for a multi-modal center in the Study Area to provide additional parking and transit connections.
- There is a real issue for employees relative to the location of parking spaces and the distance to building entrances.
- Staples is finishing construction of new parking structure, which is estimated to have 500 parking spaces. The new garage is related to parking for both their offices and health center.
- With all the parking spaces in the Study Area, there are likely opportunities for shared parking.
- Is there the opportunity for an internal shuttle system that would provide access to/from parking areas to buildings as well as among buildings in the Study Area?
- Those who are commuting from west of the Study Area (e.g., from or through Southborough) are primarily using local roads and not the MassPike (e.g., people will drive down Route 85 to Route 30 to get to Tech Park).
- There are constraints for certain roadway improvements due to stormwater regulations.
- Roadway access to Tech Park through Southborough is relatively limited.
- More housing choices near Study Area could potentially reduce the number of regional and local commuter trips.
- During the day, there is little traffic congestion, but during peak periods the roadways are highly congested.
- Could a reduction in the amount of available parking or adding a cost for parking support more transit use?
- The need for access to a car during the day increases the need to bring a car to work. Work day and/or daily needs for car may prevent more use of transit and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures.
- A nearby mixture of uses would reduce the amount of daily trips generated by the site.
- More public transit needs to be available.
- There are few existing commercial or retail uses in the park, and the sidewalk and paths may not be sufficient to connect if these uses were available.
- Genzyme has an existing policy to tow vehicles that are not parked in permitted locations. This has not stopped some from parking in these unpermitted locations.
- There is a need for a rail (rapid) transit connection to Tech Park from Framingham Commuter Rail Station.

- Opportunity exists with the freight rail line that connects to Tech Park.
- Is there the opportunity for more incentives to have employees shift the time and/or location of their workday?
- There is limited access to Tech Park, and there are issues with the internal roadway network.
- MetroWest Transportation Management Association (TMA) services could help address vehicle flexibility needs for people who would shift to transit, carpooling or use other TDM measures.
- The MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) opportunity and issue is growth – service is at about 20% of its maturity. The MWRTA is battling the need for shorter headways. For example to have more attractive services, it would require headways of 30 minutes or less. This would mean doubling the existing services, however resources are not available at this time to facilitate increases in the service.
- The framework for the MWRTA service is in place.
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are critical for providing connections to/from transit stops and across the major roadways like Route 9.
- Ridership on Route 9 MWRTA routes is not as high as would be expected.
- Provide opportunities for employees to stay local (e.g., hotels nearby) and limit the distances that they have to drive.
- There is a need for signage to direct to locations in the Study Area, such as specific offices, as well as to area destinations like restaurants.
- For FedEx, employees are on a split-shift and since there are no food establishments nearby to be accessed by walking, they have to bring their car to get to other uses.
- Make location attractive to employers as well as to employees/talent.
- How can increased frequency of MWRTA services be supported?
- Is there the possibility for having employees pay for parking?
- There is an existing Park and Ride lot located on Route 9 by the intersection with California Avenue.
- There is a connection between the availability of alternative modes of travel and a reduction in people driving alone to work.
- Nearby residents may not find it worthwhile to use another mode (e.g. transit) in comparison to driving to work.
- Are there different approaches to addressing travel options for commute trips from nearby municipalities versus commute trips from municipalities that are farther away?
- Compare north-south travel options for access and in addition to east-west travel. A possible example may be provided by travel options that are used in the Route 128 corridor.
- What role do toll booth operations at MassPike exit/entrance play in relation to traffic congestion and flow?
- The Southborough Commuter Rail Station is located near the Study Area. Are there access options to the Study Area from this commuter rail stop, especially since employees may be coming from Worcester (west → east commuters)?