

## Integrity in Our Business

by Joe McMahon, P.E., CEO



Lack of integrity is often perceived as one of the ills of our society. The quality of products we buy and the

backing by the manufacturer and/or retailer, are a constant source of concern and disappointment by consumers. The same concern increasingly applies to services, including health-care and legal services. The media is another area where ethics and integrity are constantly in the spotlight.

Entertainment, ranging from sports to movies, constantly involves the question of integrity. The recent emphasis on steroids in sports and the Michael Jackson trial are examples.

I am pleased that engineers and engineering firms are very highly regarded by the public. This has been repeatedly verified through public opinion polls.

At McM, integrity is our highest priority. "Doing the right thing" is paramount to McM's business.

Saying and doing the right thing, however, is not always easy. For example, being able to document the need for extras in contracts is not always clear. Clear communication with the client is essential.

Fairness is important. Dealing with vendors, subconsultants, and

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## Transportation Infrastructure Report Card

by Rod Plourde, Ph.D., P.E., President

We all loved bringing home A's and B's from school, but unfortunately, the latest report card for our country's infrastructure is not one we'd want to proudly display on the refrigerator. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) released its 2005 Report Card for America's Infrastructure in March. It looked at 15 different categories, from aviation to dams, bridges, schools, and waste water. While the grading scale ranged from A (Exceptional) through F (Failing), no infrastructure category was rated better than a C (Mediocre), and most categories received a D (Poor).

### 2005 Nationwide transportation grades:

- Bridges: C
- Rail: C-
- Roads: D
- Transit: D+

Some statistics for the major states where we do business include the following:

#### Pennsylvania:

- 23 percent of major urban roads are congested
- 46 percent of major roads are in poor or mediocre condition
- 42 percent of bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete

#### Florida:

- 34 percent of Florida's major urban roads are congested
- 18 percent of bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete

#### Massachusetts:

- 31 percent of major urban roads are congested
- 71 percent of major roads are in poor or mediocre condition
- 51 percent of bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete

### Addressing the problem

To tackle this problem, our greatest priority is passing the federal Surface Transportation Act reauthorization. At the time of this newsletter, the act successfully passed the House and Senate at the \$286.5 billion level, and was awaiting the President's signature. Bipartisan support was needed to get the House, Senate, and White House to agree on the final number and get these funds to the states.

The states also match federal funds through state gas taxes. Despite two-plus dollars per gallon gasoline costs, states must face the need to increase gas taxes. Otherwise, states may lose their ability to match and retain federal funds allocated to them. As citizens and members of the transportation industry, we need to exert our influence on legislators and governors at the state level.

### Public-Private partnerships

Finally, as part of our transportation engineering practice, we have opportunities with both public (municipal) and private (development) clients to promote public-private partnerships that will fund needed roadway and bridge projects. All it takes is some innovation, resourcefulness, and cooperation on both sides to effect funding for critical transportation improvements that will make them a reality more quickly than waiting for normal public funding mechanisms and processes to take their due course. There are several good examples of successful public-private partnerships, and we encourage both our public and private clients to think creatively to move forward with their projects.

More information on the ASCE Report Card can be found at <http://www.asce.org/reportcard/2005/index.cfm>.

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# The South Boston Seaport District: Transportation Planning adds to Facelift

by *Steven C. Findlen, Project Manager*

Recent major transportation infrastructure improvements and several development projects will improve access and bring vitality to the area located between downtown Boston and South Boston known as the Seaport District.

The Central Artery/Tunnel (CA/T) project recently opened the last section of the I-90 regional highway system that connects the Massachusetts Turnpike and the Ted Williams Tunnel. The ever-changing roadway patterns as a result of the CA/T project have allowed McMahon Associates to provide on-going traffic management services in and around the Boston area, including the Seaport District, to accommodate traffic during construction. The work includes developing traffic management plans, signal plans, and coordination with contractors and the Boston Transportation Department. In addition, the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) Transitway and Silver Line projects are providing a higher level of public transit service to the South



layout by Spaulding & Slye Colliers

Overview of the revitalized Seaport District in South Boston.

Boston Seaport, which includes offering a one-seat ride from South Station to terminals at Logan Airport.

## Seaport district development

Among other developments, the South Boston Seaport District is currently home to the Joseph Moakley Federal Courthouse, World Trade Center, Seaport Hotel, Fish Pier, and the new Boston Convention & Exhibition Center (BCEC). The BCEC opened in June 2004 and

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# Philadelphia's Red Light Camera Enforcement Program

by *Anton K. Kuhner, P.E., P.T.O.E., Project Manager*

The Philadelphia Red Light Camera Enforcement Program began in June 2005, marking the start of a city-wide program to install red light cameras. During its first week of operation, the red light camera program at Roosevelt Boulevard and Grant Avenue recorded 1,400 violations leading to 499 citations.



Red light cameras now monitor traffic at the intersection of Roosevelt Boulevard and Grant Avenue in Philadelphia.

The Philadelphia Parking Authority (PPA), the owner of the program, will install systems at nine intersections, with the intent to expand.

The initial nine intersections were selected from a review of accident history, with a concentration on accidents frequently related to drivers running red lights. Subsequent intersections will be evaluated for red light cameras based on the same criteria. Once an intersection is identified, the City of Philadelphia Streets Department and City Council grants approval for each installation.

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## Florida Legislation Encourages Funding Mix for Roads

by Michael D. Spitz, P.E., Project Manager

As regional growth multiplies the need for public roadway improvement dollars, competition for available funds grows fierce. Various options are available for project funding. Project proponents can pay for the improvement out of their own pockets, or they can finance the project through bonds or other loan programs. Cities and counties can charge impact fees for new developments, apply for a variety of grant programs, or seek out partners who will benefit from the improvements and share the expenses.



Engineers discuss ways to finance infrastructure improvements.

Many projects will apply several of these options before completion, but each option has benefits and drawbacks:

- Proponents may not have the capacity to pay for the project out of their own funds.
- Bonds and loan programs are readily available, provided the applicant can show a capacity to repay them, usually through tax programs or roadway tolls.
- Grants don't require a repayment, but they are highly competitive, offer a limited amount of funding, and often have a drawn-out process that precludes fast-tracked projects.

To address these needs, and to promote private-public partnerships, the State of Florida recently approved a new Growth Management bill that includes approximately \$1 billion in grants for transportation projects. These projects must include matching funds of 50 percent from the applicant. Applicants can include

counties, local municipalities, private developers, or a combined team of these proponents as part of their match.

The projects must increase roadway capacity and provide additional benefits such as promoting economic development. Similar programs are available in many states as a way to encourage governmental entities and private developers to work together. McMahon Associates has a solid history of working with all of these various methods of funding and in helping to assemble public-private partnerships.

Public-private partnerships can apply to almost any scale of a project, from a simple sidewalk or intersection improvement to the planning, design, and construction of new freeway interchanges. They often include the developer providing the initial capital or right of way necessary to construct the project in exchange for impact fee credits, property tax breaks, zoning concessions, or non-standard access agreements. Florida's new legislation encourages such partnerships and McMahon is ready to help your community navigate this new road.

### NEW ENGLAND

- Traffic Impact Study for Walgreen's Pharmacy, Town of Framingham, MA
- Off-site Roadway Improvement Design, Wrentham Crossing, Wrentham, MA
- Traffic Analysis and Permitting for Brockton Parking Garage, City of Brockton, MA

### FLORIDA

- US-41 Corridor/Master Plan for CRA with EDAAW, City of Fort Myers, Lee County, FL
- Sistrunk Boulevard Traffic Studies, Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, FL
- DelPrado Boulevard Traffic Signal Designs, City of Cape Coral, Lee County, FL

### MID-ATLANTIC

- Pennsylvania Act 209 Roadway Sufficiency Analysis and Capital Improvement Plan, Straban Township, Adams County, PA
- Commerce Bank Trip Generation Study for ITE, from Berks County to Cumberland County, PA
- I-81 Exit 2/US Route 11 Interchange Modifications, Antrim Township, Franklin County, PA

### Did You Know?

An average diesel-powered bus gets 4.5 miles per gallon. That is less than 1/10th of a gallon per mile per passenger. If you are commuting to work by yourself, a typical sedan would need to get 210 miles per gallon to be as efficient.

### Mid-Atlantic Regional News *(continued from page 2)*

Roosevelt Boulevard and Grant Avenue was chosen due to its notoriety as one of the three most dangerous intersections in the country, according to studies conducted by State Farm Insurance. Camera systems were installed at the intersection in February 2005 and, in accordance with the city ordinance, were operational for a 120-day warning period.

During this time, more than 26,000 violations were recorded and about 12,000 warning notices were issued to drivers identified by the

camera system as violating a red light.

A citation includes two photographs of the violation taken from a position approximately 150 feet in advance of the intersection. The first photo shows the vehicle at a point before the stop line and the red signal indication, and the second shows the vehicle in the intersection with the red indication. A close-up of the vehicle is also given, showing the vehicle's license plate. Once the photos are completed and compiled, and before a citation is issued, the

violation must go through a three-step review by two employees from the PPA and a Philadelphia city police officer.

In the summer of 2004, American Traffic Solutions (ATS) won the contract to install the camera systems and provide technical support for the program. McMahon Associates assisted ATS with the construction planning and permitting required to launch the program.

## Integrity in Our Business

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clients constantly involves ethical questions and dilemmas. We strive to treat others as we would like to be treated.

McM has consistently erred on the side of caution by doing what we believe is ethically right. This has cost the firm not only financially but also psychically, as these hard conservative decisions often feel unjust to us. However, our goal is to always exceed our clients' expectations.

Earning the respect of our clients and the public requires constant monitoring and attention. Twenty-nine years of ethical engineering practice has earned McM a reputation as a highly regarded firm. This regard is expressed not only by our clients but by our peers and competitors as well. We are proud of this achievement and work every day to maintain that integrity and trust.

## New England Regional News *(continued from page 2)*

includes 516,000 square feet of exhibit space, which is #1 in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states.

After a somewhat slow start in the financial year 2005, the BCEC more than doubled its number of bookings for future conventions and trade shows, according to the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority. Another construction project completed in 2004 was the 14-story Manulife building, which will house the John Hancock Wealth Management Group.

The planning agency, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), continues working to develop master plans to establish a vital commercial mixed-use waterfront district.

### Fan Pier

One major parcel of land along the Boston Harbor, shown on page 2, is designated for the Fan Pier, which is undergoing the largest waterfront project in Boston's history. Current approved BRA permitting allows for just over 2.5 million square feet of development, including offices, retail, condominiums, and two hotels.

In addition, the ideal location of the Fan Pier has attracted Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) to move its current facility to a new state-

of-the-art facility along this parcel of land. The ICA is currently under construction and projected to open in 2006, and will be the first art museum to be built in Boston in almost 100 years.

### Other development projects

A few of the other projects currently under construction or in the design phase within the South Boston Seaport District include Waterside Place, a 1.2 million square-foot mixed-use project, and the first major retail complex in Boston in a decade.

Located across from the BCEC, Waterside Place will include 570,000 square feet of retail space, a 20-story condominium complex, and a 21-story hotel. Also under construction and scheduled to open in summer 2006 is the 17-story, 790 room Westin Boston Waterfront hotel, which is fully integrated with the BCEC and will provide much-needed lodging in this fast-growing district.

As the South Boston Seaport District continues to change and develop, it is clear that transportation remains a key component in ensuring that the needs of existing and future developments are met. This is true as the construction progresses, transportation services evolve, and the Seaport District looks to improve access and provide attractive options to commuters, visitors, and residents.

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*Inside*

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