



Talking Freight: Truck Rest Locations

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Freight Planning at the Boston Region MPO

The Boston Region MPO:

- is geographically small: one of 13 in MA
- is not part of an implementing agency
- is focused on certification responsibilities
- has staff that can serve as a “think tank”
- studies issues important to the MPO or state
- recognized rest locations as a statewide problem





BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Stephanie Pollack, MassDOT Secretary and CEO and MPO Chair
Karl H. Quackenbush, Executive Director, MPO Staff

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 6, 2016
TO: Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
FROM: Bill Kuttner
RE: Rest Locations for Long-Distance Truck Drivers in Massachusetts

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Goals of this Study

Rest locations for long-distance truck drivers are a critical component of the nation's freight transportation system. While the rest location system is appended to the public road system, most motorists are unfamiliar with the rest-location system's operating parameters and the challenges that confront the motor freight industry in using them effectively.

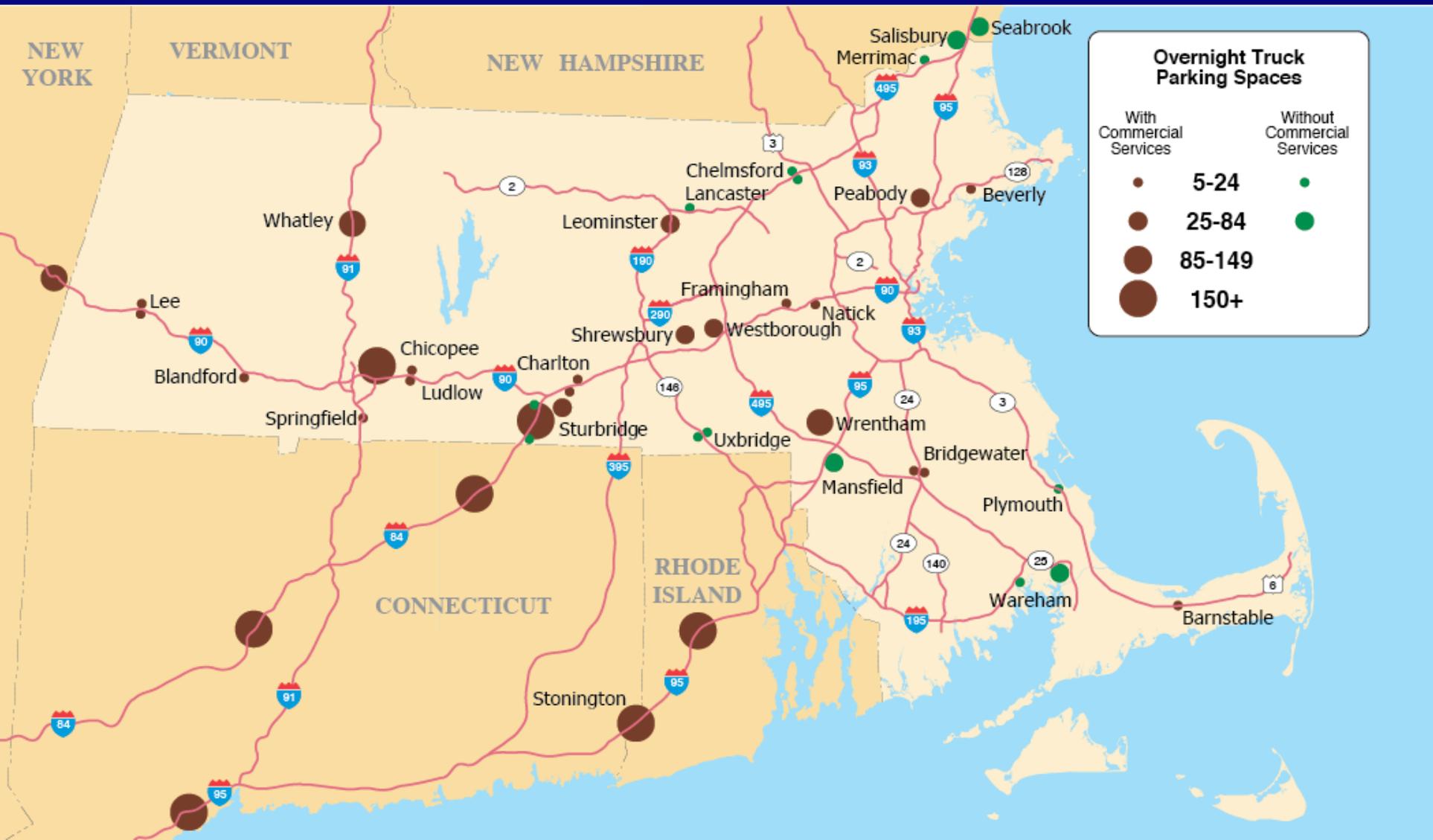
The ostensibly simple act of parking a truck has always presented a challenge, and industry and regulatory trends have made these challenges more acute. This memorandum will explore this topic in four steps:

- Discuss safety, efficiency, and environmental issues associated with providing appropriate truck parking opportunities.
- Describe existing conditions, including availability, configuration, and physical condition of truck parking locations serving Massachusetts.
- Highlight a specific need for a major rest location that serves trucks traveling on the northwest arc of Interstate 495.
- Present some of the available strategies and opportunities that would expand and improve truck parking locations in Massachusetts, both at commercial truck stops and at public rest areas.

1.2 Regional Context of this Analysis

The issue of availability and adequacy of truck rest locations is a national problem. The 101 municipalities of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) depend almost exclusively on trucks for their freight transportation needs, and so the truck rest location issues are important to the Boston region even if their scope is statewide or New England-wide.

The Rest Location System in Lower New England



A "Rest Area" on I-495

Chelmsford, MA
"Visitor Information Center"



Google earth
© 2013 Google

Strengthening the Rest Location System: Commercial Truck Stops

- Identifying and purchasing suitable and sufficient land
- FAST Act allows use of federal funds
- Mandate impact-reducing technologies

Strengthening the Rest Location System: Rest Areas

- Seek federal approval for public-private partnerships and limited commercial activity
- Rest area programs might be expanded to obsolete weigh stations
- Park-and-ride lots could be striped to allow some truck parking

Draft Massachusetts Freight Plan

prepared for

Massachusetts Department
of Transportation

prepared by

Cambridge Systematics, Inc.
101 Station Landing, Suite 410
Medford, MA 02155

with

Regina Villa Associates
Portscape, Inc.

5.4 Putting it All Together

This section details the proponents, funding, prioritization criteria, and management strategies that can be used to implement five selected strategies:

- **Build or expand truck stops on primary truck routes;**
- **Upgrade rail lines to the 286K standard;**
- **Resolve key bottlenecks on highways;**
- **Maintain uncongested freight access to airports, seaports, and rail terminals in mixed-use urban settings; and**
- **Develop Intelligent Transportation Systems and Active Transportation Demand Management.**

Brief summaries of the implementation for all of the strategies in the Freight Plan are provided in Table 5.1.

Implementing an Immediate Strategy | **BUILD TRUCK STOPS AND PARKING**

The problem of insufficient truck parking is not limited to Massachusetts. Many if not all states face it. Nonetheless, **it is a critical immediate priority that new truck stops and parking areas be constructed, in particular along the northern arc of I-495.**

In addition to increasing parking capacity, there are other measures that states can take to improve the efficiency of their existing parking stock:

- Electrify truck parking areas so that vehicles need not idle. This will reduce emissions and noise pollution.
- Improve driver information systems, providing parking availability in advance and allowing for reservations.



Image Credit: Boston Region MPO.

ACTIONS

Collaborate among State, local, regional, and multi-state authorities to locate appropriate properties on primary truck routes.

Form public-private partnerships between State and local authorities and private truck stop operators to defray the risk of opening facilities.

Develop smartphone apps and variable message signboards to allow drivers to view available spaces, reserve spaces, and receive directions.

WHO PROPOSES?

MassDOT.

WHO PAYS?

Public Private Partnership between operator and MassDOT, with MA funds from NHFP and other sources for truck stop electrification (TSE).

WHAT BENEFIT?

Cost-effectiveness (PPP), Economic Impact, Safety, Environmental and Health (TSE), Policy Support (in the Freight Plan).

WHO MANAGES?

Private operator and municipality.

New Technologies



Identifying Suitable Locations



Thank You

