

Regional EV Strategy Working Group Meeting Notes

September 26, 2024 Meeting

Climate Bill Updates

- Norman Abbott and Georgia Barlow (MAPC) provided an overview of the provisions pertaining to electric vehicles that did not advance in the Climate Bill and potential pathways for future inclusion.
- Norman and Georgia discussed some of the bills MAPC has endorsed:
 - **Electric school buses**- working with the legislature to facilitate procurement of school buses and chargers.
 - **Cooperative purchasing** – though not directly related to EV work, will make it easier to procure by allowing for multiple vendors.
 - **Right-to-Charge** – this is included in the Senate bill, which is currently in Committee, so we do not know where it may go. The goal is to streamline the process of installing chargers at multi-unit dwellings. At present, the housing association or condo can block the ability to install chargers.
- MAPC facilitated Q&A on the Climate Bill:
 - Comment from a participant: On the Right-to-Charge legislature, this is an issue that has come up in our municipality that may come up in other communities as well: commercial sites are subject to special permits (e.g., everything on Route 9 in Natick). If we wanted to add chargers that take away parking, it would trigger modification to special permit which is difficult, time consuming, and brings up issues that have nothing to do with charging. It would be good if the State would be open to doing it by-right. I don't know if my state representative or senator would be supportive of right-to-charge because it means the planning board would have to relinquish some control.

North Suffolk Freight Decarbonization Strategies

- Shrvanthi Gopalan Narayanan (Program Manager, Boston MPO) provided an overview of the findings from a recent Freight Decarbonization Study completed in the North Suffolk Area a few months ago. Link to study:
<https://www.ctps.org/freight-decarbonization>
 - The study was originally proposed by the City of Chelsea, and then expanded to include Revere, Winthrop, East Boston, and Everett. The region has a significant racial minority and limited English proficiency population.

- For the purposes of this study, freight is defined as the transportation of bulk goods by land, sea, or air. Different vehicles are suitable for different types of trips; for instance, heavy duty vehicles are suitable for longer distances.
- Shrvanathi identified the following current challenges:
 - **Roadway conditions, congestion, and safety**- road deterioration results in limited transit options and leads to bottlenecks. This may result in freight vehicles taking local roads to avoid congestion and resulting in wear & tear of local roads and increased risk of accidents.
 - **Noise and air pollution**- the study area is densely populated with residents disproportionately and vulnerable to extreme heat. Industrial activity worsens air quality and causes noise pollution for local residents.
 - **Coastal flooding**- freight infrastructure and logistics hubs are at risk of coastal flooding resulting from climate change. We have received an MVP grant to take initial steps on action-oriented resilience plans.
- Decarbonization strategies:
 - Like nationwide, transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Massachusetts, and most of transportation sector emissions come from passenger and light duty vehicles. The Commonwealth has a goal of reaching net zero emissions by 2050, and freight electrification was the most commonly suggested strategy to accelerate decarbonization.
 - Stakeholder interviewed for this study emphasized that freight electrification will be a long and complex process and will not address concerns associated with traffic noise or road conditions. They recommend exploring alternative fuels such as compressed gas, biodiesel, and hydrogen to complement electrification. Some stakeholders expressed an interest in having more specific local air quality data reporting to enable the identification of point sources of particulate matter. This information could be helpful to prioritize investments and to develop regulations that could include emission reductions. Other strategies that arose included anti-idling enforcement and no emission zones. Similarly, there was an interest in understanding the origins and destinations of truck traffic and the resulting impact of truck traffic flows on air quality.
 - Mode shifting, like transitioning from truck to rail and using cargo e-bikes for local freight deliveries, can facilitate intermodal freight connections. This requires increased coordination at the local,

regional, state and national levels. Transportation and land use are closely connected and significantly impact one another. There is a possibility of a transportation and land use mismatch when freight patterns and zoning are not integrated in the planning and decision-making process. Based on the study findings, there are 2 categories of next steps: 1) follow-up studies based on ideas that emerged through the study, and 2) regional efforts (such as an analysis of regional freight patterns to gain deeper insights on vehicle emissions, or a regional decarbonization plan). Further exploration of a multimodal approach by combining the movement of freight across shipping and truck transport is another important regional effort.

Q&A

- Do you have a sense of what percent of the freight VMT in this area are local freight deliveries?
 - We didn't examine this for this study, but we did look at other data such as where truck routes are, how they overlap w/ environmental justice communities, etc. We are interested in learning more about VMT and want to better understand what percentage of trucks are commercial and what the impact of mode shift would be if freight truck trips were converted to other modes. This would be a good topic for a future study.
- Could you share the MPO link regarding cargo bikes?
 - <https://www.ctps.org/parking-in-bike-lanes>
- Was there any feedback from the Boston Delivers cargo bike pilot that you used in your analysis?
 - The Freight Decarbonization study was completed in April 2024, and findings from the pilot program are yet to be publicly shared.
 - MAPC is part of the Boston Delivers E-Cargo Bike Study. The public report will be available in the near future, and we can discuss it and share the study's recommendations at a future Working Group meeting.
<https://www.boston.gov/departments/transportation/boston-delivers>
 - In Brookline, some businesses are concerned that the proposed Washington Street Complete Streets Project (<https://www.washingtonstbrookline.com/>) would make business deliveries more difficult and reduce customer parking, so cargo bikes and other strategies could help.
- What plans do you have for future public engagement & education?

- We want to develop a regional decarbonization freight plan in the future. For this plan, we would develop an advisory group and have robust public engagement throughout the region. We plan to talk with town planners, sustainability coordinators from municipalities, etc. This will be a multi-year effort. Please reach out to Shrvanathi at sgnarayanan@ctps.org if you are an interested municipality.

Discussion on 2024-2025 EV Working Group Topics

- What topics do you want to learn more about in the next year?
 - From the survey, we heard interest in the following: Level 3 charging for fleets, general EVSE procurement strategies, micro-mobility, medium- and heavy-duty fleet considerations, and charging at multi-family buildings.
 - +1 on EVSE procurement from municipal side and O&M for these vehicles.
- Participants added the following:
 - More about the NEVI program.
 - State's Operational Services Division is doing a lot of work with landscape equipment (golf carts, machinery, etc.). Interest in learning more about landscaping equipment.
 - As of July 1, large multi-family housing is required to install EV charging. With this new building code update, interest in understanding what are the impacts to development or density. What issues arise for new private developments and are there ways we can figure out innovative solutions in making it easier locally for those developments.
 - Interest in learning more from folks in California on medium- and heavy-duty fleets in light of the upcoming implementation date for the Advanced Clean Trucks Act (ACT) and Heavy-Duty Omnibus Rules (HDO) in MA.
 - All about the money: any new grants, incentives, rebates.
 - Clearer information about questions that arise regarding weight of EV charging infrastructure in parking garages – what fire/safety criteria may be, etc.
 - Cambridge has an expert working on the national fire regulations. Can be a potential speaker.
 - Bring your own questions event. Submit questions in advance and we plan panels, speakers, etc.

Municipal Updates

- **Cambridge** received first electric rubbish packer. More info coming at the next EV Working Group meeting in November.
- **Somerville** joined Watertown, Everett, and Brookline in supporting a grant application by the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe for Round 2 of the Charging & Fueling Infrastructure grant. If awarded, each community should be able to begin a more robust rollout of Level 3 chargers in strategic locations.
- **Woburn** is trying to upgrade municipal charging stations to Level 3, while maintaining the existing Level 2 stations. Woburn is also exploring the possibility of partnering with a vendor to manage the operation and maintenance of existing and free charging stations and adding charging fees.

Updates and Resources

- **Upcoming Funding:**
 - 2024 EPA Clean School Bus Rebate Program: Applicants can request up to \$325,000 per bus for up to 50 buses per application. Due Jan 9, at 4pm.
- **Upcoming Events:**
 - Today kicks off National Drive Electric Week (local events in Westborough, Salem, Lee, and Hingham)
 - National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Deployment Plan - Open Houses throughout Oct from 6pm-8pm.
 - AltWheels Fleet Day: Oct 7 in Norwood.
 - ReCharge Massachusetts Symposium: Envisioning an Equitable EV Transition for Massachusetts. Oct 9 in Boston.
- **Announcement of Funding Awardees:**
 - Charging Fueling and Infrastructure Grant Round 2 Awardees:
 - **Department of Conservation and Recreation.** Public Access Electric Access Public Charging Program. Awarded Amount: \$1.2 Million. Plan and install up to 40 publicly accessible EV charging locations, primarily located in public parks.
 - **City of Boston.** Recharge Boston: Making EV Charging Publicly Available in Every Neighborhood. Awarded Amount: \$15 Million. Install a minimum of 300 EV charging ports (Level 2 and DC Fast Chargers) across the City of Boston, with focus in environmental justice communities. EV charging will be located to provide access in every neighborhood and placed within 10-minute walking distances. The project includes several city programs that will steer EV charging

jobs to those in disadvantaged communities and to disadvantaged business enterprises.

- **Notices of Proposed Rulemaking**

- **Proposed Rule for EV Charging Stations:** The U.S. Access Board issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to amend the accessibility guidelines of EV charging stations at buildings and facilities.
- **Alternative Fuel Vehicle Refueling Property Credit:** U.S. Department of the Treasury and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and additional guidance on the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Refueling Property Credit (section 30C). Guidance will provide clarity on alternative fuel vehicle refueling property investments for battery-powered electric vehicle charging and other clean fuel infrastructure.