

ISSUE BRIEF

Traffic and Transportation

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Background-

The Alliance members have identified congestion and construction delays as a critical concern for their current workforce and in planning for their long term growth plans along the 128 central corridor. This corridor is generally considered to cover the commercial activity along Route 128/ Interstate 95 from Route 3 in Burlington south to the Massachusetts Turnpike. The members are committed to working with neighboring communities, local developers, and state officials in an effort to develop proposals to reduce traffic delays through highway improvements and alternative transportation options to single occupancy vehicles (SOV) including public transit, private shuttle service, and bike and pedestrian mobility in the corridor.

Route 128 from Burlington south to the Mass Pike is notorious for traffic congestion and construction delays. Many of the most infamous traffic issues can be associated with the on-going repair of the Winter Street bridge at Exit 27, which has been 20 years in the making since it was struck by a backhoe. Route 128 opened on August 24, 1951 and by 1956, the expressway covered 65 miles from Gloucester to Braintree. While planners were optimistic the road would ease the traffic burden, they did not anticipate that the surrounding area would become a development destination for companies like Raytheon and Polaroid. This led to later references to Route 128 as "America's Technology Highway." Rapid out migration from Boston and Cambridge to suburban communities over the last 30 years has exacerbated the traffic problems. Office and lab spaces have rapidly absorbed open land sites and replaced older single story industrial buildings that represented the initial post war suburban commercial developments. Housing growth, as well as infrastructure improvements, have not kept pace with the changing corporate landscape, yet the corridor remains extremely desirable to businesses seeking to locate outside the city, but proximate to a highly skilled workforce. The neighboring communities offer a high quality of living to the employee base of employers located in the corridor.

Member companies of the 128 Corporate Alliance include: Fresenius Medical Care, National Grid, ImmunoGen, Massachusetts Medical Society, Adobe Systems Inc, Perkin Elmer Inc, Qinetiq/Foster Miller, and The Westin Waltham. These companies employ a workforce of approximately 4,500 along the corridor. In addition other major employers include Thermo Fisher Scientific, Astra Zeneca, Raytheon, Novell, Autodesk, and Genzyme among others.

The corridor is also home to hundreds of smaller companies that occupy multi-tenanted office buildings and research parks. The buildings and sites are owned and developed by many national firms like Boston Properties and Equity Office Properties as well as many successful local development firms. Current employment in the corridor was approximately 129,000 based on 2000 census data. This is expected to grow to 140,000 by 2030 based on current trends. In the corridor, exiting commercial

office space is approximately 29 million square feet. Industrial and flex office accounts for another 11.5 million square feet. The retail market is estimated to include 6.7 million square feet and there are 7,900 rooms provided by area hotels in Cambridge and along the corridor. The Boston Globe identified 15 major development projects along 128 in various stages of planning and construction. As currently planned, these projects have generated 2 million SF of new commercial development over the past 18 months and are expected to contribute an additional 7.2 million square feet (see attached table). While these developments are likely to proceed sporadically over the next decade, it is clear that when completed they would contribute significantly greater employment in the corridor than historic trends. It is this anticipated growth of contemplated developments that create concerns among the member companies of the 128 Corporate Alliance. Route 128 and the adjacent local roads are operating at or beyond capacity. Thus, the Alliance believes that coordinated planning is critical to address their concerns about continued expansion in the corridor.

Options-

1. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) has developed a range of options and improvements to the corridor. These options can be grouped into five (5) general categories:
2. Improvements to the existing roadway system including roadway reconstruction and improved incident management.
3. Improvements to the existing roadway system providing operational improvements like express lanes, express bus service, and congestion pricing.
4. Improvements to the existing local street network including local design guidelines and new signal equipment.
5. Expanding the transportation options available to reduce the number of Single-Occupant Vehicle (SOV) trips including a new Multi-Modal Center and expanded shuttle bus services.
6. Changes in local land use/zoning practices that could include the creation of a 128 Development District.

In reviewing the MAPC draft proposal it is clear that a number of these options and improvements will be considered over a period of many years. These recommendations have been developed by the MAPC at the behest of the Central Corridor (C3) Coalition, a body comprised of elected officials from municipalities along the corridor including: Burlington, Lincoln, Lexington, Waltham, and Weston. While the local communities are still building consensus views on specific options, they agree upon the need to evaluate the timeline for these proposals and to separate priorities into both short term and long term groupings.

Other efforts to improve planning in the corridor include:

1. State Transportation Study led by Mass DOT to be completed over the next 18 months
2. The Land Use Partnership Act (LUPA) based upon a bill filed with the MA legislature (HB3572 and SB765), with the intent to amend Chapter 40A of the MA General Laws that govern development. The

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bill would require “opt-in” municipalities to adopt comprehensive land use plans consistent with the state’s goals and to conform zoning and subdivision plans accordingly. They would benefit through a priority allocation of infrastructure funding and other economic development resources. The proposed bill also provides language regarding the assessment of impact fees on future developments. Further, the bill proposes the creation of a state level interagency planning board. The development community is opposed to many aspects of the proposed legislation and most local governments do not want to relinquish local control.

3. The Patrick Administration has offered guiding principles for regional economic development. These principles include intent to “build upon existing assets”, and promote more planning, and form strategic partnerships. In addition the framework highlights the need to improve upon existing infrastructure- “Massachusetts’ network of roads, rail, ports and air facilities link markets for employment, goods and services... [e]fficient, reliable and safe transportation infrastructure is essential for people, communities and businesses to connect to opportunities of all kinds.” Furthermore, the State’s Regional Economic Development Strategy issued in January 2009, highlights the need for collaboration within the corridor. “Inter- regional transportation planning efforts, such as current corridor planning initiatives along 128 and Interstate 290, require strategic focus, good analyses, and the cooperation of multiple stakeholders from nearby communities and the state.”

Position of the 128 Corporate Alliance-

The 128 Corporate Alliance shares the view that traffic and transportation challenges are best addressed through a multi-stakeholder process. The Alliance also agrees with the C3 Coalition that projects should be grouped based on scheduled impacts in an effort to identify certain projects that would provide short term benefits for the corridor. The Alliance supports the following objectives and initiatives:

Objectives with Short-Term Outcomes

1. Improved effectiveness and enhanced capacity for TMA (Transportation Management Association) enterprises like The 128 Business Council shuttle service.
2. Careful planning and phasing of intersection improvements to minimize traffic disruptions during peak travel times.
3. Better planning, coordination, and communication in the completion of the Winter Street Bridge and Exit 27 improvements.
4. The need to plan future development projects with mobility and transportation goals as integral elements.
5. Develop consistent local design guidelines for future roadway projects. This should include signal timings, use of roundabouts and signage.
6. Increase pedestrian surfaces within local street networks to enable non-vehicular mobility. These should be designated locally and funded by development projects.

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Objectives with Longer-Term Outcomes

1. Immediate action on planning for the proposed Multi-Modal center on Jones Rd and Route 20 with express service targeted at 128 corridor destinations.
2. Support corridor planning initiatives that reduce SOV transportation demand and shape development efforts that will reduce traffic congestion.
3. Plan and evaluate reconstruction of the shoulder/breakdown lane as an express bus/shuttle bus lane.
4. Plan and implement additional bike and pedestrian crossings of Route 128
5. Conduct on-going interchange reviews and evaluate re-design needs to improve geometry of on/off ramps to meet current/future use/demand
6. Complete links north and south of Mass Central Rail Trail to provide bicycle and pedestrian links to proposed multi-modal site.
7. Install express lanes using VMS (Variable Message Signs) and explore use of HOT (High Occupancy Toll Lanes) used in other parts of the country. Evaluate use of congestion pricing in other transportation markets.

The 128 Corporate Alliance firmly supports the overarching goal that “quality of workplace” is of paramount concern to member firms and their employees. For this reason, we firmly support the need for state and local governments, and the development community, to work with employers located along the corridor to improve the transportation challenges along Route 128.

References-

Paige, Connie, “Taming Traffic on Route 128: Communities Join to Face the Future”,
The Boston Globe, July 27, 2008

“Mass Moments: Route 128 Open’s Boston’s High Tech Age”, <http://www.massmoments.org>

“A Framework for Action: The State Regional Economic Development Strategy”,
Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development, Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
January, 28, 2009

“Draft Route 128 Corridor Plan”, The Metropolitan Area Planning Council for the Central
Corridor Coalition, September 25, 2009

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15 Projects Proposed on I-95 Projects Identified by The Boston Globe (July 2007)

| Project | Location | Development Type | Developer | Current & Proposed Scope | Status |
|--|------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|
| NorthWest Park Redevelopment | Burlington | office, retail, residential, hotel | Nordblum | Currently 1.4M SF of Flex/R&D space - rezoned for 3.2M SF mixed use environment Permitting process is in final stage | Complete- 1,400,000 SF Proposed- 1,800,000 SF |
| 400 - 600 Wheeler Rd | Burlington | office, retail | Gutierrez Company | Can be delivered within 12 months - 120,000 SF (400 Wheeler) & 130,000 SF (600 Wheeler) | Proposed- 250,000 SF |
| Wayside Commons(former Raytheon site) | Burlington | retail, restaurant | Patriot Partners | Tenants Include: Ann Taylor, Borders Books, and The Capital Grille | Complete- 196,000 SF |
| 43-63 South Avenue | Burlington | R&D & office | Gutierrez Company | 590,000 SF build to suit space for both office and biotech users (on 16 acres) - 3 building site plan | Proposed- 590,000 SF |
| Burlington Mall Expansion | Burlington | retail - Expansion Wing | Simon Property Group | New Tenants include: Nordstrom, Crate & Barrel | Complete- 117,000 SF Mall- 1,318,000 |
| Lexington Technology Park | Lexington | R&D, office, manufacturing | Patriot Partners | Former Raytheon headquarters to be reused and repositioned as a 700K SF biotechnology campus. Shire Pharmaceuticals has made a commitment to occupy 250,000 SF and has purchased land to build an additional 172,000 SF | Complete- 422,000 SF Proposed- 550,000 SF |
| Avalon at Lexington Square | Lexington | residential | Avalon Bay | Multi-building rental residential complex. Scope: renovating an existing four story building to house 233 units and below grade parking; a four story mid rise building that houses 60 units; 6 town home buildings that include 62 units and 3 story units that include 32 units. Total size: 375K SF | Complete- 375,000 SF |
| 175 Wyman St | Waltham | office | Hobbs Brook | 336,000 SF office space, redevelopment of former Hewlett Packard site | Shell Complete- 336,000 SF |
| Commons at Prospect Hill | Waltham | office, retail | Formerly National Development | Proposed redevelopment of former Polaroid site Helaba Bank purchased at auction for \$42.5M | Proposed- 1,700,000 SF Site auctioned (10/13/09) |
| Green Street Development (40 Green Street) | Waltham | office, retail | Sam Park & Co. | 650K SF professional office, retail and hotel development | Proposed- 650,000 SF |
| Overlook Center (Adobe Boston) | Waltham | office | Normandy/Adobe | Corporate R&D Facility LEED Certified | Complete- 108,000 SF |
| Reservoir Woods | Waltham | office, hotel | Davis Marcus Partners | West Campus: 920 - 940 Winter Street (451K SF) & 850 Winter Street (185K SF); East Campus: National Grid - 312K SF - Complete | Complete- 950,000 SF Proposed- 500,000 SF |
| CityPoint | Waltham | office, retail | Boston Properties | Existing: 230 City Point and 77 City Point | Completed- 500,000 SF Proposed- 1,200,000 SF |
| 1560 Trapelo Rd (Autodesk) | Waltham | office | Bullfinch Companies | Autodesk Corporate Facility-completed 12/08 | Complete- 56,000 SF |
| Corporate Center (Mass Broken Stone) | Weston | office | Boston Properties | 350K SF office space - build to suit for Biogen Idec occupancy expected July 2010 | Under Construction- 350,000 SF |

Compl.- 18 months- 2,066,000 SF
Under Construction: 350,000 SF
Proposed: 7,240,000 SF