

# Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force

DRAFT

## Minutes of June 20, 2007 at the New Bedford Free Library at 4:00 PM

### Present:

John Bullard, Vision 2020	Mark Rousseau, Easton
Dr. Susan Peterson, SRPEDD	James Hartnett, Fall River
Robert Overholtzer, OCPC	Linda Grubb, Lakeville
Roy Nascimento, New Bedford Chamber	Mayor Scott Lang, New Bedford
Jill McLean, New Bedford	Ray Khalife, New Bedford
Kyla Bennett, PEER	Richard McCarthy, Raynham
Carolyn LaMarre, TRWA	Lou Gitto, Stoughton
Robb Johnson, TNC	Kevin Shea, Taunton
Priscilla Chapman, Mass Audobon	Anthi Frangiadis, Wareham
Kristina Egan, South Coast Rail Project Mgr.	Steven Ouellette, Westport
Robert Mitchell, EOHEd	Pat Ciaramella, OCPC
Rachel Bain, EOT	Karen Winger, OCPC
Steve Trudeau, Dattco, Inc.	Stephen Smith, SRPEDD
David Farmer, Jacobs, Edwards & Kelcey	Roland Hebert, SRPEDD
Prof. Edgar Adams, Roger Williams Univ.	Greg Guimond, SRPEDD
Louise Daley, SRPEDD	Nancy Durfee, SRPEDD

### 1. Call to Order

Chairman John Bullard called the meeting to order at 4:15 PM.

### 2. Acceptance of Minutes

It was unanimously voted to accept the minutes of May 9, 2007.

At this point, Mr. Bullard asked that everyone introduce him or herself and opted to take the agenda items out of order.

### 6. Review of Task Force work to date

Steve Smith distributed a review of the Task Force work to date and highlighted some of its conclusions. He noted that since the time the work scope was negotiated five years ago, much has changed. The Task Force found early on that the region is growing, regardless of the rail project. Rail creates opportunities for new growth. It does influence where people live. An update to the EOEA buildout analysis shows that 55% of the region is developed. There is a concern for gentrification, which points to the need for good planning. OCPC's chapter on the Old Colony Line's impacts shows that it took

a long time for development to occur after the rail line was reactivated, although it is occurring now. Greg Guimond's work has looked at the proposed station sites as well as alternative sites and their suitability for TOD. Nancy Durfee has completed individual community work, identifying priority protection areas and priority development areas in Dighton, Westport, Swansea and Somerset. Another four communities are almost done. A Phase 2 work scope could complete and expand the area. There is more detail of the Task Force work on the SRPEDD website, [www.srpedd.org](http://www.srpedd.org). Mr. Bullard noted that now that there are again three route options for the rail, additional communities are potentially affected. It makes sense to continue this work, identifying priority protection areas and priority development areas with local leaders. This work seems to make sense regardless of the route, and should include the additional communities. Mr. Smith reported that there have not yet been any negotiations with the State about the continuing work of the Task Force.

4. Greg Guimond completed his site analysis for the proposed Stoughton line and presented his findings for the branch from Myrick's Junction to New Bedford. The current proposal calls for just one station in New Bedford on this branch, which creates a gap in the service area between East Freetown and New Bedford. Six potential sites were reviewed: West Lakeville; East Freetown at Chace Road, west of Route 140; Chipaway Road on the Freetown/New Bedford line; New Bedford Business Park; Kings Highway; and the proposed MBTA site. Mr. Guimond suggested that the Kings Highway site is an opportunity for redevelopment. He presented examples of former malls converted into mixed use TOD. Mr. Guimond recommended improved connectivity to the proposed MBTA station site, particularly for pedestrians. He noted that both New Bedford and Fall River have the potential for creating intermodal centers by putting the bus and the rail service together. A seventh alternative called for extending the rail line closer to the downtown, if Route 18 is boulevardized.

Mr. Bullard observed that this analysis is good for today, but it changes as development changes. If communities agree with any of Mr. Guimond's recommendations, they should take steps with zoning or site acquisition. Richard McCarthy reported that the owner of Raynham Park attended a meeting with the Roger Williams University students and seemed surprised at the redevelopment potential of his site. A similar presentation will take place with the Board of Selectmen in September and will appear on local cable TV. The students' work helps people to visualize what TOD and redevelopment mean. Mr. Bullard noted that at the Raynham Park, redevelopment might be a good idea with or without rail. Kyla questioned the characterization of the recent vote in Raynham as a change in the level of support for the rail project. Carolyn Lamarre asked that the exact wording and the vote be distributed.

### 3. Greetings from Kristina Egan, South Coast Rail Project Manager

Kristina Egan stated that she takes a collaborative approach to this project. Her background involves energy, environmental and smart growth issues. She understands that the rail is not just a transportation project. It will help with community revitalization, but sprawl must not be an outcome. Her job is to make it happen, and in the best way possible. Ms. Egan announced that the Strategic and Environmental Permitting Plan

(SEPP) will be available on July 11 and she will send it to the Task Force. Also, she would like to schedule a listening session on environmental issues related to the rail project in mid to late July. She asks that everyone who cares about the environmental impacts attend. Mr. Bullard thanked Ms. Egan for attending the meeting.

Kyla Bennett asked if the cost for Transfer of Development Rights is included in the \$1.4B. Ms. Egan said she did not believe so. The State is looking at ways to direct other resources toward this purpose. Bob Mitchell said the new Bond Bill should reflect a positive trend for open space funding.

Mayor Lang commented that he sees this project as the next WPA project. Tony Cabral's bill is a discussion point on ways to pay for rail. It is needed for economic stimulus in the area. He urged the State to finish the study, pick a route and go. He also pushed for using more modern technology for the rail corridor and trains.

#### 5. Task Force tour of the Greenbush line

After taking a count of who could attend a July 19 tour of the Greenbush line, Ms. Egan announced that the tour would take place on that date. Details will follow.

#### 7. Future Meetings

Noting the Greenbush Tour and the environmental listening session, both in July, the next Task Force meeting will be Tuesday, September 11, 2007 from 4:00-6:00PM in Taunton. By then, there will be an expanded membership and hopefully, a charge from the State for the continuation of the Task Force with available funding to continue.

#### 8. Adjourn

Mr. Bullard adjourned the meeting at 5:50 PM.