

# **Memorandum for the Record**

## **Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting**

### **October 17, 2013 Meeting**

10:00 AM – 1:30 PM, The Academy Building at Cushing Memorial Park, 700 Winter Street, Framingham, MA

Ned Codd, Chair, 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 program for the *Long-Range Transportation Plan, FFY 2014* project as revised
- approve the work program for the *Diesel Multiple Unit Feasibility Study*

### **Meeting Agenda**

#### **1. Public Comments**

There were none.

#### **2. Chair's Report—Ned Codd, MassDOT**

N. Codd announced that David Montgomery and Mike Gowing were elected as chair and vice chair respectively of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council. He then recognized the outgoing chair, Steve Olanoff, for his years of service on the Advisory Council.

N. Codd also announced that Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and his wife have recently become the parents of twins.

Lastly, he reported that due to the reopening of the federal government, federal obligating authority is expected to be available soon, so that MassDOT will be able to advertise projects slated to receive federal funding without having to use the state's Advanced Construction method.

#### **3. Committee Chairs' Reports**

There were none.

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

S. Olanoff reported that the Advisory Council met on October 9. Elections were held, as previously noted. Also, Bill Kuttner, MPO Staff, gave a presentation on the MPO's proposed Freight Action Plan. The Advisory Council has made recommendations to the MPO regarding this plan. (A comment letter to the MPO from the Advisory Council was distributed. MPO staff shared a graphic from the plan, revised by staff in response to a comment made by the Advisory Council at its October meeting.) The Advisory Council's Freight Committee is very supportive of the plan.

As mentioned in its letter to the MPO, the Advisory Council is recommending that the MPO staff coordinate with other MPOs as it conducts freight planning and consider the multimodal aspect of freight planning. S. Olanoff emphasized the need to implement improvements in the freight system through projects funded through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), agency projects, public/private partnerships, and private industry projects. He also discussed the need for the MPO staff to proactively disseminate data that it collects to the public, particularly as this data could be beneficial to and used by the freight industry. The Advisory Council urges the MPO to adopt this plan.

Marc Draisen, MAPC, suggested that the MPO's proposed Freight Action Plan be discussed at the next Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agency Transportation Managers' Meeting since the topic involves inter-regional issues.

N. Codd concurred and stated that the topic could be added to the agenda of the Transportation Manager's Meeting in November. He remarked that the topic of freight has a prominent place in the new federal transportation legislation, MAP-21, and in the federal performance measures that are expected to be released in the coming months. All MPOs in Massachusetts have freight planning activities in their Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWPs). N. Codd also reported that MassDOT is preparing to update the State Freight Plan that was released in 2010; the update is expected to be released in September 2015.

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

K. Quackenbush referenced the presentation on the Freight Action Plan at the September 12 MPO meeting. He noted that, at that time, the MPO wanted more time to review the document before approving the plan by consensus. Following the MPO's approval of the plan, the next step would be for staff to return to the MPO with a work program.

Since September 12, staff has had conversations with the City of Boston and the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council has recommended one change to the Freight Action Plan, which was handled by modifying the chart in the Action Plan. That modified chart was distributed to members today.

M. Draisen inquired about the substance of the Advisory Council's comment and the City of Boston's concerns. K. Quackenbush noted that a revision to the chart that was in the Freight Action Plan was done to indicate that outcomes of the work should include efforts toward project implementation. Tom Kadzis, City of Boston, reported that the city requested a clarification in the language of the document.

On another topic, K. Quackenbush noted that the audio files of the MPO meetings that are posted on the MPO's website have been augmented with a posting of the files using SoniClear software. This software allows a listener to key in on specific agenda items.

## **6. Welcome from Host Municipality—*Dennis Giombetti, Chair, Framingham Board of Selectmen***

D. Giombetti welcomed the MPO members and attendees to Framingham. He thanked the staff of the Keefe Technical School for providing refreshments, the MPO staff for doing the site review and setting up the meeting, and the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) for providing shuttle service to the venue. He noted that Cushing Memorial Park is the site of a former hospital for servicemen who returned from World War II, and later housed a state-owned geriatric facility. When that facility closed in the 1990s, the property was turned over to the Town of Framingham – which turned its portion into a park – and to a corporation that runs an assisted-living facility there.

D. Giombetti introduced four speakers who then discussed issues in the MetroWest region: Bob Halpin, Framingham Town Manager; Bonnie Biocchi, President of the MetroWest Chamber of Commerce; Jessica Strunkin, 495/MetroWest Partnership; and Ed Carr, MWRTA.

B. Halpin began by noting that Framingham is the heart of the MetroWest region which is one of the largest regions in Massachusetts that imports commuters. He then discussed the Framingham Board of Selectmen's focus on changing the conversation about Framingham, which it is doing with a new brand, "Choose Framingham." The message this brand sends reflects the idea that world class companies choose to locate in Framingham and that residents have the knowledge and skills to drive the economy.

He expressed thanks to the MPO and MassDOT for supporting three projects. The first is the *Downtown Traffic and Streetscape* project, which went to bid in September. As

part of this project, a real-time auto traffic control system will be installed which will help to clear traffic after trains pass through downtown. The streetscape improvements will change the face of downtown Framingham. The second project is the *MAPC/Framingham Downtown Development Vision Planning* project, which is being funded by MassDOT and MAPC. And the third is the *Routes 126 and 135 Grade Crossing Mitigation and Improvement* project; four options are currently being reviewed for this project.

He continued to discuss the region's rich collection of transportation assets, such as the commuter rail, Route 9, the Bay Circuit Trail, and the MWRTA. While these assets serve commercial areas including Tech Park and the 9/90 Office Park, they are not well integrated. Route 9 is the sole route to access these parks, which house the largest collection of employers in the region and which are experiencing enormous growth.

He reported that MAPC, through its Sustainable Communities Grant, examined transportation demand management strategies for managing traffic coming in and out of these parks, and identified ways to encourage carpooling to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips. MAPC's work also pointed to the need to create a "sense of place" in these parks, which could be accomplished with mixed-use development.

Lastly, he discussed the town's other priority development site, downtown Framingham. The town is working on a vision for downtown that incorporates transit-oriented development focused on young, knowledge workers who want access to job opportunities in the region. The town will be convening a panel discussion in November on potential development sites and working with MAPC to engage a Tech Park Advisory Committee. A Transportation Infrastructure Study will also be funded.

B. Biocchi then discussed the business community in the region and efforts to retain the region's workforce. The region is headquarters to a number of large employers – including EMC, TJX, Bose, Staples, and Mathworks – and many manufacturers are located there – including Genzyme, Raytheon, and Natick Soldier Systems. The companies in the region have a combined payroll of about \$13 billion and support about 181,000 jobs. Since 1997, the region has been a net importer of jobs; there are more jobs available than can be filled by people in the region. Given the expected growth of companies in the region, employers in the region are seeing the need for transit-oriented development (TOD).

She noted that employers such as Mathworks, which is expanding and adding jobs, are faced with the challenge of getting employees the "last mile" from the train station to their offices. The Chamber of Commerce is working with the region's transportation

management association (TMA), the 495/MetroWest Partnership, the MWRTA and other organizations to address these issues. One solution to the “last mile” problem could be to align the commuter rail schedule with employers needs.

J. Strunkin then discussed the challenges that the 495/MetroWest Partnership is working to address and its priorities. The 495/MetroWest Partnership is a regional economic development organization that works with the public and private sector and 33 municipalities along the Interstate 495 corridor; 26 of those municipalities are in the Boston Region MPO area.

The priorities of the 495/MetroWest Partnership include the implementation of recommendations from MassDOT’s *I-495/Route 9 Interchange Improvement Study*. The organization also sees an opportunity to address safety and congestion at the I-495 interchange as MassDOT implements the *All-Electronic Tolling Implementation Project*. J. Strunkin noted that improvements to Route 9 and the interchange at I-495 are economic development drivers.

She also spoke about opportunities for inter-MPO operability given that these projects cross MPO borders and she suggested that the MPO coordinate with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. She then discussed “last mile” needs in the region which has three commuter rail lines. A new TMA, Cross Town Connect, has been started in the region by municipalities and has been getting private sector buy-in. She suggested that this TMA is a model that could be replicated in the Boston Region MPO area. She thanked the MPO for its attention to issues in the MetroWest region and for supporting the MWRTA.

E. Carr began his presentation by showing a YouTube video about the MWRTA, a transit agency that has 13 member municipalities. Ridership on the MWRTA grew from 180,000 riders in 2008 to 600,000 in 2013. The MWRTA receives federal and state funding, and it has received support from the Boston Region MPO.

Then E. Carr gave a PowerPoint presentation. He discussed the MWRTA’s new Wellesley route, which was developed with input from Wellesley College and other colleges in the area, and the MWRTA’s new facility at Blandin Avenue.

In August 2012, the MWRTA entered into a lease with the South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) for the Blandin Avenue facility with an option to buy for \$2.3 million. In October 2012, the MWRTA used state funding (RTACAP funds) to contract with Tetra Tech to create a conceptual design and develop a cost estimate for the development of a maintenance and operations facility at the site. Tetra Tech estimated that a total of \$7.3 million would be needed to purchase and develop the facility.

In January 2013, MWRTA had \$1 million from a Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative Grant, 5307 federal formula capital funding, and state RTACAP funding. An additional \$1 million was needed in order to create a CNG filling facility. Then the MWRTA assumed the \$1.63 million mortgage in June 2013.

E. Carr stated that this unprecedented approach – along with support from the region’s legislative caucus, municipalities, and public and private officials -- convinced MassDOT Secretary Richard Davey to support the MWRTA’s efforts. In September 2013, the Boston Region MPO approved a transfer of \$7.19 million of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds from highway funding to transit funding for this project. E. Carr expressed his thanks to the MPO for its support.

Following the presentations, N. Codd discussed the work MAPC is conducting through its Sustainable Communities Grant program to help municipalities plan for and implement recommendations from its long-range plan, MetroFuture, and to promote healthier transportation modes. He also discussed MassDOT’s work with employers, developers, MassRIDES, and TMAs to help employers make those “last mile” connections.

## **7. Work Programs—Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff, and Anne McGahan, MPO Staff**

Members voted on two work programs: the *Long-Range Transportation Plan, FFY 2014* project and the *Diesel Multiple Unit Feasibility Study*.

### ***Long-Range Transportation Plan, FFY 2014 Project***

K. Quackenbush introduced the work program for the *Long-Range Transportation Plan, FFY 2014* project. He noted that through this project to develop the MPO’s Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) the MPO members have the opportunity to express what the MPO stands for through its visions and policies, and to take a comprehensive look at the region’s transportation assets and land use patterns. New planning tools are available for this update to the LRTP, including new models for land use and economic impacts, and an updated travel demand model that includes results of the recent household travel survey.

A. McGahan then gave a presentation on the LRTP development. She began by noting that the LRTP serves as the guiding document for the Boston Region MPO, that it establishes the visions and policies for the region, and it is used by the MPO in making decisions for the future.

The forecast year for the new LRTP will be 2040. Although the MPO recently adopted an amendment to the existing LRTP in July, the next LRTP must be adopted by September 2015 because of federal planning regulations that require MPOs to adopt a new LRTP every four years.

There are four major components to the development of the new LRTP:

- a Needs Assessment for the region, which gathers, organizes, and analyzes information about the state of the transportation system
- continued work on the development of performance measures and performance-based planning
- development of the LRTP document, including recommended projects and programs to be constructed over the next 25 years
- responding to requests for information and keeping current on planning practices and changes in guidance

The Needs Assessment for this LRTP will be a new interactive, web-based product. It will allow the MPO staff to streamline its data management, easily update databases for use by the public, and allow the MPO to keep information current. The development of the Needs Assessment will involve gathering data from state and CTPS-managed databases for tracking performance measures, trends, and transportation needs in the region. The travel demand model will be used to establish a 2012 base year for performance measures.

MPO staff will be coordinating with MassDOT and the MBTA on the development of performance measures. The MPO's visions and policies will be reviewed and simplified to correspond to the performance measures. Staff is developing a memorandum about the next steps in the process of developing performance measures, which will be presented to the MPO. Performance-based planning will be incorporated into the MPO's decision-making processes.

The first task in the development of the new LRTP document will be to develop and analyze alternative future land use and transportation scenarios. Staff will work with MassDOT to develop a projection of future transportation revenues that will be available for funding projects and programs. This task will also involve reviewing and updating the Universe of Projects and Programs list.

The MPO's travel demand model will be used to model a series of land use and transportation network scenarios. These scenarios will be based on demographic projections to 2040, which will be developed by MAPC. The MPO may choose certain themes for the scenarios. For example, the themes might aim to maximize the particular

benefits of a network of projects, such as in addressing climate change issues, increasing mobility, or system preservation.

The funding available for this work program allows for the modeling of two separate land use assumptions and two separate transportation networks. If the MPO chooses, staff could add other scenarios, however, funding for additional scenarios would have to be addressed in the development of the FFY 2015 UPWP. For each scenario modeled, staff will perform transportation equity and greenhouse (GHG) analyses. After these results are obtained, the MPO will select a preferred land use scenario. This information will be circulated for public review.

Following the public review, the MPO will select a recommended list of projects and programs. For the projects and programs in the Draft Recommended LRTP staff will perform environmental justice, air quality conformity, and GHG analyses. Then the draft document will be released for public review. After the MPO responds to public comments, the MPO will adopt the LRTP in September 2015.

While this is a two-year project, this work program only includes the budget for the upcoming year. The budget for FFY 2015 will be developed during the development of the FFY 2015 UPWP.

Currently, staff is working on the update of the Needs Assessment, which will continue through next May, and the development of performance measures. The work on performance measures will be ongoing and new measures can always be considered. The MPO can begin discussions on alternative land use and transportation scenarios after members have reviewed the Needs Assessment. Additional modeling runs can be added through the end of FFY 2014. Staff expects to have financial information early in calendar year 2015, so the MPO will not be able to have a project and program list before then.

Immediate work after the approval of this work program is to develop a memorandum on the next steps in the development of performance measures. Staff would also like to schedule a presentation to the MPO on the analysis tools that will be used in LRTP development – the new travel demand model, the land use model (CUBELAND), and the economic model (TREDIS) – as well as a presentation from MAPC staff on the development of the 2040 demographic projections.

### ***Discussion***

Richard Canale, At Large Town of Lexington, inquired whether all the MAP-21 regulations have been promulgated and when the legislation expires. A. McGahan and N. Codd replied that the MAP-21 performance measure regulations are expected to be



released in the next six months. The legislation is set to expire on September 30, 2015. They also noted that the broad categories of the performance measures are known, and many are measures that states are already using.

M. Draisen asked staff to include references in the work program to indicate that staff will be consulting with MAPC with regard to MAPC's development database. MAPC has data on locations in the region where development projects are planned and their stage of development. He also called for the visions and policies of the LRTP to be consistent with the objectives of MetroFuture, though adjusted as the MPO sees fit. K.

Quackenbush concurred that this should be the starting point. A. McGahan reported that the MPO staff has been meeting regularly with MAPC staff and that MetroFuture was taken into consideration during the development of the current LRTP and will be used for the LRTP Update.

Ed Tarallo, North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn), asked how staff plans to incorporate data provided by municipalities and subregions, particularly given that they may have a different picture of priorities if they are thinking out to 2040. A. McGahan replied that staff will be conducting outreach to municipalities, subregions, and the public throughout the LRTP development process. The outreach work will be described in a separate work program. E. Tarallo asked that staff emphasize early on to the communities that the planning horizon extends to 2040.

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), inquired about the overall cost estimate for this two-year project. K. Quackenbush noted that \$300,000 has been approved for the FFY 2014 portion of the project; this amount was approved as a line item in the FFY 2014 UPWP. Staff has not estimated a cost for the FFY 2015 portion of the work. That estimate will be generated during the development of the FFY 2015 UPWP. The cost for the second year of work will be shaped by the work done in the first phase and whether the MPO would like to have additional scenarios tested.

M. Draisen asked for several changes to be made to the work program. He asked that text be added to state that the MPO staff will consider MAPC's development database, that staff will use the baselines set in MetroFuture as a starting point for planning, and that staff will consult with municipalities and subregions through the process. He expressed the importance of documenting the level of consultation that has been staff's practice.

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, asked for a clarifying language to Task 4 of the work program. He suggested that the text explicitly state that four land use and

transportation scenarios will be modeled. He then asked whether the final scenario would be modeled again for air quality, GHG, and environmental justice impacts. A. McGahan confirmed that there will be a final model run prior to the public review period for the draft document.

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, asked if staff would be analyzing relevant state laws and policies during the LRTP development process, such as the recent legislation that sets new project selection requirements. He expressed concern that such considerations are not mentioned explicitly in the work program and that there could be a possibility that the MPO's decision-making might not be coordinated with state decision-making. A. McGahan replied that this work would occur under the development of performance measures. N. Codd added that the LRTP reflects how the MPO evaluates and prioritizes projects under its discretion. Also, he said that MassDOT's representatives on the MPO would express the importance of reflecting state principles within the performance measures and evaluation criteria.

L. Dantas suggested that the MPO's Congestion Management Process (CMP) might have a role in Task 3 of the work program. A. McGahan replied that the CMP will have a role in the performance measures for reliability. L. Dantas suggested that staff strengthen the description of how other MPO activities are incorporated into the LRTP development process.

A motion to give staff the discretion to revise the work program for the *Long-Range Transportation Plan, FFY 2014* project to incorporate changes recommended by the members was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (John Romano), and seconded by MAPC (M. Draisen). The motion carried.

E. Tarallo asked that staff distribute the revised work program with the changes in red-lines after the chair has reviewed the document.

K. Quackenbush noted that staff will be interacting with the MPO members throughout the course of this project so that the members will have many opportunities to shape the work.

A motion to approve the work program for the *Long-Range Transportation Plan, FFY 2014* project as revised today was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano), and seconded by North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) (E. Tarallo). The motion carried.

M. Draisen then raised a topic that was discussed at the meeting of September 12, the work program for *Central Artery/Tunnel Project Backcasting* study. CTPS is conducting

this work at the request of MassDOT; the study is required under the state's new transportation finance law to determine the air quality impacts of the Central Artery/Tunnel project. M. Draisen expressed concerns about the political implications of the study. He asked that it be done carefully and that the MPO be kept well-informed throughout the process.

### ***Diesel Multiple Unit Feasibility Study***

K. Quackenbush introduced the work program for the *Diesel Multiple Unit Feasibility Study*. MassDOT is interested in determining the feasibility of deploying self-propelled diesel multiple unit (DMU) vehicles on certain commuter rail lines. DMUs have the potential to provide more flexibility and better headways at off-peak travel times than commuter rail train sets.

Through this work program, staff will provide analytic support to MassDOT. CTPS will conduct travel demand modeling based on hypothetical service plans developed by MassDOT. CTPS will then produce estimates of potential ridership, air quality impacts, and environmental justice consequences of the hypothetical service plans, as well as vehicle requirements.

This \$90,000 project will be paid for from a MassDOT Section 5303 contract authorized in the FFY 2014 UPWP.

### ***Discussion***

L. Dantas asked for a description of the larger context for this study. N. Codd replied that DMUs are self-propelled vehicles that can operate on commuter rail tracks in conjunction with commuter rail and rail freight traffic. They must meet safety standards beyond those for light rail. DMUs offer advantages over locomotive and coach sets, since DMUs are smaller train sets, can be more economical, and can accelerate and decelerate more quickly. MassDOT considers the Fairmount commuter rail line a good example of an urban rail corridor where DMUs could be effective. This work program will examine the potential impacts, benefits, and costs of using DMUs on other urban commuter rail lines.

In response to a question from S. Olanoff, N. Codd stated that staff would make the Fairmount Line Service Improvements: Potential Use of DMUs, April 2008" study available that was recently done on the Fairmount commuter rail line.

S. Olanoff suggested that staff name the commuter rail lines that will be considered in this work program. N. Codd noted, however, that the project involves determining characteristics of commuter rail lines that make DMU service feasible and then

screening for the lines that have those characteristics. Six lines will be selected for further analysis. S. Olanoff asked that staff inform the MPO members of the selection.

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston, asked that if this study involves any elements that were not studied in the Fairmount study, that those elements also be applied to the Fairmount line so that results are comparable between all lines. He also asked for the results of the Fairmount study.

Hayes Morrison, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), reported that the City of Somerville is receptive to the idea of using DMUs. She asked if the study will consider only active commuter rail lines or all rail lines. N. Codd replied that all rail lines that could support DMUs will be considered. L. Dantas asked that the work program be revised to reflect that fact.

D. Crowley inquired about the customization that would be required for DMU vehicles to be able to operate on rails in the Boston Region and whether a cost/benefit analysis has been done regarding the number of vehicles that would be needed. N. Codd replied that there are few FRA-compliant DMUs operating in the country right now. A significant degree of customization would be required. The cost would be taken into account in the MassDOT's study that CTPS's work is supporting. Ron Morgan, MBTA, added that all transit vehicles are generally custom built.

R. Morgan expressed the MBTA's concerns about maintenance issues for DMU vehicles and asked if those issues would be taken into account in this work program. N. Codd replied that those issues are major considerations and that the MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning is discussing those issues with the Rail and Transit Division.

Tom O'Rourke, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce), raised the concern that the study could recommend the use of DMUs, but the recommendation might be too expensive to implement. N. Codd replied that it will be necessary before implementing any project to understand the costs, benefits, and impacts.

T. O'Rourke asked if the DMUs would supplement existing commuter rail service or replace it. N. Codd replied that they would be primarily supplementing existing service, but that they could possibly replace commuter rail service at certain stations at certain times. CTPS's analysis will help MassDOT to understand how DMUs could be used.

James Errickson, At-Large City of Everett, encouraged staff to consider future conditions as well as existing conditions, as some communities may be considering

redevelopment options over the long term. He also asked that outreach to municipalities be included in the work program.

Wig Zamore, Somerville resident, asked that CTPS consider black carbon when considering air quality impacts in this study. He noted that diesel emissions are proven carcinogens that cause lung cancer, and that these emissions pose a risk for transportation workers and riders. He referenced a study on the topic done by Harvard University. He stated that the MPO is in the position of being able to calculate the number of deaths in Massachusetts caused by diesel transportation.

Josh Ostroff, Town of Natick, noted that if DMUs were used on Track 61 from Back Bay to South Station, new construction might be required. He also noted that the Town of Natick will be conducting a feasibility study regarding a future commuter rail station in that town and that public feedback received from that process could feed into the CTPS study.

D. Crowley asked if the primary goal of the study is to determine the number of DMU vehicles that would be needed. K. Quackenbush replied that the CTPS portion of the study would be contributing information regarding projected ridership, environmental justice, air quality impacts, and vehicle requirements. D. Crowley expressed reservations about spending \$90,000 of taxpayer money for this study.

S. Olanoff discussed the potential air quality benefits that could come from using DMUs because they would provide an alternative to auto usage. He noted, however, that this issue is complicated in that there could be an increase in pollution if DMUs were used frequently. Ideally, he said, electric cars would be used.

A motion to approve the work program for the *Diesel Multiple Unit Feasibility Study* was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano), and seconded by the MBTA (R. Morgan). The motion carried. The South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (D. Crowley) was opposed.

## **8. Report: Route 30—Seth Asante, MPO Staff**

S. Asante gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Route 30 study. This roadway was among the arterial segments identified in the LRTP as in need of safety and mobility improvements and modernization. MassDOT and the towns of Framingham and Natick have all identified the roadway as in need of safety and mobility improvements. The purpose of the study was to identify problems in the corridor and multimodal solutions to those problems. An Advisory Task Force made up of representatives from Framingham, Natick, the MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, and the MassDOT District Office guided this project.

The study area is a one-mile section of Route 30 from Ring Road in Framingham to the TJX Driveway in Natick. There are five traffic signals along this section of the roadway. The area is zoned for commercial and industrial uses, and it is surrounded by residential areas. The proposed Cochituate Rail Trail and the Cochituate State Park is on the eastern end of the study area. Route 30 provides access to the Massachusetts Turnpike and Route 9. Route 30 is maintained by the towns while MassDOT maintains the connections to the Turnpike.

MPO staff and the Advisory Task Force identified several problems along the corridor: an incomplete bicycle and pedestrian network; safety concerns at the Cochituate Rail Trail crossing; traffic congestion and queues; and a high number of crashes at the Speen Street, Burr Street, and Whittier Street intersections.

Three options were developed as solutions to the bicycle and pedestrian issues. Option 1 is a low cost option that would connect the existing sidewalks to Speen Street and the rail trail. Option 2 involves constructing new sidewalks on the south side of Route 30. As this option crosses the Turnpike ramp it would require the installation of pedestrian warning devices. Option 3 involves constructing new sidewalks on Route 30 and a multiuse path skirting the Turnpike ramp.

Since there is currently no shoulder on the Route 30 study area, the recommendations include installing a 2 to 3 foot buffer between the sidewalk and roadway to provide safety and comfort for pedestrians. The installation of bicycle detectors and sharrows are also proposed.

Recommendations for short term improvements for traffic safety and operations include retiming traffic signals and consolidating driveway access. A concept for reducing congestion in the medium term is to add a lane from the TJX Driveway to the Speen Street intersection and the westbound Turnpike connector. This option will require right-of-way takings and will have impacts to access and egress from driveways.

Long term concepts to address congestion at Speen Street are as follows:

- a grade separation on Speen Street
- a grade separation on the northbound left turn lane of Speen Street and exclusive right-turn lanes on Route 30 eastbound
- a grade separated median left turn from Speen Street northbound to the Turnpike (eastbound and westbound)
- a grade separated median left turn from Speen Street northbound to the Turnpike (eastbound only)
- conversion of the south leg of Speen Street into a continuous flow intersection

Four alternatives for the Cochituate Rail Trail Crossing at Route 30 were developed. Alternatives 1 and 2 divert trail users from the trail and allow them to cross at the Speen Street intersection or at the TJX Driveway. Staff does not recommend this option.

Alternatives 3 and 4 allow trail users to cross at the current alignment of the trail. Alternative 3 is an at-grade crossing; trail users would have to stop to cross Route 30 using a traffic light. This option is not recommended by staff because it will affect traffic operations. Alternative 4 is an accessible pedestrian bridge. Alternative 4 is considered to be the most effective option by staff, although it is the most costly option.

The next steps are for MassDOT and the towns to coordinate on the feasibility, design, and construction of the long term options, including the regional connections between the Turnpike, Route 30, and Speen Street. They must also examine the proposed safety, access, and traffic management improvements to Route 30. All design options should consider MassDOT's *All Electronic Tolling Project*.

Other next steps are for MassDOT and the towns to coordinate on the feasibility, design, and construction of fully connected sidewalks along Route 30 and Speen Street. The towns would have to agree on a design for the Cochituate Rail Trail crossing.

### ***Discussion***

S. Olanoff asked if there is any indication that people are walking where the sidewalks are proposed along Route 30. S. Asante replied that yes, there are footpaths to be seen there.

S. Olanoff asked how people would know where to walk if Option 3 were developed (the sidewalks and multiuse path skirting the Turnpike ramp). S. Asante replied that signage would have to be installed to direct pedestrians.

J. Ostroff suggested that Alternative 4, the pedestrian bridge, might be better characterized as a grade separated alternative given that a tunnel could be an option. Arthur Frost, MassDOT District 3, added that a grade separated option would be the most viable option.

D. Giombetti stated that the towns of Framingham and Natick are committed to working with the MassDOT District Office to develop short, medium, and long term solutions. He discussed the economic development opportunities in the area. J. Strunkin added that the Route 30 issues affect major employers in the area, not only TJX. And J. Ostroff noted that in Natick the economic center of gravity is along Route 30.

## **9. Briefing: MAPC MWRA Aqueduct Multiple Use Path Initiative—*Joel Barrera and David Loutzenheiser, MAPC Staff***

J. Barrera discussed MAPC's and the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority's (MWRA's) *Aqueduct Multiple Use Path Initiative*. Approximately 40 miles of aqueduct land is now available for conversion to trails. MAPC and the MWRA are working with municipalities to permit these lands for trail use. J. Barrera recognized D. Giombetti and J. Ostroff as leaders in their communities on these efforts.

For small cost these lands are being made available for public use. Some funds from the UPWP and federal Community Transformations Grant funds are being used for planning and permitting. State Representative Chris Walsh has filed an amendment to a bond bill in order to access \$2 million in environmental bond funds for this work.

J. Barrera asked people to consider if there are lands in their cities or towns that could be incorporated into this trail network.

D. Loutzenheiser then showed a map of aqueducts that MAPC and MWRA are working on opening for public access. The pedestrian network is piecemeal now, but MAPC is working toward making connections for a seamless trail system through conservation lands. He displayed other maps showing the sections of trail currently open to the public and the proposed network.

### ***Discussion***

R. Mares asked what the cost is to municipalities to participate. D. Loutzenheiser replied that the cost would be for staff time. The MWRA would do the basic maintenance on the properties.

R. Mares asked if this idea has been presented to the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. J. Barrera explained that a portion of the \$2 million environmental bond bill would go to the Central region so that they could work with their municipalities on a trail network.

David Koses, At Large City of Newton, asked how much of the trail network goes through dense residential areas. D. Loutzenheiser explained that the proposed network includes the City of Newton and Town of Framingham. D. Giombetti remarked that initially there were concerns in the Town of Framingham about the trail in residential areas, but that the town conducted outreach that has engaged the residents, who are now supportive of the trails.

J. Gillooly raised a question about the protection of reservoirs as critical infrastructure. J. Barrera stated that it is better to have people near these facilities and keeping their



eyes on them. The areas that MAPC and the MWRA are opening are back-up aquaducts and less sensitive from a security standpoint.

Melissa Santucci Rozzi, South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree), asked if the trail areas are ADA accessible. D. Loutzenheiser replied that the areas are being opened for public access. If improvements were made to the trails, ADA issues would have to be considered.

## **10. Members Items**

J. Gillooly informed members that the City of Boston was awarded a \$15.5 million federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant for the city's Connecting Historic Boston project. The city will be investing \$7.5 million into this project. The Federal Highway Administration is asking that these funds be programmed on the TIP and in the LRTP. At the appropriate time, the city will be requesting that the MPO program these funds.

The following agenda items were tabled:

- Meeting Minutes of September 12 and October 13
- Update on the MPO's Technical Assistance to the MWRTA
- FFY 2014 Schedule for Certification Activities

## **11. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by the At-Large Town of Lexington (R. Canale) and seconded by the At-Large City of Newton (D. Koses). The motion carried.

## Attendance

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### Members

### Representatives and Alternates

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At-Large City (City of Everett)	James Errickson
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	Richard Canale
City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)	Lara Mérida
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jim Gillooly
	Tom Kadzis
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Hayes Morrison
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Ned Codd
MassDOT Highway Division	David Anderson
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Ron Morgan
Massachusetts Port Authority	Lourenço Dantas
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Marc Draisen
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Denise Deschamps
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Ed Tarallo
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Steve Olanoff
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)	Melissa Santucci Rozzi
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Dennis Crowley
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)	Tom O'Rourke

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<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Sree Allam	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Joel Barrera	MAPC
Bonnie Biocchi	MetroWest Chamber of Commerce
Ed Carr	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Arthur Frost	MassDOT District 3
Mike Gowing	Town of Acton Board of Selectmen
Bob Halpin	Town of Framingham
Kristina Johnson	City of Quincy
David Loutzenheiser	MAPC
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Elena Mihaly	Conservation Law Foundation
David Montgomery	Town of Needham / Regional Transportation Advisory Council
Josh Ostroff	Town of Natick
Jessica Strunkin	495/MetroWest Partnership
Jennifer Thompson	Town of Framingham
Wig Zamore	Somerville resident

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**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director  
Seth Asante  
Jonathan Belcher  
David Fargen  
Maureen Kelly  
Robin Mannion  
Anne McGahan  
Elizabeth Moore  
Efi Pagitsas  
Sean Pfalzer  
Pam Wolfe

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