



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Richard A. Davey, MassDOT Secretary and CEO and MPO Chairman
Karl H. Quackenbush, Executive Director, MPO Staff

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 1, 2014

TO: Draft Memorandum for MPO Website

FROM: Ryan Hicks, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)

RE: Boston Region MPO Meeting Minutes

Meeting Time/Location:

1:00 PM–2:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Chairperson:

Lourenço Dantas, representing Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport)

Decisions:

No decisions were made at this meeting.

Meeting Agenda:

1. Introductions

Efi Pagitsas coordinated the introductions for the Congestion Management Process (CMP) committee. Lourenço Dantas, who is the normal committee chair, was not in attendance at this meeting.

The Congestion Management Process is a mandatory program for MPOs that have nonattainment status for air-quality conformation. The CMP monitors performance of local transportation facilities and makes recommendations for cost-effective strategies to relieve congestion. Two performance measures that CTPS monitors are park-and-ride and bicycle-parking usage at MBTA stations, which was covered in a presentation at this meeting. Another presentation at the meeting was about the Express Highway Performance Dashboard.

2. Chair's Report

There was none.

3. Approval of Minutes from January 23, 2014, CMP Meeting

Approval of these minutes was postponed until the next CMP committee meeting.

4. Presentation of Memoranda: “2012–13 Inventory of Park-and-Ride Lots at MBTA Facilities,” and “2012 Inventory of Bicycle Parking Spaces and Number of Parked Bicycles at MBTA Stations”

2012–13 Inventory of Park-and-Ride Lots at MBTA Facilities

The goal of this data-collection endeavor is to obtain parking-utilization rates for each station, including the entire MBTA system. Parking-utilization data for the current inventory was collected between October 2012 and June 2013. Staff compared this with previous inventories to see if there were any changes in utilization rates throughout the MBTA, which could be a result of factors such as fare increases, station construction, and state of the economy.

Park-and-ride use of MBTA lots decreased in the period between the 2005–06 and 2009–10 inventories; but has increased between the 2009–10 and 2012–13 inventories. Many of the lots that showed a utilization rate of 85 percent or greater in 2012–13 are located within Route 128 or along expressway corridors. Also in 2012–13, MBTA system-wide parking lot utilization has increased three percent since the previous inventory—despite an increase in parking capacity and the 2012 fare increase.

2012 Inventory of Bicycle Parking Spaces and Number of Parked Bicycles at MBTA Stations

As with the park-and-ride inventory, the goal of the bicycle-parking inventory is to obtain the bicycle-parking utilization rate. Staff surveyed MBTA commuter rail stations in summer 2012, and rapid transit stations in fall 2012.

Bicycle-parking capacity and utilization has been increasing steadily since 2005. However, the number of bicycles parked at stations is rising faster than the number of bicycle-parking spaces. In the memorandum, staff recommended improvements for each station flagged for problems with bicycle parking, which included enhanced security, visibility, aesthetics, and capacity.

Questions and Comments

Utilization rates for bicycles may be higher on lines that permit bicycles on the vehicles. Do we know which routes allow bike-rack access? Are there any counts for the number of bicycles that utilize these services?

Yes, as of December 2012, all buses that do not have overhead wiring have bike racks installed. This project was funded through a grant in 2010. To date, CTPS does not have a count for the number of riders who have used the bus racks. Staff would need to conduct a separate survey to collect this data.

To whom are the recommendations in the bicycle memo directed?

CTPS gives the recommendations to the MBTA bicycle coordinator for reviews. In the past, staff worked with the bicycle coordinator to decide where to place bicycle cages in order to best prevent theft and other incidents.

Is the MBTA considering installing rentable secure bicycle lockers?

We do not know if the MBTA has plans to install lockers, although staff can ask the MBTA if necessary.

Table 1 in the “2012–13 Inventory of Park-and-Ride Lots at MBTA Facilities” displays the change in number of parking spaces. Is there a common reason for the reduction of the rapid transit parking spaces?

Certain stations have lost parking capacity for various reasons, such as development, among other factors.

Should there be concern that the pricing of these parking lots may not be set correctly to achieve the optimum 85 percent parking-utilization rate?

Staff enters the counts from the park-and-ride survey into the CTPS travel demand model, which derives transit-ridership data. If the ridership numbers are normal, then commuters are parking nearby. (Our work scope does not include determining where exactly they are parking.) When the MBTA raises its parking rates, nearby private parking lots may, in turn, reduce their prices to undercut MBTA prices.

Did the MBTA look at the parking-utilization numbers?

The MBTA did look at these numbers, but they analyzed them from a technical point of view rather than a policy perspective. CTPS staff and the MBTA met to make sure that the data collected from the 2012–13 survey was consistent with the capacity numbers of the MBTA. The MBTA did not look at the price sensitivities of the stations that showed a drop in utilization.

Are old bicycle racks being replaced?

Currently, the agency is using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to replace older racks at MBTA stations with bicycle ports, which usually have inverted U-shaped racks and roofs.

5. Demonstration of CMP Freeway Interactive Map Application

Last year, CTPS purchased INRIX data for the entire Boston region. Staff has been working to analyze the data and determine an effective way to communicate findings to the public. Staff has established a number of performance measures, including travel speed, speed index, congestion duration, delay per mile, travel time index, and planning time index.

The name of this application is the Express Highway Performance Dashboard. The dashboard features two displays—a regional view, and data by route. Staff demonstrated the application to show average travel speed, congestion duration, speed index, and delay per mile. The map's colors are still in draft form, and could be altered if they do not depict congestion correctly. We plan is to post this application on the MPO website so that the public may access it.

Questions and Comments

How much flexibility did you guys have with setting the speed thresholds?

The average speed performance measure thresholds were set according the Highway Capacity Manual's guidelines. Other performance measures, unique to the Boston region, have draft thresholds that could be changed if needed.

When will this application become available online to the public?

It should be available to the public by the end of June.

Are there any future regional projects that may be good candidates for a before-and-after analysis using this INRIX data?

Right now, future projections may be calculated by calibrating the CTPS transportation model.

How many years of this data do you expect to obtain?

To date, CTPS has purchased INRIX data for the entire year 2012. Because this data is relatively inexpensive compared to manually collected data, CTPS probably would be able to purchase this data every few years. However, at this writing, the purchase of additional years' data is not in the CTPS budget.

6. Other Business

There was none.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Attendance

Members	Representatives/ Alternates
At-Large City (City of Everett)	Tony Scusa
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	Richard Canale
City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)	Tom Kadzis
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	David Montgomery
Three Rivers Interlocal Council/Town of Norwood	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Mike Gowing	Regional Transportation Advisory Council /Town of Acton

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Hiral Gandhi
Ryan Hicks
Ben Krepp
Anne McGahan
Efi Pagitsas
Scott Peterson
