

Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Unified Planning Work Program Committee Meeting

March 19, 2015 Meeting

11:45 AM to 1:30 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Sreelatha Allam, Chair, representing the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Materials

Materials for this meeting included:

- A copy of the meeting agenda
- A copy of a public comment on the UPWP from a Somerville resident
- A printed email describing proposed MAPC project topics for the FFY 2016 UPWP
- A document listing MPO staff priorities for new FFY 2016 UPWP projects
- A document describing the results of a UPWP Committee member survey of top-priority and bottom-priority projects from the draft FFY 2016 UPWP Universe of Proposed New Projects

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Sreelatha Allam, Chair, Unified Planning Work Program Committee (Massachusetts Department of Transportation) called the meeting to order at approximately 11:45 AM. UPWP Committee members, MPO staff, and other attendees introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 14.) Michelle Scott, MPO staff, reviewed the meeting materials.

2. Updates to Draft FFY 2016 UPWP Universe of Proposed New Projects

M. Scott mentioned several items pertaining to the draft FFY 2016 UPWP Universe of Proposed New Projects:

Suggested Study of Tolling and Transit Investment

The Committee reviewed a public comment from Joel Weber, a resident of Somerville, which suggested that the Boston Region MPO's UPWP evaluate what transit improvements could most cost effectively reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles on the tolled highways during peak travel times. Increased toll revenues would fund these improvements. MPO staff are waiting for further feedback from MassDOT on whether this is something that would make sense for the MPO to pursue.

Noise and Public Health

A member of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council requested that the MPO give attention to noise pollution when considering links between transportation and public health. MPO staff is looking for opportunities to incorporate public health considerations into MPO activities (such as ongoing programs and corridors studies), and they will look at ways that noise impacts can be considered.

E-11: Alewife Transportation Community Study

M. Scott introduced the study, which seeks to improve bus, bicycle, and pedestrian mobility in the Alewife area and adjacent communities. Arthur Strang, a Cambridge resident, explained that he and members of the Fresh Pond Residents Alliance (FPRA) view the transportation network, including transit lines, as creating a radial system within Cambridge, Watertown, Arlington and Belmont. They are concerned about traffic moving within and between these communities and towards Boston, and the congestion this traffic creates, particularly for buses in the area. He explained that the scope and geographic area of this study should focus on making bus travel faster and more predictable. The movements of these buses should be prioritized along their entire routes.

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, noted that there are linkages between this proposed study and proposed project F-1: First Mile and Last Mile Connections Studies. He added that the MBTA has recently reviewed Route 77 between Cambridge and Arlington and recommended improvements such as stop consolidation, some of which were implemented by the two municipalities. He asked if an Alewife-area bus route could be studied as part of F-1. He also noted that it would be harder to make improvements on Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)-owned parkways. A. Strang noted that while buses don't travel on these parkways, they do cross them.

A. Strang indicated that community/FPRA members would be open to signal prioritization or moving bus stops, although bus stops should not be eliminated. E.

Bourassa noted that bus stop consolidation is a valuable strategy for improving travel time, though there are political barriers to removing stops.

David Koses, At-Large Cities (City of Newton) said that in his experience, buses move well through this area until they get to Alewife station, and asked whether this study proposes to look at areas some distance away from Alewife station. A. Strang suggested that the study not be circumscribed to a particular location, because bus bunching and congestion issues exist in areas beyond Alewife station.

F-6: Feasibility of Consolidated Ferry Service for Inner Core Communities M. Scott explained that MPO staff has continued to work with members of the Inner Core Committee on this project. They are also continuing to make sure that this study would be aligned with, and not duplicative of, the work of the Massachusetts Ferry Compact. She said that she attended a meeting of the Inner Core Committee on March 12 to discuss this issue with members, although attendance was light. She and MAPC's liaison for the Inner Core Committee are continuing to exchange information.

E. Bourassa noted that many municipalities, such as Medford, Everett, Quincy, and Winthrop, are interested in ferry service. Lara Mérida, City of Boston, mentioned that Boston has received a Transportation Investments for Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant to implement ferry service between East Boston and downtown Boston, and into Charleston. E. Bourassa said that he believes the MBTA wants to get out of the business of providing ferry service due to the cost. Alternatives for municipalities include doing their own contracting for ferry service, or coordinating together through a transportation management association-like entity. Municipalities might be able to leverage funding from businesses and mitigation funds from new developments to pay for ferry service. The study could research whether it would be possible to create this type of coordination entity.

E. Bourassa asked for more information on the Ferry Compact and its organizational structure. Elizabeth Moore, MPO staff, explained that the Compact is a group that MassDOT coordinates to discuss ferry transportation options. CTPS has done supporting research on existing conditions and demand for service. The Compact is now deciding what their future activities will be. E. Bourassa said that interacting with this group would be important.

Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), noted that the City of Somerville would be interested in ferry service for Assembly Square. He said that this service could

potentially be supported by the MBTA, but perhaps this study could investigate whether municipalities could contract with private entities.

3. Anticipated FFY 2016 MAPC Projects

E. Bourassa used the email describing proposed MAPC project topics for the FFY 2016 UPWP as a guide for this item. He explained that in previous years, MAPC has prepared information on new projects they planned to conduct in the upcoming UPWP year. In this development cycle, MAPC plans to continue work that they began in FFY 2015 and seeks the Committee's concurrence and/or feedback. He added that MAPC's UPWP work primarily focuses on the linkages between land use and transportation, such as parking and transit-oriented development.

E. Bourassa explained that one item for the upcoming year that will be new is an increased focus on first-mile and last-mile connections to transit. He noted that CTPS is also proposing to do work on first-mile and last-mile connections (proposed study F-1).

S. Allam asked whether MAPC's proposed activity would be something that they and CTPS would work on together. E. Bourassa said that if the proposed study F-1 were to happen, MAPC would coordinate with this work, in part to avoid overlap. He explained that in past years, MAPC has coordinated with CTPS staff on this type of work. This is a topic that MAPC is hearing about from suburban towns, although the opportunities for and feasibility of implementing these kinds of services can vary from town to town. S. Allam emphasized that there should not be duplication between the two studies.

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC) asked for confirmation that MAPC has its own UPWP activities, but that in some cases CTPS will seek MAPC's support on a project. E. Bourassa mentioned that CTPS and MAPC coordinate regularly on the Community Transportation Technical Assistance and Livable Community Workshop programs, although they also occasionally work on discrete UPWP studies together.

S. Olanoff asked whether it would be best for CTPS to address this first-mile or last-mile connections topic or for CTPS and MAPC to work on it together. He also asked how much money should come from each entity, if the latter option were chosen. Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director, explained that in study F-1, CTPS would request candidate locations and then conduct a series of individual first-mile/last-mile connections studies. E. Bourassa said that MAPC would likely provide a more diffuse type of technical assistance. On a past transit study in the SWAP subregion, MAPC played a facilitation and data gathering role while CTPS focused more on data analysis

and identifying opportunities for improvements. K. Quackenbush said that there may be an opportunity for a similar kind of collaboration, depending on how MAPC's first-mile and last-mile work evolves. S. Olanoff noted that this is a project that received the highest number of Committee member top priority votes (per the UPWP Committee member survey), and was recommended by staff, so this collaboration discussion should continue.

Tom O'Rourke, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC) asked how MAPC's proposed projects would be reflected in the UPWP. He recalled that last year, MAPC brought forward four or five specific projects for inclusion in the UPWP Universe. E. Bourassa explained that for many MAPC projects, descriptions in the upcoming UPWP document will explain that work that was started last year will be continued. Financial information will be provided for these projects. M. Scott explained that the next step for the UPWP Committee will be to review MAPC and CTPS's proposed budgets, which will provide a comprehensive look at all of the projects that CTPS and MAPC plan to include in the upcoming UPWP.

S. Olanoff asked how planning funding is distributed between CTPS and MAPC. K. Quackenbush explained that metropolitan planning funding from FHWA that is allocated to the Boston region is split between MAPC and CTPS by an agreement between the agencies. S. Olanoff asked for conformation that the UPWP Committee does not have a role in the distribution of these funds, but that they can advise MAPC on what topics they study. K. Quackenbush explained that the Committee can and should be providing such advice to MAPC. CTPS has historically brought more project information forward for the MPO's consideration, such as through work scopes, but the Committee should feel comfortable advising MAPC on how they spend their planning funds.

4. Results of UPWP Committee Member Priority Projects Survey

M. Scott described the structure of the document describing the results of the UPWP Committee member survey on top-priority and bottom-priority projects. This document categorizes the Universe projects by whether these projects received exclusively top priority votes, mixed top-priority and bottom-priority votes, exclusively bottom-priority votes, or no top-or-bottom priority votes. Proposed projects that are priorities for MPO staff are highlighted in yellow. Six UPWP Committee members responded to the survey.

She also described the structure of the document listing MPO staff's priority projects from the UPWP Universe. These staff priorities were identified using an internal survey process. The document also describes how these projects rated in terms of addressing long-range transportation plan vision themes, UPWP project functions, and UPWP

focus areas. For some of these projects, ratings have been updated since the February 19 UPWP Committee meeting.

5. Discussion of Staff Priorities for Proposed New Projects

Projects with Only Top-Priority Votes from Committee Members

M. Scott explained that MPO staff and UPWP Committee members shared a number of common project priorities in this group, including:

- F-1: First-Mile-and-Last-Mile Transit Connections Studies
- A-1: Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways: FFY 2016
- B-2: Pedestrian Level of Service Metric Development
- F-5: First-Mile-and-Last-Mile Transit Connections Studies
- A-2: Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment: FFY 2016
- A-3: Safety and Operations at Selected Intersections: FFY 2016
- D-1: Systemwide Environmental Justice/Title VI Assessment of TIP Projects
- G-1: Research Topics Generated by MPO Staff

She then identified projects that received support from Committee members, but were not included in the list of staff priorities. She provided specific details for two projects:

- **E-1: MBTA Parking Lots: Price Sensitivity Analysis:** M. Scott said that MPO staff is waiting to hear from MBTA staff on whether this project is of interest before including it in their priority list.
- **E-6: Transportation Mitigation of Major Developments: Review of Existing Strategies:** This project would build off of this year's Core Capacity Constraints study, which includes a section focused on transit mitigation policies. MPO staff has not included this project in their priority list, as they are waiting to see what they might find in the Core Capacity Constraints study.

Projects with Mixed Top-and-Bottom Priority Votes from Committee Members

M. Scott explained that staff priorities in this section include:

- E-4: Methodologies and Tools for Understanding the Relationship of Transportation to Gentrification and Displacement
- F-2: Non-Fixed-Route Transportation Services: Opportunities for Transit Agencies

The Committee members then discussed several UPWP Universe projects in detail.

A-6: Analyzing the Impacts of Expanded All-Electronic Tolling (AET)

K. Quackenbush explained that the MPO has done similar work of this type when directed by the state to address a particular policy interest. He said that this is work that is worthy of being done, but this type of study might have a more logical home as part of state-funded work, rather than MPO-funded work.

E. Bourassa said that he was enthusiastic about this project, which would be a theoretical analysis that would be useful in describing how indicators (such as those for congestion and mode shift) would change in response to expanded electronic tolling. He agreed that this type of project does tend in the direction of being state-directed work. K. Quackenbush explained that doing this work at the state's direction might tie the results more to reality in terms of implementation.

S. Olanoff asked what studies or work regarding all-electronic tolling might be done by the state. E. Bourassa said he thought that under new administration, new tolls would not be likely.

K. Quackenbush said that it is possible that MPO staff could explore this topic in future MPO scenario-planning efforts, which would take advantage of expanded CTPS and MAPC planning tools. This future scenario planning would continue past the LRTP to address areas of interest to the MPO and the transportation community at large, and could be used to see how potential policies might fit into a performance-based planning process. If this topic were to be addressed through this scenario planning, it would be MPO-funded, but would be folded into MPO ongoing work instead of being a stand-alone project.

S. Olanoff asked whether MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning (OTP) plans to study the impacts of AET once implemented. E. Bourassa asked whether the model would show new information if the tolls were not going to change. Scott Peterson, MPO staff, explained that while there would be some travel time efficiencies, there may not be significant changes in indicators for the MassPike because new tolls or pricing structures are not being instituted. (Note: Safety improvements are a likely benefit that could be measured over time and geometric changes could lead to some improvement in travel times, which could be quantified.)

D. Koses noted that he agreed with E. Bourassa and Joel Weber on their points regarding tolling studies. He added that he was interested in this study because AET creates substantial changes to the transportation system, but he is not aware of any studies of the topic that have been brought to the MPO. He noted that the MPO has just

completed a study of Washington Street in Newton, but added that he wondered what might happen to his area if all-electronic tolling was introduced between West Newton and Newton Corner, where there currently is no toll. S. Olanoff added that he did not know of any study behind the removal of tollbooths on I-90, nor of any study supporting the replacement of some of the tollbooths. D. Koses noted that removal of tollbooths has created changes in traffic in West Newton, and that the replacement of tollbooths might create changes in Newton Corner.

S. Peterson explained that there are several tolling-related studies underway. One is for the Route 3 Public Private Partnership, and the other relates to I-90 Allston Interchange project, which is looking at the reconfiguration of that interchange. This includes the removal of tollbooths and may allow for geometric changes that support safety. He said he wasn't aware of any other studies underway that are examining alternative tolling structures.

S. Peterson noted that proposed study A-6 could be a congestion pricing scenario, which could lead to mode shift. E. Bourassa said that roadway pricing would be the right strategy for creating mode shift and reducing congestion, rather than new transit capital projects. K. Quackenbush said that there would need to be a mix of strategies, because in some places, additional capacity might be needed to give travelers different options.

Eileen Gunn, MassDOT OTP's Sustainability Manager, explained that this topic was discussed at a recent MassDOT innovation conference, and that federal laws would need to be changed to support tolling on interstate highways. E. Bourassa agreed that is a constraint, although the Obama administration is discussing potential changes to related regulations.

E. Gunn added that S. Peterson and MassDOT are working a project using a FHWA modeling/greenhouse gas (GHG) analytics tool, and could potentially use this research as an opportunity to inform this issue. Melissa Kalicin, MassDOT, mentioned the revenue, safety, and mode shift benefits of London's congestion pricing initiative. S. Olanoff suggested that A-6 study be pursued, and that it reflect London's congestion pricing approach. D. Koses said that the issue should be studied, and asked who might study this topic if MassDOT does not. T. Bent noted that if the outcomes of this type of study would not be supported by the federal government, there may not be a point to doing this body of work.

K. Quackenbush said that some tolling related issues that could affect West Newton fall into an "operations" category, since the MassPike is already a tolled facility and recent

changes focus on the transition from non-electronic to electronic toll collection infrastructure. Study A-6 is looking at implementing tolling where it does not currently exist, which would make it a more policy-oriented study. D. Koses said he was concerned about the implications of a new electronic toll on the MassPike AET on the Masspike (not at the entrance ramps, but on the road itself) between West Newton and Newton Corners. He said he was interested in knowing where people would be traveling in response to the presence of the toll. K. Quackenbush explained that the shifts in traffic on the network are operational issues. T. Bent noted that Washington Street would be a highly specific example for looking at tolling impacts, although D. Koses said the level of specificity might vary depending on the area being studied.

S. Olanoff noted that even if tolling is not permitted on some facilities, if the results of a tolling-related study were compelling, it might be able to provide support for policy change. M. Kalicin said that New York City has been working on congestion pricing policies. K. Quackenbush and E. Bourassa noted that past efforts to institute congestion pricing in New York City have failed.

D. Koses noted that study A-6 could also account for impacts in response to variations in pricing, and that there is likely some aspect of this overall topic that would be worthwhile for the MPO to study. There is something here that's worth studying. K. Quackenbush noted that there are a number of parameters that could be studied—changes in modes, roadways used, travel during particular times of day.

T. Bent noted that this type of study should probably be a statewide endeavor, because these policies would likely be implemented in areas beyond just Boston. He asked whether it would be possible to get feedback from the state on whether it would be better for them to conduct this work. S. Allam said she would relay these comments to MassDOT management.

E-4: Methodologies and Tools for Understanding the Relationship of Transportation to Gentrification and Displacement

M. Scott noted that Committee member responses on E-4 were mixed, and that this project is a staff priority.

E. Bourassa said he voted for this project, but asked what data and tools would be used to shed light on this issue. S. Peterson said he has been working with Tim Reardon at MAPC on how the new land use model could be used to examine how transportation investments could change accessibility measures. CTPS and MAPC could examine how accessibility metrics change for specific income or ethnic groups, and they could

examine how changes in the pricing structure of housing impact these population groups. E. Bourassa said he thought such work would provide valuable information for Inner Core Communities.

S. Peterson said that two possible locations for study could be Davis Square, which has been heavily researched already, (there's been a lot of research done on this already) and the areas around Green Line Extension, where staff would look potential changes beyond what has already occurred.

E. Bourassa noted that Somerville has done a lot to plan for displacement. T. Bent said that Somerville identified study E-4 as a lower priority when responding to the UPWP Committee member survey. He said that Somerville could be used as a test subject for this study, and that Somerville is trying to stay ahead of those changes with its new zoning ordinance and other plans. He said that he was concerned that this study might just confirm what Somerville has already learned. S. Olanoff asked what work Somerville is doing to mitigate gentrification effects through its zoning ordinance updates. T. Bent said, through this update of the 25-year-old ordinance, the City is looking at opportunities to increase affordable housing and to prevent gentrification in station districts. One interesting finding from the station-area planning is that almost the whole city is within a half miles of an MBTA station, which creates some complexity regarding regulating development.

K. Quackenbush suggested this study could use Somerville's case to calibrate modeling tools, and to create an analytical mechanism which could be used to help other communities in the future. These tools could ultimately generate information about the magnitudes of different impacts from transportation projects.

T O'Rourke asked where the tool might be applied in the future. E. Bourassa suggested that it could be used as part of planning for the Olympics. L. Mérida said she would be interested in cases where infrastructure improvements were made but gentrification didn't happen, although she didn't know under what circumstances that phenomenon might occur. She said that the Boston is encountering this issue when building new stations along the Fairmount Line. Some communities in the area are concerned about gentrification as a result of Fairmount Line improvements and therefore are resisting those improvements. She said she was unsure how this study might improve upon the information planners already have to address these issues.

E. Bourassa asked whether this study might help the City of Boston show the magnitude for potential displacement. K. Quackenbush explained that the study might

shed light on the circumstances—including project and geographic area characteristics—where displacement might be more or less significant. Such tools could provide the MPO with more information when doing project evaluation. E. Bourassa said these tools could support analysis of gentrification occurring around existing transit service. He also said he was curious to know whether commuter rail improvements could have an effect on displacement and gentrification.

T. O'Rourke said he was concerned that the region's transportation system is already mature, with no real major transit line extension occurring outside of the Green Line. S. Olanoff asked whether perhaps these tools could shed light on how municipal or other activities to counteract gentrification and displacement might perform. T. Bent said it may not be possible to see these outcomes until 10 or 20 years from now.

S. Peterson said he hoped this study build understanding by looking at existing projects, and support development of a tool that could estimate the magnitudes of shifts in markets and housing costs.

C-1: MPO Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Planning

This project was included in the category of projects that received no top-priority or bottom priority votes. M. Scott noted that the MPO seeks to do more work related to climate change adaptation planning past work focused on GHG reduction. She added that the MPO is aware that MassDOT is doing work in this area already, and is interested in MassDOT's feedback on how the MPO can add value.

E. Gunn said that MPOs can learn from the process and methodology coming out of MassDOT's own vulnerability assessment work, though MassDOT's assessments would need to be adapted for the MPO level. She said that it would be a good idea to look at other adaptation efforts, as listed in the proposed project description, although it can be hard to assess the viability of different adaptation strategies in the absence of specific climate data. She noted that many agencies are also struggling in the absence of design guidelines from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

M. Kalicin explained that MassDOT's Environmental section has developed a storm surge and sea level rise model for the City of Boston and Cambridge. The project team is currently developing a communications plan to support the release of the model results. She added that she was working on a statewide vulnerability assessment for other climate factors, including freeze/thaw and precipitation. This assessment would overlay a variety of climate scenarios over MassDOT assets, including MBTA, highway,

aeronautics, and some DCR facilities. MassDOT is currently identifying a consultant for this project, which is expected to last 18 months.

M. Kalicin explained that the MassDOT's work will set the climate scenarios for the whole state, which will support consistency across agencies, and that the project is expected to produce a tool that MPOs can use in conjunction with their own asset maps. She encouraged the MPO to coordinate with MassDOT on their climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation activities going forward.

T. Bent said he wondered whether it would make sense for the MPO to wait to proceed with project C-1 until after MassDOT has completed its climate scenarios project. He asked M. Kalicin to encourage the consultant to involve CTPS in this project.

E-5. Analyzing the Impacts of Special Events on the Region's Transportation System

E. Bourassa asked if this project pertained to the Olympics. M. Scott explained that is not oriented towards events like the Olympics, but rather recurring special events, such as sports events, that are causing capacity surges on the transportation system. This is a phenomenon that could be better captured in the MPO's regional travel demand model and could be incorporated into scenario planning and other analyses. S. Peterson added that this information would help expand the MPO's ability to model transportation activity beyond typical weekday travel. S. Olanoff asked whether this would include conventions, which have also been linked to increases in traffic congestion. K. Quackenbush said that conventions would be included.

F-3 New Community Transit Services

M. Scott explained that while MPO staff feels the topic covered by this study is important, they think it could be addressed by increasing funding to the ongoing Regional Transit Service Planning Technical Support program in the UPWP, which provides transit-related technical assistance. S. Olanoff asked whether this work would overlap with the content of proposed study F-1. M. Scott said there would be some linkages.

6. FFY 2016 UPWP Development Process: Upcoming Steps

At the next meeting, the Committee will look at the comprehensive proposed MAPC and CTPS budgets, along with the MPO staff recommendation for proposed new projects. There may be more meetings in April to support the LRTP, which may create additional opportunities for UPWP Committee meetings.

7. Work Program for Safety Analysis of Intersections near MAGIC Schools (tentative, if time allows)

This agenda item was not discussed at the current UPWP Committee meeting. It will be discussed at a future meeting.

8. Member Items

There were none.

9. Next Meeting

MPO staff proposed having the next UPWP Committee meeting will be on April 9, 2015. At this meeting, MPO staff will present a proposed FFY 2016 UPWP budget and a staff recommendation for new projects.

10. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by E. Bourassa and seconded by T. Bent. The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large Cities (City of Newton)	David Koses
City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)	Lara Mérida
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Sreelatha Allam
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees Affiliation

Eileen Gunn	MassDOT
Melissa Kalicin	MassDOT
Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)
Arthur Strang	Cambridge resident

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director
Mark Abbott
David Fargen
Elizabeth Moore
Scott Peterson
Michelle Scott
Pam Wolfe
