

Memorandum for the Record
Transportation Planning and Programming Committee of the
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

April 2, 2009 Meeting

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 & 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

David Mohler, Chair, representing James Aloisi, Executive Office of Transportation & Public Works (EOTPW)

Decisions

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee voted to take the following actions:

- approve the minutes of the February 26 meeting
- approve the work program for the *Congestion Management Process (CMP) – FFY 2009*
- approve the work program for the *Greenbush Impact Study*

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

There were none.

2. Chair's Report – David Mohler, EOTPW

There was none.

3. Subcommittee Chairs' Reports – Jim Gallagher, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and Stephen Woelfel, MassHighway

The Suburban Mobility/Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Subcommittee met on March 19 to review five letters of interest for TDM proposals. The Subcommittee responded with letters to the interested parties. The Town of Stoughton was informed that its proposed project would not be eligible. Full proposals are due May 7. Today is the deadline for Suburban Mobility proposals. The Subcommittee will meet to review those proposals on April 16.

Staff distributed an outline for the development of the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2010 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). (See attached.) The UPWP Subcommittee meeting scheduled for this afternoon has been cancelled. The Subcommittee will resume its meetings on April 16. In the meantime, S. Woelfel, Subcommittee Chair, apologized for the cancellation and recommended that staff begin the process of developing study ideas. He noted that there are ideas that have been held over from previous years that may be considered, and that staff is still receiving new ideas from members of the public through responses to an insert in last month's issue of *TransREPORT*. Any members who have questions or ideas for improving the proposed development process should contact Mary Ellen Sullivan, UPWP Manager, CTPS.

Mary Pratt, Town of Hopkinton, asked about how staff plans to select intersections to study for the recently approved work program for *Operational Improvements at Selected Congested and High-Crash Intersections*, and how municipalities can request to be part of the study. Karl Quackenbush, Deputy Director of CTPS, replied that CTPS is receiving input from municipalities via MAPC. Municipalities may also contact him or Efi Pagitsas, CTPS. Staff is proposing to study different intersections than those studied in recently completed work program for *Safety and Operational Improvements at Selected Intersections*. Staff plans to use Registry of Motor Vehicles crash data to locate high-crash areas and the Mobility Management System to identify areas of congestion. The focus will be on those areas where there is interest from local officials in implementing improvements.

4. Director's Report – *Arnie Soolman, Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)*

The Administration & Finance Subcommittee met this morning and voted to recommend the approval of two new hires at CTPS. Upon Committee approval, CTPS will have 61 full-time staff members. CTPS has budgeted for 64 staff members. After some internal staff reassignments, two positions are in the Traffic Analysis & Design Group and these will remain vacant until the UPWP is further developed. At that time we anticipate having a better sense of the skills that will be needed for future work.

The third position is in the Travel Model Development Group. CTPS has been seeking to fill that position for about a year and now plans to hire a consultant rather than fill that position in-house. CTPS needs help climbing the learning curve on developing activity-based travel demand models. These are designed to be more accurate and sensitive to a wider range of policy variables. Staff would like to brief members on activity-based models in a future Committee meeting.

5. Approval of New Hires, Certification Activities Group – *Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board*

A motion to approve the hiring of Mike Callahan for the CTPS Certification Activities Group – as recommended by the Administration & Finance Subcommittee – was made by P. Regan, and seconded by S. Woelfel. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to approve the promotion of Sean Pfalzer from a part-time temporary employee to a full-time employee at the CTPS Certification Activities Group – as recommended by the Administration & Finance Subcommittee – was made by Thomas Bent, City of Somerville, and seconded by Shirin Karanfiloglu, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Regional Transportation Advisory Council – *Steve Olanoff, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

The Advisory Council will meet on April 8. The agenda includes as presentation from MAPC on the MPO's Bike Rack Program.

7. Meeting Minutes – Pam Wolfe, Manager of Certification Activities, CTPS

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 26 meeting – with changes recommended by J. Gallagher to pages 8 and 17 – was made by Thomas Kadzis, City of Boston, and seconded by M. Pratt. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Work Program – Congestion Management Process (CMP) – FFY 2009– Karl Quackenbush, Deputy Director, CTPS

Members were presented with the work program for the *Congestion Management Process (CMP) – FFY 2009*. This scope of work provides for the continuation of the work program for the *Mobility Management System (MMS)* through the end of this federal fiscal year. (Members last approved the work program in 2005.) The MPO has been operating the MMS since 1995 to measure mobility indicators in the region. It has been used to provide information for use in the MPO's planning processes, recommend system/infrastructure improvements, and generate UPWP study ideas and reports. The last work program resulted, among other things, in the dissemination of MMS information on the MPO's website.

The MMS is now being referred to as the Congestion Management Process (CMP) to be consistent with SAFETEA-LU legislation and the interests of the MPO's federal partners. SAFETEA-LU calls for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan to be linked with the CMP and include operations and management strategies.

The objective of this interim work program is to continue the monitoring of intersections and park-and-ride lots in the region, refresh counts of park-and-ride use, add to the MPO's intersection database, and to continue to provide information to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) processes. Staff also proposes to conduct outreach to local officials to bring their attention to the MPO's intersection database.

After this interim work program, MPO staff would like to present another work program to carry the CMS work into FFY 2010 and beyond. Staff would propose to link the next CMP work program with the RTP work program and plans to have more discussion with the Committee about this topic concurrently.

K. Quackenbush raised an issue that has been a concern of City of Newton officials – parking on local streets by MBTA commuters. This is also a concern to staff. To better identify areas where this is happening, staff is proposing to compare data from responses to a MBTA systemwide survey question (which asks how a person got to a transit station) to field counts. David Koses, City of Newton, stated that he appreciates the attention that staff is giving to this issue. He also noted that when the MBTA raises its parking fees there may be more people choosing to park on local streets and that demand is not captured.

T. Bent suggested adding a survey question that would ask if the respondent parked in an MBTA lot or on a residential street. S. Olanoff also voiced support for this suggestion.

The survey is already in progress, however, and there were questions about whether respondents would be inclined to answer that question honestly.

T. Kadzis suggested that the MBTA consider the issue of whether it makes sense to make uniform parking fee increases, considering that lot usership may vary from line to line.

J. Gallagher noted that the MPO's intersection website is a very good way to disseminate mobility information and that it works well. He asked how staff intends to conduct its outreach to local officials and if there is anything that MPO members can do to help. K. Quackenbush replied that staff plans to contact municipal engineers and planners to invite feedback, starting with those municipalities that have intersections on the MPO's website.

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, added that the MPO could encourage interest from municipal officials by developing a TIP program (perhaps structured like the Suburban Mobility/TDM Program) to dedicate funds for the implementation of MPO recommendations for intersection improvements. J. Gallagher agreed that the MPO should develop such a program.

J. Gallagher asked why the CMS work program presented today does not include operations and management. K. Quackenbush replied that the logical time to incorporate that piece would be in the fall when the RTP work program is prepared. He also noted that consideration would have to be given to the implications for agencies. Staff would like to brief the Committee further about this topic.

M. Draisen recommended that staff focus on the links to operations and management when the RTP work program is presented in the fall. He expressed that it would be useful to better understand the degree to which the work program could result in proposals to address mobility problems.

Carey Duques, City of Salem, asked if staff intends to survey park-and-ride lots outside the MBTA system to see how many people are carpooling and to see if there is a demand for those facilities. K. Quackenbush replied that staff does monitor other park-and-ride lots, including those of private express bus services and the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority.

T. Kadzis mentioned that the U.S. Department of Transportation was going to assess the methodology for clearing crash scenes (as speed of that clearance affects congestion). Efi Pagitsas, MPO staff, stated that the subject qualifies for consideration under operations and management strategies. She added that crash incidents account for about 60% of the congestion in MPO region.

A motion to approve the work program for the *Congestion Management Process (CMP)* – *FFY 2009*, was made by M. Draisen, and seconded by M. Pratt. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Work Program – Greenbush Impact Study – *Karl Quackenbush, Deputy Director, CTPS*

The MBTA has requested that CTPS undertake the work program for the *Greenbush Impact Study* to determine how the opening of the Greenbush commuter rail line (in October 2007) has affected travel patterns and the use of other transportation facilities in the area. The study would involve adjusting the ongoing MBTA systemwide survey for Greenbush riders to include questions about what facilities riders used before the line opened. Staff would use existing count data supplemented with data on boardings and alightings by station, and data from a license plate survey. Staff would also look at data on users of the Red Line, other commuter rail lines, commuter boat, private buses, and traffic volumes on Route 3 and Interstate 93. The study is in the FFY 2009 UPWP, implicitly, in the Assistance to MBTA Development project.

During a discussion period, members asked questions and made comments:

Will the survey capture the benefits of rail, for example, by measuring whether people are moving from areas without transit service to those where there is access to the commuter rail? (P. Regan)

That is outside the purview of this scope of work. (K. Quackenbush)

Could the survey ask riders what they would do if the commuter boat stopped operating? (P. Regan)

That is outside this scope of work. (D. Mohler) People ought to be asked such questions somewhere, if not in this survey. (M. Draisen)

Is the Greenbush line at capacity? If not, it is important to survey the people who are not using the line if the objective is to increase ridership on this line (though this may not be part of this scope of work). (M. Draisen)

The line is not at capacity. (Joe Cosgrove, MBTA) This survey is aimed at validating our assumptions and projections of ridership on the Greenbush line. (D. Mohler) It also helps to refine our modeling methods. (K. Quackenbush)

Is the other research being done [under another scope of work]? (M. Draisen)

The regional household survey would survey people who are not using transit. (J. Gallagher)

Could the survey be used to ask commuter boat riders if they would use the Greenbush line if the boat were not operating? (S. Karanfiloglu)

The systemwide onboard passenger survey was already administered to boat riders. There would have to be another survey directed at boat riders to ask that question. (K. Quackenbush) It would be useful to get this information to the MBTA before it begins its public process relating to possible changes to service. (P. Regan)

Has the commuter boat ridership diminished since the start of the Greenbush service? (M. Pratt)

Ridership has been flat. (J. Cosgrove)

Regarding the before and after traffic counts, can the economic variables be isolated to account for what we assume are lower traffic volumes from 18 months ago? (T. Kadzis)
We can make inferences about whether we are seeing anything that can be associated with the Greenbush line. (K. Quackenbush)

A motion to approve the work program for the *Greenbush Impact Study* was made by M. Draisen, and seconded by P. Regan. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Members' Items

P. Regan reported that the MBTA Advisory Board is distributing a report, *Born Broke*, about the MBTA's fiscal condition and how it compares to other transit agencies in the country. Based on a national comparison of transit agencies, the MBTA would have been in the best fiscal shape if it were not so debt burdened. The MBTA has the largest percentage of funds going to debt service of all the agencies surveyed – 30% this year.

M. Draisen reported that MAPC is in the process of finalizing a date for the MPO elections. The date should be decided today. It will be a late afternoon/early evening event.

M. Draisen suggested that the MPO discuss ways to fund municipal priority projects in the next round of stimulus funding. There needs to be an agreement between municipalities and MassHighway regarding project readiness, he noted. D. Mohler stated that MassHighway is in the process of finalizing the eligibility determinations for projects that municipalities submitted for stimulus funding. There is a goal to fund more local projects in the second round of stimulus funding. M. Pratt stated that municipalities need to be made aware of the requirements for projects that receive stimulus funding.

L. Dantas followed up on an item discussed at a previous meeting. He reported that the projects for the *Boston and Chelsea – Deck Rehabilitation on Tobin Bridge, Phase VII* and *Boston and Chelsea – Structural Steel Painting on Tobin Bridge, Phase 3 and 8* are in Massport's capital funding program. If the projects were eligible for stimulus funding the schedule for implementation would have been moved up. Since they are not eligible, the projects will be implemented on their original schedule.

T. Bent inquired as to how much stimulus funding would be available in the second round of funding. D. Mohler replied that a minimum of approximately \$90 million would be available but unless the minimum for urbanized areas is not met in the first round (which it currently is) there are no requirements that it be directed to this urbanized area.

11. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by S. Woelfel, and seconded by P. Regan. The motion passed unanimously.

Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Meeting Attendance
Thursday, April 2, 2009, 10:00 AM

Member Agencies

EOTPW
City of Boston
City of Newton
City of Salem
City of Somerville
MAPC

MassHighway
MassPike
Massport
MBTA
MBTA Advisory Board
Regional Transportation
Advisory Council
Town of Bedford
Town of Hopkinton
Town of Framingham

Representatives and Alternates

David Mohler
Thomas Kadzis
David Koses
Carey Duques
Thomas Bent
Marc Draisen
Jim Gallagher
Stephen Woelfel
Shirin Karanfiloglu
Lourenço Dantas
Joe Cosgrove
Paul Regan
Steve Olanoff

Richard Reed
Mary Pratt
Ginger Esty

MPO Staff/CTPS

Maureen Kelly
Anne McGahan
Hayes Morrison
Efi Pagitsas
Sean Pfalzer
Karl Quackenbush
Arnie Soolman
Mary Ellen Sullivan
Pam Wolfe

Other Attendees

Tony Centore Town of Medfield

FFY 2010 UPWP Development Outline

Sources for Potential FFY 2010 UPWP Projects:

For the development of the 2010 UPWP, staff recommends drawing from the following sources to generate a universe of study ideas for staff evaluation:

1. Existing Planning Documents (the MMS, the PMT, the RTP, the You Move Massachusetts Interim Report, MetroFuture, and recent feasibility studies)
2. 2009 UPWP comment letters and March 2009 *TRANSREPORT* insert responses
3. Consultations with MAPC, the MBTA, MassHighway, and EOT
4. MPO staff identified needs

Staff Evaluation Process

Once a universe of potential studies has been defined, staff proposes to strengthen the link between UPWP studies and the RTP by drawing from the Topics and Visions articulated in the RTP to categorize studies and evaluate their consistency with them:

RTP Topics and Visions:

- 1 System Preservation, Modernization, and Efficiency
Preserving the existing transportation network and replacing systems once their life span is realized are tasks critical to the promotion and effective management of regional mobility. The vision of the Boston Region MPO is to maintain and manage existing transportation facilities so that they function at their highest possible level of safety and efficiency. In this manner, people using elements of the system will experience the highest possible service level. Application of transportation systems management and intelligent transportation systems (ITS) technologies will be the main tool used to provide information, reduce congestion, and expedite transit service, thereby providing for system reliability, safety, and efficiency. Upgrading to keep in step with evolving standards will help meet the region's changing needs.
- 2 Mobility
A coordinated mix of transportation modes and services will give users of the region's transportation system increased opportunities for convenient, reliable, speedy, affordable, and accessible travel. Existing roadway, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and freight links will be maintained and their serviceability improved. New routes, lines, and connections will serve additional needs. The spectrum of options will serve travelers from different areas of the region with varying needs.
- 3 Environment
Transportation planning activities and projects will strive to reduce air quality degradation and other environmental degradations caused by transportation. Vehicle emissions (carbon monoxide [CO], nitrogen oxides [NOx], volatile organic compounds [VOCs], particulates, and carbon dioxide [CO2]) will be

reduced by modernizing transit, truck, and automobile fleets, and through increasing transit mode share.

In the process of considering transportation projects, the MPO will take into account the management and minimization of soil and water contamination, such as highway and rail right-of-way runoff, and wetland impacts. Construction of transportation facilities will be planned and carried out in a manner that avoids or minimizes negative impacts to natural resources. Transportation planning will also promote project design that preserves cultural resources such as community character and cohesiveness, quality of life, and historic and scenic resources; protects greenfields, open space, wildlife, and ecosystems; and advances sustainability and health-promoting transportation options. Transportation agencies will work with environmental and cultural resource agencies to achieve these ends.

4 Safety and Security

Safety and security initiatives will be implemented to protect the region from natural and human threats. Transportation infrastructure and its operation will be upgraded on an ongoing basis for the safety and security of all users. Technologies will be employed to manage incidents, conduct emergency response, and support safe evacuations using various transportation modes. Highway and transit infrastructure will be kept in a state of good repair. There will be fewer crashes, due to improved intersection designs and upgrades.

5 Regional Equity

Regional equity and the needs of low-income and minority residents will be assessed through regular activities and technical analyses. Low-income and minority residents will share equally with others in access to the transportation network and its mobility benefits. Environmental burdens from transportation facilities and services will be identified and minimized for all populations.

6 Land Use and Economic Development

Multimodal transportation will serve business, residential, and mixed-use centers. Transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities will be linked in a network to a growing inventory of denser residential development, employment and commercial centers, and major destinations. Transportation investments will focus on centers of economic activity and areas with adequate water, sewer, and other public infrastructure. Transportation rights-of-way will be used to maximize public benefits.

Transportation planning will be integrated with land-use and economic-development planning to the greatest extent possible in order to achieve more mobility, foster sustainable communities and transportation, and expand economic opportunities and prosperity. Transportation improvements will be made to facilitate the movement of freight throughout the region.

Next, senior staff proposes to further evaluate each study idea in a series of in-house discussions that will explore a variety of issues, such as whether there is current or planned construction in the study area, whether the recommendations of related previous studies (if applicable) have been implemented; and if they have addressed the need identified in the previous studies. Following this evaluation, staff will define the general scope and cost of a potential new study and whether a proposed study is consistent with the following guidelines established by the UPWP Subcommittee:

1. Advances an MMS or Study Recommendation or CMP Emphasis Area
2. Forwards an RTP or PMT Project
3. Advances MPO Policy
4. Advances SAFETEA-LU Planning Factor
5. Leads to an Implementable TIP Project

Following completion of this process staff will present the results in an evaluation matrix to the UPWP Subcommittee along with a staff recommendation.

Review of Ongoing 3C Activities

In addition to identifying needs and evaluating study ideas, MPO staff is reviewing each of the ongoing tasks presented in the FFY 2009 UPWP through which the MPO carries out its 3C responsibilities. At the CTPS Director's request, all group and project managers involved in 3C work are examining their programs to reevaluate the planning needs for FFY 2010 and the levels of effort and staffing required to meet them. Work to be conducted may change, as may the funding requirements. Managers will present the justifications for their 2010 requests to the Director and Deputies who will then develop a draft budget to present to the UPWP Subcommittee. This draft budget will also include the anticipated costs of completing studies begun under the FFY 2009 UPWP that are not expected to be complete by October 1, 2009.

Proposed Timeline for UPWP Development

April 6-17	Consultations with agencies and staff; and development of project universe as described above
April 20-30	Senior management review and preliminary evaluation of project universe
May 7	Presentation and discussion of project universe with the UPWP Subcommittee
May 11-18	Refined staff evaluations and development of a proposed short list of projects based on feedback from the UPWP Subcommittee members
May 19	UPWP Subcommittee presentation of proposed short list and staff recommendation on a proposed set of new UPWP studies to the
June 4	UPWP Subcommittee presentation of task descriptions and ongoing budgets for ongoing 3C activities

June 5-11	Completion of a UPWP Subcommittee draft FFY 2010 UPWP
June 18	UPWP Subcommittee recommendation on endorsement for the TPPC
June xx-Julyxx	Public review period
August 6	UPWP Subcommittee review of draft FFY 2010 UPWP Summary of Comments and MPO Responses.
August 20	TPPC and MPO Approval of the final FFY 2010 UPWP
August 21-28	Final document preparation
August 31	Document submittal to EOT for transmittal to FHWA and FTA.