Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Secretary Jay Ash FMCB Testimony
Foxboro Commuter Rail Pilot
February 27, 2017
On behalf of Gov. Baker, EOHED is working to create a platform for broad-based economic growth by:
  • Partnering with communities to advance priority local development opportunities,
  • Growing innovation jobs across Massachusetts,
  • And delivering a skilled workforce.
EOHED is committed to building stronger, economically diverse regions across the Commonwealth.
And EOHED is working with local and regional stakeholders to increase the number of significant, development-ready, marketable sites.
EOHED has been successful in using public infrastructure interventions to accelerate regional economic development.
A pilot commuter rail service to Foxboro represents a unique opportunity to unlock the economic potential of this portion of southeastern Massachusetts.
Unlocking Foxboro’s Potential

• EOHED’s ability to grow economically vibrant regions outside the Boston core depends on our ability to partner with local stakeholders to activate high-potential sites.
• With 1.5M sf of first-class, pre-permitted commercial development potential, Foxboro represents a significant regional economic development opportunity.
• This opportunity is unique in Southeastern Massachusetts, and it is immediate.
• The private market’s preference for multi-modal transportation access has limited our ability to deliver on Foxboro’s economic development potential.
• New public infrastructure, in the form of pilot commuter rail service, will allow Foxboro to become a regional economic anchor.
• This potential is broader than the immediate stadium area.
• Commuter rail service will unlock development at roughly two dozen sites, up and down Route 1, from Walpole to Wrentham and Plainville.
Public Infrastructure Delivers Private Investment

- Public infrastructure investment is a core component of EOHED’s work to promote regional economic development.
- EOHED regularly partners with Administration agencies, and local and regional stakeholders, to create or expand public infrastructure that generates private investment and grows jobs in communities.
  - EOHED’s MassWorks Infrastructure Program demonstrates the power of public infrastructure to unlock new private investment and economic development opportunities.
  - Over the past two years, EOHED has awarded $179M in competitive infrastructure grants, to communities from Pittsfield to Provincetown.
  - These public investments in roadway improvements, water and sewer systems, and electric utilities, create a platform for private sector growth.
  - The 2015 and 2016 MassWorks grant rounds will deliver 3,000 new housing units.
  - The 2015 and 2016 MassWorks grant rounds unlocked a total of $1.7B in immediate private investment.
- Public infrastructure plays a critical role in creating market-ready development sites, and building vibrant regions outside the Boston core.
Case Study: Union Point, Weymouth

• A modest public infrastructure investment helped jump-start the redevelopment of the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station.

• Prior to a recent infrastructure intervention, development on the 1,500-acre property was stalled.

• A 1.3-mile, $6.7M parkway extension, funded by MassDOT, has opened up the site to development, allowing for:
  • The immediate construction of 800 new housing units, and
  • The construction of a $38M manufacturing plant, and the creation of 150 new jobs, by the robotics manufacturer ProDrive.

• MassDOT’s parkway investment will unlock a total of 3,900 new housing units, 6M sf of commercial and retail development, and $2B in private investment.

• Union Point’s marketability rested on the new parkway, and on proximity to the existing South Weymouth commuter rail station.
Case Study: Cordage Park, Plymouth

- A modest public infrastructure investment is allowing Plymouth to revitalize its waterfront.
- Plymouth rezoned a dilapidated 55-acre industrial property in 2006 for 675 housing units and commercial space, but the project faced significant market headwinds.
- A $2M MassWorks infrastructure grant is providing new roadways, utilities, and pedestrian walkways at the project site.
- These public infrastructure improvements have enabled construction on the project’s first phase to commence, demolishing an abandoned Wal-Mart, and erecting 204 new housing units along Plymouth Harbor.
- Cordage Park’s location, at the end of the Kingston/Plymouth commuter rail line, has given the project significant transit-oriented development potential.