

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



Regional Transportation Advisory Council

December 9, 2015 Meeting

3:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

Meeting Summary

Introductions

M. Sanborn, Vice Chair (Massachusetts Bus Association) called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 5)

Chair's Report-Mark Sanborn, Vice Chair

M. Sanborn explained that the Advisory Council's 3C Documents Committee held a meeting on November 30 to discuss the Green Line Extension proposals to the MPO. The meeting covered members' perspectives on the project. The Committee expressed support for the Green Line Extension as it was originally designed and not scaled back in a way that would diminish service. The committee members supported the continuance of Phase 2 of the extension project should the current funding transfer occur.

Committee members want to know what part of the project would be cut, and what were the options being presented? Members were concerned that transferring the MPO funds from GLX2 to GLX1 would only cover about a fifth of the overall costs prompting a discussion on where the rest of the funds would come from. The committee was also concerned with how the project overruns are explained and whether the Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB) can renegotiate the contracts. Section four of the procurement contract represents a huge overrun and committee members want to know if this is typical of all seven contract components and asked how can overruns be averted in the future?

M. Sanborn reported that the Amendment to the LRTP dealing with financing the GLX was not brought up at the MPO's December 3 meeting. Any comments on the subject can be made today, or sent to the officers and staff.

Minutes - November 18, 2015

A motion to approve the minutes for the November 18 meeting was seconded. The minutes were approved as amended.

TIP Evaluation Criteria Update Process - *Sean Pfalzer, TIP Manager, CTPS*

S. Pfalzer explained that existing project evaluation criteria are being updated by the MPO. This presentation reviewed the related discussion at the last two MPO meetings, identifying the current status of the update process, and reviewed some of the feedback received and how that is incorporated into the next steps.

The existing TIP criteria were established by the MPO in 2010 in developing the last Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The criteria were designed to identify projects that will help the region attain the vision, goals and objectives of the LRTP. The goals are system preservation, modernization and efficiency, livability and economic benefits, mobility, environment and climate change, environmental justice, and safety and security. Within each of the goals are 35 criteria which are factors that support the achievement of the goals. For example, within the goal of safety and security, there are nine criteria that assess to what degree the project addresses safety needs and improvements for all modes. Currently, the MPO is discussing updates to these specific criteria and, in identifying the criteria to be used, weighs the data measures to be used to capture the relationship to goal achievement.

S. Pfalzer reviewed the Federal Highway Program funding sources for the MPO. Three main funding programs include the Bridge Program, Statewide Items (pavement and resurfacing projects, bicycle and pedestrian projects, intersections and Safe-Routes-to-School projects), and the Regional Targets. Regional Target funds are the funds that go to the MPOs, of which about 43% goes to the Boston MPO. The project selection criteria are used in evaluating the projects in this funding category.

The TIP project selection process starts with the compilation of a universe of projects proposed by cities and towns. When projects reach the 25 percent design phase, they are evaluated with the criteria. A First-Tier list is made from the evaluation results and guides the staff recommendation which varies based on funding availability.

The TIP evaluation criteria approach has remained consistent for the last five development cycles and has helped solidify the MPO's data-driven approach to investment decision-making. Projects with greater needs are being addressed which leads to progress toward goals: high crash locations are improved, substandard

pavement is improved and CO² is reduced. The projects span all eight MAPC subregions and all four MAPC community types which indicates positive geographic equity of projects throughout the region.

Updating the selection criteria this year was prompted by the update of the LRTP which has new goals and changes within the goals. Since the criteria are used to ensure that the goals are being advanced, the criteria need to be synchronized with the updated LRTP goals and objectives.

The MPO is transitioning to Performance-based Planning and Programming, a requirement of the federal MAP-21 guidelines, which links the MPO's goals and objectives with performance measures and with evaluation criteria.

Updating the criteria was also based on public comments which encouraged the MPO to consider geographic equity; economic benefits associated with the projects; quantitative measures and outcomes over qualitative ones; preference for projects that select people over machines, and changing the metrics to capture that sensitivity.

The Advisory Council comment letter sent last summer suggested that the MPO staff conduct sensitivity analysis of criteria to see how changes to criteria might impact the project ratings. The letter also suggested that staff focus criteria on quantitative measures and outcomes and improve data and analytical methods.

S. Pfalzer explained handouts summarizing the three steps staff proposed to the MPO for updating the criteria. Step one was the realignment of the criteria under new goals. Step two eliminated redundant criteria within each goal category. In step three, additions and revisions were made to line up with MAP-21 requirements. The MPO expressed interest in maintaining a strong emphasis on Complete Streets and Environmental Justice (EJ). The MPO also promoted a consistent approach of specific criteria over more abstract criteria. The MPO preferred to prioritize the objective over the subjective and to focus on measuring impacts and outcomes.

Questions and Comments

M. Sanborn commended S. Pfalzer for the organization and presentation of the charts and noted their clarity and comprehensive style.

C. Porter explained that some of the criteria depend on how the factor is rated. For example, regarding the MPO's comments on Complete Streets design might be considered a component of the reducing auto dependency but it depends on how much the auto dependency is weighted. S. Pfalzer explained that the overall value of the scoring for Complete Streets may not diminish despite fewer criteria with Complete Streets references.

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In response to a question from B. Steinberg, S. Pfalzer said that with existing criteria, a majority of the criteria are evaluated with data and quantifiable measures, particularly with safety values and pavement management scores. Some criteria are measured with non-quantitative data, such as improving pedestrian safety (sidewalk availability and crash data) but to a certain degree, a professional judgment must be made because some data points are not the only factors considered in the pedestrian safety assessment.

D. Montgomery asked about the historical context of changes and the proposed time frame for completing the update.

S. Pfalzer stated that in 2010, each project was scored and received a rating. In 2012, there was a broadening of EJ populations considerations and targeted development sites. The updates were minor, but this effort is more significant. The next two MPO meetings will address the new updates and decide on the final version. Projects for this year's TIP will be evaluated in February which requires these being finalized by then.

J. McQueen encouraged that certain quality of life measures might be obtained through DPH and incorporated into the analysis.

S. Pfalzer explained the MassDOT Project Selection Advisory Council (PSAC) selects projects based on criteria that align fairly closely with the proposed updates, in response to a question from P. Nelson. The MPO criteria are intended to evaluate projects that are associated with the MPO's more specific projects in the Target Program (intersections, roadway and bike path projects) whereas the PSAC criteria are designed to evaluate a more comprehensive set of projects in MassDOT's first application of the evaluation criteria to its capital investment program. Going forward, the MPO may retool the evaluation criteria to be more synchronized with the criteria being used to evaluate projects in the capital investment program. There is overlap in the scoring at MassDOT and the MPO because the goals are consistent.

S. Larrabee expressed concerned that transit is not being represented in the new goals.

Old Business, New Business and Member Announcements

M. Sanborn encouraged members to submit comments on the evaluation criteria and on the Green Line Extension to the officers soon as these will both be covered in upcoming MPO meetings.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion passes and the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 PM.

Attendance

Municipalities (Voting)

Brookline
Cambridge
Needham

Westwood
Weymouth

Citizen Groups

American Council of Engineering Companies
Association for Public Transportation
Boston Society of Architects
Boston Society of Civil Engineers
Massachusetts Bus Association
MassBike
MASCO
WalkBoston

Municipalities (Non-Voting)

Boston

Guests

Malden Resident

Cambridge Resident

Staff

David Fargen
Sean Pfalzer

Attendees

Todd M. Kirrane
Cleo Stoughton
David Montgomery
Trevor
Laubenstein
Owen MacDonald

Fred Moseley
Barry M Steinberg
Schuyler Larrabee
Topher Smith
Mark Sanborn
Chris Porter
Paul Nelson
John McQueen

Tom Kadzis

Ed Lowney
Brittany
Montgomery

Matt Archer