

**Memorandum for the Record**  
**Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting**

**January 5, 2012 Meeting**

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 & 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

David Mohler and Clinton Bench, Chairs, representing Richard Davey, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

**Decisions**

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization agreed to the following:

- approve the work programs for the *Callahan Tunnel Construction Impact Study* and the *Analysis of JARC and New Freedom Projects*
- approve the minutes of the meeting of December 15

**Meeting Agenda**

**1. Public Comments**

Wig Zamore, Somerville resident, pointed out discrepancies in the amount of funds programmed for the *Green Line Extension* project in the MPO's planning documents – the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – and the state's capital plan. He suggested that those figures be reconciled. D. Mohler explained that the discrepancy is due to a decision, made after the LRTP and TIP were completed, to phase the project. He said that the LRTP and TIP would be amended to reflect the changes.

**2. Chair's Report – David Mohler, MassDOT**

The MBTA has announced proposed fare increases and cuts to transit service to address a \$161 million budget deficit in FY 2013. The scenarios under consideration would institute either a 43% increase in fares with service cuts to all modes, or a 35% increase with even more extensive service cuts. The MBTA will hold 20 public hearings on this topic in January and February. After receiving public input, the MBTA Board of Directors will make a decision about the fare increases and service cuts in April. Regardless of the scenario the Board adopts, the action will not solve the long term structural deficit of the MBTA. D. Mohler encouraged members and attendees to read a report by Central Transportation Planning Staff which describes the scenarios under consideration, and to be involved in the public hearings. The report, *Potential MBTA Fare Increase and Service Reductions in 2012: Impact Analysis*, is posted on the MBTA's website.

Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, added that the MBTA is legally required to submit a balanced budget to the state legislature by May 1. He announced that at the upcoming meeting of MBTA Advisory Board, on January 9, there will be a discussion of the MBTA proposals and the MBTA's Capital Investment Program (CIP), which will

illustrate that the proposed fare increases and service cuts will not solve the problem of the MBTA's operating deficit or the condition of its fleets.

Ed Tarallo, North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn), raised the issue of the implication of service cuts and the possibility that the cuts could result in more people shifting modes and traveling on the highways. D. Mohler noted that under both of the MBTA proposals ferry service would be eliminated, which would affect ferry-related projects in the CIP. Also both scenarios would eliminate weekend commuter rail service and service after 10 PM. More details on the potential impacts are discussed in the CTPS report.

### **3. Subcommittee Chairs' Reports**

There were none.

### **4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report – Steve Olanoff, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council**

The Advisory Council will meet next on January 11 and the guest speaker will be Secretary of Transportation Richard Davey. The Freight Committee will also meet on that day.

### **5. Executive Director's Report – Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff**

CTPS has hired Ruairi O'Mahony as Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Manager. He worked previously for the Central New Hampshire Planning Commission and the Dublin City Council. He holds a B.A. and M.A. from University College in Cork, Ireland.

K. Quackenbush reminded MPO members that they are welcome to contact him and the MPO staff if they would like to discuss any matters.

### **6. Work Programs – Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff**

At the meeting of December 15 members were presented with the draft work programs for the *Callahan Tunnel Construction Impact Study* and the *Analysis of JARC and New Freedom Projects*. A suggestion was made at that meeting to include an analysis of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) in the Callahan Tunnel study. D. Mohler suggested that staff adopt a standard practice of including GHGs in air quality analyses.

A motion to approve the work programs for the *Callahan Tunnel Construction Impact Study* and the *Analysis of JARC and New Freedom Projects* was made by P. Regan, and seconded by John Romano, MassDOT Highway Division. The motion carried.

### **7. Meeting Minutes – Maureen Kelly, MPO Specialist, MPO Staff**

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 15 was made by Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), and seconded by J. Romano. The motion carried.

**8. MBTA Bus Route 1 Transit Signal Priority Study – Mark Abbott, Project Manager, MPO Staff**

Members were provided with a report on the *MBTA Bus Route 1 Transit Signal Priority Study*. K. Quackenbush introduced the topic by noting that the report shows the results of a study that is a companion to a study that the MPO staff reported on in October 2011 that focused on MBTA bus routes 66, 111, and 15. While the earlier study was funded by the MBTA, this one was funded by the MPO.

M. Abbott then gave a PowerPoint presentation on the results of the study. The purpose of the study was to evaluate potential transit signal priority (TSP) strategies and queue jumps on the Route 1 corridor. TSP is an intelligent transportation systems (ITS) technology that is applied to signals and buses to increase passenger and vehicle carrying capacity. The technology allows a traffic control center to determine if a bus is on schedule, and to adjust signals to give a bus a green light to maintain or provide for schedule adherence. Queue jumps generally provide for a dedicated bus lane at intersections equipped with TSP. This study examined shared queue jump lanes in which the right turn lanes would have a signal that would clear traffic for buses.

MBTA bus route 1, which runs from Harvard Square in Cambridge to Dudley Square in Boston, is one of the MBTA's Key Bus Routes. It was identified as a candidate for this study based on data on travel times from the Congestion Management Process (CMP). The study examined 23 intersections along the route and found that if TSP were employed along the entire route there would be an 8-12 percent reduction in delays.

There are limitations to applying TSP on the route, however. The City of Cambridge does not have a central signal control center. TSP could be applied to the Boston side of the route, however, since the signals in Boston are tied to the Boston Traffic Control Center.

The study recommends testing TSP at three locations:

- Massachusetts Avenue at Brookline Street in Cambridge
- Massachusetts Avenue at Beacon Street in Boston
- Massachusetts Avenue at Newbury Street in Boston

Work is underway to coordinate communications between the Boston Traffic Control Center and the MBTA's control center, which could allow the MBTA control center to communicate with intersection signals throughout Boston.

Members asked questions and made comments.

S. Olanoff expressed that TSP strategies should result in shortening the schedule of buses. M. Abbott noted that the MBTA is evaluating bus stop consolidation strategies to shorten schedules, but that the TSP strategies are intended to improve the service reliability of buses. Hank Manz, At-Large Town (Town of Lexington), added that bus riders want schedule reliability and that buses that run on time are what is important for encouraging ridership.

Joe Onorato, MassDOT Highway Division, inquired as to whether consideration was given to using Opticon technology. M. Abbott explained that TSP technology is a less expensive option given that it uses ADL technology that buses are already equipped with. The costs of employing TSP would come from programming signals.

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, asked why TSP technology is not being considered to shorten bus route schedules. M. Abbott noted that there can be impacts to traffic on side streets from giving priority to buses. R. Mares noted that it would be worthwhile to study those impacts.

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), asked if staff discussed the issue of taking parking spaces for queue jumps with the city. M. Abbott noted that preserving parking is a concern for the city, which is why the study focused on using shared right turn lanes rather than taking parking spaces. Jim Gillooly, City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department), added that the city follows a Complete Streets policy when making decisions about whether parking spots should be taken in such situations.

J. Gillooly also remarked on the issue of using TSP to shorten bus route schedules. He noted that the first steps toward that goal would be to reduce delays and ensure predictability of the service. He remarked on the ITS work underway to build the capacity of the MBTA to coordinate with traffic signals in Boston.

Laura Wiener, At-Large Town (Town of Arlington), inquired about the costs for implementing TSP on route 1. M. Abbott replied that the costs would be high for the City of Cambridge since it does not have a central traffic control center. Other costs would be for signal communication equipment.

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), asked staff to provide members with a list of work programs that would allow members to keep track of studies. He asked that the following information be included: study costs, work program approval dates, recipients, and completion date.

**9. Work Program for Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment – Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff**

Members were provided with the draft work program for the *Priority Corridors for Long-Range Transportation Plan Needs Assessment*. This study will analyze a subset of arterial roadway segments that were identified through the Needs Assessment of the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) as having problems associated with safety, mobility, and bottlenecks.

The study would focus on identifying congestion and safety issues in the roadway segments. Staff will take a multimodal and Complete Streets approach to consider the needs of motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit vehicles. The roadway segments

would be ranked based on measures – such as speed index, congestion, and bus reliability – to identify those segments most in need of remedial action.

This study differs from other corridor studies conducted by the MPO staff in that it would focus on corridor segments identified in the LRTP and focus on roadway segments rather than entire corridors. It also differs in that attention will be given to traffic flows and volumes of trucks. Also the resulting document would adhere to MassDOT's guidelines and format for functional design reports, so that the study's products can be more readily moved towards implementation.

Staff will coordinate with the MassDOT Highway Division, MAPC, and municipal officials on this project, and strive to elicit commitments from municipalities to implement the study recommendations.

Potential roadways segments for study are listed in the work program. The MPO will have the opportunity to review the subset of that list that staff identifies for study and guide the final set of segments to be studied.

Members asked questions and made comments:

E. Bourassa asked if the study would include an examination of whether proposed projects (in the MPO's Universe of Projects) would address the problems identified at the roadway segments. K. Quackenbush indicated that staff would consider those projects when examining the segments.

J. Gillooly asked if staff would be open to studying a location that is not included on the list in the work program. David Koses, At-Large City (City of Newton), also expressed that there are other locations that would be good candidates for study. K. Quackenbush replied that the aim was to link this study to needs identified in the LRTP, though staff could consider other locations if a strong case was made for studying them. He also noted that the FFY 2013 UPWP will be under development soon and that it may provide another avenue for addressing new study ideas.

Anne McGahan, LRTP Manager, added that the MPO conducted a needs assessment as part of the LRTP development and that the list of roadway segments in the work program represents those needs prioritized at a regional level. Staff conducted the technical work to determine the needs in the corridors, and the MPO approved the Needs Assessment after a public review period.

W. Zamore asked if the study would account for the health impacts to bicyclists and pedestrians from pollutants. K. Quackenbush replied that such a task is not included in this work program, but it could be a study idea for the next UPWP.

**10. Economic Development Planning** – *Angela Insinger and James Freas, Metropolitan Area Planning Council*

A. Insinger gave a PowerPoint presentation on MAPC's economic development planning work. She discussed MAPC's role in economic development planning, where economic development is occurring in the region, how MAPC's demographic projections are used, and examples of projects.

MAPC's economic development division is a part of the agency's Department of Smart Growth Planning, an interdisciplinary group which includes divisions focused on land use planning, housing, environment, and transportation. MAPC is designated by the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) as the economic development district (EDD) for the Boston Region. MAPC is thus focused on developing strategies for economic development and job creation. It develops the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which is the platform for advancing projects funded by the EDA.

MAPC's economic development work is a channel for implementing MAPC's MetroFuture plan for regional growth through 2030. MAPC is focused on supporting small businesses and minority and immigrant entrepreneurs, and promoting smart growth.

A. Insinger showed a map of the Boston Region depicting areas of commercial and industrial development as of 2010, as well as a map of projected development from 2010 to 2035. The latter shows that future development and jobs would be clustered in the Inner Core and along existing transportation corridors, such as Route 128 and Interstate 495. The figures used for the projections were obtained from a 2007 survey in which municipalities reported on their plans for future development. These data are among the inputs that MAPC uses when developing the demographic projections that are used in the development of the MPO's LRTP.

Three examples of economic development projects that MAPC has worked on are: the Gloucester Economic Development Visioning and Cluster Analysis, which focused on increasing the sustainability of the maritime industry in Gloucester; the Fraunhofer Center for Sustainable Energy Systems, which focused on the clean technology industry in Boston; and the Downtown Stoughton Market Study and Implementation Plan, which involved a retail and housing market study and an assessment for a streamlined permitting process.

In response to questions after the presentation, MAPC staff provided details about their work in developing streamlined permitting processes. A. Insinger and James Freas, MAPC, explained that the assessments of existing zoning ordinances focus on reorganizing the steps to permitting to address conflicting timeframes and regulations, and to make the permitting process easier and more predictable for developers.

Tim Reardon, MAPC, further discussed MAPC's database of development projects. He stated that there are projects in the database that are projected to create as many as 14,379 jobs. He also explained that MAPC applied "discounts" to projects' job-creation and

other estimates based on a number of factors, such as whether or not the projects have gone through a MEPA review, how distant in time they are, or how speculative or ambitious the projects may be.

Clinton Bench, now chairing the meeting, invited members to provide feedback on this presentation and other topics that may be of interest for future meetings.

Pam Wolfe, Manager of Certification Activities, MPO staff, noted that MAPC provides economic development data for incorporation into the TIP and LRTP project evaluations.

**11. Certification Activities Update** – *Pam Wolfe, Certification Activities Manager, MPO Staff*

The MPO staff is on schedule for incorporating changes members requested to the schedule for the development of the TIP and UPWP. Staff mailed letters to all municipal chief executive officers on December 22 announcing the new schedule and completion dates for TIP development activities, and emailed both the same notice and a reminder to all municipal TIP contacts. The upcoming TIP Building Workshops and Open House have also been advertised.

Municipalities have been asked to update information on their Project Information Forms in January in order that staff may begin project evaluations in February. In February and March, staff will conduct outreach to the MAPC subregions to identify their priority projects.

Staff will be developing its recommendations for UPWP project ideas, so that the MPO can discuss them on February 2.

**12. MPO/RTAs Memorandum of Understanding** – *Pam Wolfe, Certification Activities Manager, MPO Staff*

Members were provided with a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MassDOT, the MPO, the Cape Ann Regional Transit Authority (CATA), and the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA). This MOU is a result of a recommendation that came out of the federal review of the MPO. The Federal Highway and Transit Administrations (FHWA and FTA) recommended that the MPO formalize its relationship with the two regional transit authorities (RTAs) that operate entirely within the boundaries of the MPO region. The FTA also made this recommendation to the two RTAs during their recent triennial reviews. The MOU affirms that the MPO and the RTAs cooperate and collaborate with each other.

Members discussed the proposed MOU.

J. Gillooly suggested adding text to the document to clarify that the MPO would support RTA programs and projects as the MPO deems appropriate. P. Regan also called for clarifications to ensure that the RTAs would understand that their programs and projects would face the same funding restrictions as the MPO's programs and projects. E. Bourassa also expressed agreement.

D. Crowley inquired as to why the Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA), which serves towns within MPO region, is not included in the MOU. P. Wolfe replied that the MOU applies to RTAs that operate wholly within the MPO region. C. Bench added that an intent of FTA may also have been to ensure that RTAs are aware that they must coordinate with the MPO with which they are affiliated for the programming of Section 5307 funds.

D. Crowley and Christine Stickney, South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree), both expressed concern about not including all RTAs that operate in the region in the MOU. They expressed concern that certain towns, which are served by those RTAs, would not be well-represented.

Lynn Ahlgren, MWRTA, reported on the FTA's triennial review findings and noted that the FTA's intent was to clarify the 3C process to ensure that the MPO is recording projects relative to the RTAs in the MPO's planning documents.

C. Bench suggested that staff revise the MOU to reflect the concerns expressed. He asked that members review the revised text before the next meeting and make any additional suggestions so that the MPO may vote on the MOU at the meeting of January 19.

He noted that the MPO's Memorandum of understanding with the other MPOs in our Urbanized Area (UZA) would be a better vehicle for addressing the concerns about RTAs that may operate in our region, but that are funded by other MPOs' programming. He asked staff to review the existing UZA MOU.

### **13. Members Items**

J. Gillooly stated that the City of Boston would like to make a presentation to the MPO regarding the city's master plans for bicycles, the accomplishments made to date, and the regionalization of efforts (in concert with MAPC).

P. Regan announced that the next meeting of the MBTA Advisory Board will be on January 9 at 9:30 AM in Conference Room 1 of the State Transportation Building. There will be a discussion of the MBTA fare increase and service cut proposals and the MBTA's Capital Investment Program (CIP).

C. Bench announced that there will be 20 hearings regarding the MBTA's proposals. He invited communities to direct questions to Callida Cenizal, MassDOT.

P. Regan noted that the proposed cuts will have impacts to THE RIDE, and suggested that people help to get the word out to the disabled and elder communities. P. Wolfe added that the MPO has been reaching out to those communities through the Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA.

C. Bench invited members to express their interest in serving on MPO committees. P. Wolfe will send the list of committees to members and members should reply to her with



their preferences. He reminded members that the Chair will appoint the committee members.

**14. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by P. Regan, and seconded by T. Bent. The motion carried.

**Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting Attendance  
Thursday, January 5, 2012, 10:00 AM**

**Members**

At-Large City (City of Everett)  
At-Large City (City of Newton)  
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)  
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)  
City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)  
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)

Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

MassDOT Highway Division

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)  
MBTA Advisory Board  
Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination  
(Town of Bedford)

North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)  
Regional Transportation Advisory Council  
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)  
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)  
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)

**Representatives and Alternates**

Marzie Galazka  
David Koses  
Laura Wiener  
Hank Manz  
Lara Mérida  
Jim Gillooly  
Tom Kadzis  
Tom Bent  
David Mohler  
Clinton Bench  
David Anderson  
John Romano  
Ron Morgan  
Paul Regan  
Eric Bourassa  
Eric Halvorsen  
Richard Reed

Ed Tarallo  
Steve Olanoff  
Christine Stickney  
Dennis Crowley  
Tom O'Rourke

**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Daniel Amstutz

Walter Bennett

Michael Callahan

David Fargen

Maureen Kelly

Robin Mannion

Anne McGahan

Ruairi O'Mahony

Sean Pfalzer

Mary Ellen Sullivan

Alicia Wilson

Pam Wolfe

**Other Attendees**

Lynn Ahlgren

Callida Cenizal

James Freas

Angela Insinger

David Kucharsky

Rafael Mares

Joe Onorato

Tim Reardon

Amanda Richard

Kevin Sheehan

Steve Winter

Wig Zamore

MetroWest Regional Transit Authority

MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning

MAPC

MAPC

Town of Lexington

Conservation Law Foundation

MassDOT Highway

MAPC

Office of State Senator McGee

MAPC

Somerville resident