



HIGHLIGHTS FROM

North Shore TMA Forum: *Solutions to Traffic, Congestion, Access, & Sustainability* for the North Shore

Tuesday, November 15, 2011 from 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
City of Salem Planning & Community Development
120 Washington Street – 3rd Floor, Salem, MA

Below are some of the highlights from the **North Shore TMA Forum: *Solutions to Traffic, Congestion, Access, & Sustainability* for the North Shore**. Contributing writer for this commentary is North Shore TMA member (through Cummings Center) and Cycling Committee member Terry Cowman, Vice President of Centerpoint, a division of On Assignment, 100 Cummings Center Suite 206 L, Beverly, MA 01915. Speakers and panelists presented information about the benefits of working with the North Shore TMA. Some key points from the presentations are noted below:

Welcome/Introductions

Tina Cassidy, Planning Director – City of Beverly, MA
President – North Shore TMA

North Shore TMA President/City of Beverly Planning Director, Tina Cassidy kicked off the breakfast forum providing the audience with an overview of the North Shore TMA, discussing the beneficial relationship between the City of Beverly and the North Shore TMA. In particular, Ms. Cassidy noted that working with the TMA supports the City of Beverly's sustainability goals to decrease the city's carbon footprint. "I'm excited about the opportunity the Forum creates to work with the Chambers of Commerce and the North Shore Career Center to broaden the TMA's reputation as a resource for their members and partners."

Opening Remarks

Kimberley Driscoll, Mayor
City of Salem, MA

"This transportation forum was a unique platform for the business community to learn how some North Shore businesses and municipalities are working together to reduce the negative impacts of traffic congestion in our area. Some of the best ways they are doing this is through collaborative employee transportation benefits, advocacy, and innovative partnerships." said Kim Driscoll, City of Salem Mayor.

TMA Membership: A tool for Advocacy and an Employee Benefit

Steve Roberge, Director
Environmental Health & Safety – Axcelis

Axcelis' involvement in the association is headed by the manager responsible for Environmental Health and Safety. The company uses promotion of and participation in a

number of NSTMA programs to reduce auto commuting to their worksite, thereby reducing the facility's carbon footprint and promoting employee health concurrently. Mr. Roberge states, "The TMA offers several programs that create incentives for people to commute using auto alternatives, including cycling, carpools, and public transit. We promote the TMA programs that encourage the use of alternative commute modes by employees and have been very successful in reducing auto commutes to work. We now have a significant group of bike commuters!" Axcelis HR managers also use these programs as an additional way to communicate internally with their employees (another positive message about Axcelis and the company's interest in its employees) as well as with prospective employees. When recruiting staff, HR managers emphasize the company's participation in the TMA and the programs available to employees. They observe in particular, that new workers are interested in such initiatives. All in all, Mr. Roberge describes Axcelis' participation in the TMA as a significant asset that supports the company's sustainability goals while also providing a low-cost employee benefit.

MiddleOak/NSTMA: A Partnership for Wellness Benefits

***Suzanne Wilson, Senior Vice President
Human Resources – MiddleOak***

MiddleOak takes a different slant on participation in the NSTMA. They have employee wellness as a primary corporate strategy. Participation for them is a way to improve employee health and to reduce health care benefit costs. MiddleOak promotes the exercise benefits of active commuting – such as walking between the office and home or the Salem train/bus depot, and commuting by bike. They also provide information to employees for commuting between their home and MiddleOak, including a map of employee origins to support carpool formation and information on alternative commute options from their hometown or nearby towns. All of the support materials, maps and so forth, are developed for them by the NSTMA. During her presentation, Ms. Wilson stated, "MiddleOak has benefited from improved employee health and morale. The NSTMA provides assistance, materials, and programs/incentives to identified transportation issues and helps provide solutions." Like Axcelis, MiddleOak also uses materials provided by the NSTMA to support their staff recruitment efforts. "We know that several recent entry-level hires accepted employment because they knew they could easily commute without cars to Salem from the Boston area," Ms. Wilson told the group. "Without those maps they would not have been interested."

Working Together to Advocate, Market, Promote Transportation Initiatives – The Salem Ferry

***Kathy Winn, Deputy Director
Planning & Comm. Development – City of Salem***

Assistant Planning & Community Development Director for the City of Salem, Kathy Winn described how partnering with the NSTMA supported the city's sustainability and economic development goals by working with the organization to increase commuter ridership between Salem and Boston on the Salem Ferry. TMA staff members act as strong and effective advocates on behalf of the City of Salem's transportation initiatives by providing needed services and resources. In October of 2010 NSTMA staff in partnership with multiple Boston-based TMA's, the City of Salem, Salem Ferry staff, and the MBTA conducted a survey of Salem Ferry passengers, North Shore commuter rail Zone 3 passengers, and Boston-based TMA member employees. More than 700 surveys were distributed in person at the Salem Commuter Rail Station. Over 200 passengers/employees responded to the survey that was designed to measure the interest in potential new flexible joint fare media. The analysis provided suggestions that were presented by TMA staff to the MBTA, City of Salem, and the management company for the Salem Ferry for changes to the Salem Ferry/commuter rail Flexpass program that will, based on the survey data, likely

increase ridership and choice for commuters. TMA staff members continue to provide active support to the City of Salem to negotiate with all parties to establish a Salem Ferry/Commuter Rail Flex Pass with fares that are comparable to the MBTA Zone 3 commuter rail pass.

Filling the Gap - Last Mile Transit Service

Jim Gascoigne, Executive Director

Charles River TMA

The Charles River TMA's EZ Ride shuttle connects Boston's North Station to Cambridgeport, Kendall Square, and East Cambridge. Seven buses run every 10 minutes from North Station to 23 stops including MBTA Red Line and Green Line stations, MIT, and various other locations proximate to member worksites. The shuttle was initially funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation that required matching funds of 20%, 30%, and 40%, respectively during a 3-year demonstration project. In order to facilitate the success of the shuttle service, TMA Director Gascoigne requested companies provide an "overmatch" of funds during the first 3 years and requested a 5 year commitment from participants. This strategy provided stability for budgeting for participating members. Instead of dealing with a 10% year-over cost increase for the shuttle in years 2 and 3 and a substantial increase in years 4 and 5, the total projected shuttle contribution for 5 years was determined and invoiced to participants at a rate of 20% of the total 5 year commitment each year. This strategy, along with support from the City of Cambridge (that required shuttle membership as a condition of development/redevelopment allowed the service time to build its ridership and become self-sufficient. Ridership is 2000 per day now. Previous to the EZ Ride shuttle, several companies in Cambridge were providing their own limited shuttle services – causing added congestion on streets that were already chocking with traffic, pedestrians, and parking. The TMA aggregated the needs of its member companies to leverage government funding to develop a system that replaced multiple limited schedule shuttles with a larger service that provided additional stop locations, shorter waiting times between shuttle runs, and longer hours of service. Jim Gascoigne pointed out that a similar opportunity may exist for companies located at Cummings and Cherry Hill relative to the Beverly and North Beverly commuter train stations.

We hope you found the North Shore Forum informative! The North Shore TMA is looking forward to hosting another transportation event in 2012 to follow-up its success in 2011.

For more information, please contact North Shore TMA Executive Director, Andrea Leary at 781-639-6262 or *via* email at andrealeary@verizon.net.

REMINDER: If your company is interested in joining the TMA you'll receive a **50% discount** on FY12 TMA membership (July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012) for those who join by the end of the 2011. After year-end other local area chamber members may apply. Please contact us for further information.

Questions: contact us at commute@northshoretma.org / 603-702-2156 or visit www.northshoretma.org.