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Commission analyzes employment in 495/MetroWest

Representative Kate Hogan, Senator Karen Spilka, and Assistant Secretary for Communities and Programs Juan Vega co-chaired a meeting of the 495/MetroWest Suburban Edge Community Commission at the Boxborough Public Library on Friday, March 3rd focused on the industrial and employment base in the 495/MetroWest region.

At the meeting, the Commission heard from presenters in the public, private, and education sector – who provided commissioners with a range of information and recommendations for the emerging 495/MetroWest region. Nam Pham, Assistant Secretary for Business Development at the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, spoke about the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP) and the role that program has played thus far in kick-starting economic development in 495/MetroWest. TJ Costello, America’s Smart Cities & IoT Director at Cisco Systems, Inc., offered ideas on how city digitization is revitalizing business and society, and emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships in attracting businesses to a city or region. Finally, Professor Michael Goodman from UMass Dartmouth Public Policy Center - the Commission's research partner - presented data and analysis on the industrial base in the region.

“The 495/MetroWest region is a leading location for a number of the fastest growing sectors of the economy and a highly desirable place to live for the highly skilled workforce that fuels the Commonwealth's innovation economy,” noted Professor Michael Goodman, Executive Director of the Public Policy Center (PPC) at UMass Dartmouth who is leading a team of researchers who are supporting the work of the Commission. “Going forward, a major challenge for the region will be providing its innovative firms with the talent they will need to sustain their growth, and ensuring that the region's critical infrastructure is sufficient to meet the needs of its growing employers for years to come,” he added.

“Our region has consistently outperformed the nation economically due to our incredible diversity of industries, including life sciences, manufacturing, information technology, health care, and hosting headquarters for some of the state’s top companies,” said Paul Matthews, Executive Director of the 495/MetroWest Partnership. “Thanks to the Commission, UMass Dartmouth’s Public Policy Center’s work will provide the Commission, the Legislature, the 495/MetroWest Partnership, and state agencies with critical data and analysis on our employment clusters and their needs so we can support further growth.”

“The information and ideas presented today offer important insight into current industry and employment trends within the 495/MetroWest region and create a vision for our regional economy moving forward,” said Representative Kate Hogan. “The 495 Corridor is home to employees that work in a number of leading industries and it is an important region for Massachusetts’ innovation economy overall. As this Commission develops policy solutions to advance the suburban communities in MetroWest, it will be important for us to continue to communicate not only our challenges, but also our strengths and identity as a region.”

“Working with the 495/MetroWest Suburban Edge Community Commission is an important part of our work to empower communities consistent with our Economic Development Plan,” said Assistant Secretary for Communities and Programs Juan Vega. “I am thankful to Assistant Secretary of Business Development Nam Pham, and to our other partners on the Commission, for their expertise and insight into how we effectively support local economic development.”

About the Commission

The 495/MetroWest Suburban Edge Community Commission, co-chaired by Senator Karen Spilka, Representative Kate Hogan, and Assistant Secretary for Communities and Programs Juan Vega as part of a joint effort on behalf of both branches of the state legislature and the administration, was established by the legislature in [Section 233 of Chapter 165 of the Session Laws of 2015](#). The Commission will study the development challenges experienced by the Commonwealth's 35 "edge communities,"—communities that are not adjacent to Gateway Cities with a population up to 35,000—including transportation, water, cellular, and energy infrastructure, transit services, residential development, reuse of former industrial facilities and historic mills, brownfields reclamation, downtown redevelopment, and other such constraints. Through June 2017 the Commission will hold regular meetings in towns across the 495/MetroWest region to hear from state, regional, and local agencies and organizations that have experience with the various development challenges the Commission seeks to address. With the help of its research partner, the UMass Dartmouth Public Policy Center, the Commission will then develop policy responses and recommendations to ensure that edge communities can participate in state development initiatives and benefit from state resources. The Commission will focus its investigation and study on the 35 municipalities served by the [495/MetroWest Partnership](#) and develop a pilot program to address the issues to be studied and investigated by the Commission.

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