

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

February 18, 2016 Meeting

10:05 AM – 12:10 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

David Mohler, Chair, representing Stephanie Pollack, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreed to the following:

- certify that the MPO is in compliance with State Regulation 310 CMR 60.05: *Global Warming Solutions Act Requirements for the Transportation Sector and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation*
- approve the work program for the *Support to the Lower Mystic Working Group*, subject to the upcoming approval of the work program by the Lower Mystic Working Group
- approve the work program for the *MBTA Bus Service Data Collection IX*
- approve the minutes of the MPO meeting of January 21, 2016

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

There were none.

2. Chair's Report

There was none.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports

Jay Monty, At-Large City of Everett, will be the new chair of the MPO's Congestion Management Committee.

4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Tegin Bennett, Advisory Council Chair*

The Advisory Council met on February 10 for a brainstorming session to develop ideas for the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Council members raised points regarding their interest in taking an analytical and systematic approach to assessing existing programs and dedicating money to new programs, and

understanding the success of UPWP studies and whether they lead to projects. Other topics of interest include the following: cycling; data and data availability; smart parking; parking and utilization at commuter rail stations; and transit.

5. Executive Director's Report—Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, CTPS

As the MPO periodically holds meetings in communities outside of Boston, members discussed the possibility of holding one of their March meetings in Weymouth. However, due to anticipated discussions about the Green Line Extension project, members determined that the March meetings should be held in the more central location of Boston.

Follow-up Conversation to the Executive Director's Report—MPO Members

D. Mohler reported that MassDOT staff expects to give a presentation to the MPO on March 3 regarding the current status of Phase 1 of the Green Line Extension project (the extension of the line from Lechmere Station in Cambridge to College Avenue in Medford, with a spur to Union Square in Somerville). The cost estimate of the project increased from nearly \$2 billion to \$3 billion last year, prompting the MassDOT Board of Directors and the MBTA's Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB) to halt the construction of the project.

MassDOT has now hired consultants to redesign the project using value engineering techniques while complying with the requirements of the Full-Funding Grant Agreement with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). (Under this agreement, and FTA New Starts grant would providing nearly \$1 billion toward the project with Commonwealth monies funding the remainder.) The MassDOT Board and FMCB have indicated that if the revised cost estimate exceeds \$2 billion, the additional sources of funding will have to come from non-state sources. These sources could include MPO discretionary funds, or municipal or developer contributions.

As such, MassDOT anticipates potentially asking the MPO to vote on March 17 to amend its Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Charting Progress to 2040*, and FFYs 2016-20 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to reprogram funds currently intended for the construction of Phase 2 of the Green Line Extension (extending the line from College Avenue to Route 16 in Medford) to Phase 1. Then, following a 30-day public review period, the MPO could vote on the amendments on May 5. The MassDOT Board and FMCB would then have the results of the vote for their deliberations about the future of the project at their meeting on May 11.

Members and attendees discussed the Green Line Extension issue and raised several points and questions. Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), and Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, raised the idea of the MPO voting with the provision that the Phase 2 funds be restored to that segment of the project, in the event that they are not needed for Phase 1. R. Mares also noted that it may not be necessary to remove all the funding from Phase 2, because only \$8 million of the total project cost would be affected (i.e. the amount programmed in the FFY 2016 element of the TIP). D. Mohler discussed the change in the construction timeline of Phase 1 and explained that Phase 2 cannot proceed on its current timeline. Also, if the MassDOT Board of Directors and FCMB decide to cancel Phase 1, Phase 2 could not proceed.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), requested that MassDOT provide the presentation materials for the March 3 meeting to the members in advance of the meeting. J. Monty also requested that the MassDOT provide information early on about the details of the funding needs.

In response to questions from Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), D. Mohler confirmed that the new project cost estimate that will be presented to the MassDOT Board and FMCB will include the costs of terminating existing contracts.

6. Certification Statement: Compliance with State Regulation 310 CMR 60.05—Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director, and Anne McGahan, MPO Staff

Members were presented with two forms for signature to certify that the MPO's LRTP (and Air Quality Conformity Determination) and the TIP are in compliance with State Regulation 310 CMR 60.05: *Global Warming Solutions Act Requirements for the Transportation Sector and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation*. This regulation requires MPOs in the Commonwealth to track and evaluate the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions impacts from projects implemented through their LRTPs and TIPs, and to include a statement in those documents certifying that efforts have been made to minimize emissions.

Last summer the MPO approved the FFYs 2016-20 TIP, which included an appendix describing the GHG emissions associated with projects programmed in the TIP. The MPO also approved the LRTP, *Charting Progress to 2040*, and reported that MassDOT was in the process of modeling and projecting emissions impacts for LRTP projects statewide. Thus, these certification statements needed to wait for the completion of the MassDOT effort. Since that time, MassDOT has released the report, *Meeting Air Quality Goals in Transportation*, which shows that the LRTPs are in compliance with the Global

Warming Solutions Act. The report was presented to MPO on September 17, 2015, and is now a supplement to the LRTP.

The signed certification statements will be incorporated into the two documents.

7. Work Program for Support to the Lower Mystic Working Group—Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director

K. Quackenbush introduced the work program for *Support to the Lower Mystic Working Group*. Through this work program, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) will support the work of a Regional Working Group charged with assessing and developing transportation improvements that can support sustainable redevelopment and economic growth in and around the Sullivan Square area in Boston, Somerville, and Everett.

The formation of the Working Group is a requirement in the Certificate for the Second Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Report on the Wynn Casino development in Everett, issued by the Executive Office for Energy and Environmental Affairs. The group will be led by MassDOT and involve the participation of various agencies and municipalities. The group is charged to come to a consensus in 18 months.

The work program describes the tasks that will be undertaken by CTPS and MAPC, but the budget provided in the work program includes CTPS's portion only. CTPS will lead on tasks associated with travel modeling and transportation analysis. In addition to using the MPO's travel demand model, CTPS staff will employ intersection level models and micro-simulation models. MAPC will take the lead on land-use issues and developing land-use projections, and will employ the land-use allocation model that was developed jointly by MAPC and CTPS.

Specific tasks include the following: assisting with stakeholder engagement; examining existing land uses and identifying the developments that are planned for the study area; examining the existing and proposed transportation infrastructure; developing a model of existing transportation conditions; developing baseline scenarios for modeling to the forecast years of 2030 and 2040; identifying mitigation strategies and land use alternatives; modeling as many as 12 alternative scenarios; and exploring funding options for implementing identified strategies.

Discussion

D. Mohler noted that the Lower Mystic Working Group has not yet approved this work program; the work program will be on the agenda at their meeting next week. The MPO

was given the option of tabling the vote on this work program today, or voting today subject to changes that might be made by the Working Group next week.

A motion to approve the work program for *Support to the Lower Mystic Working Group*, subject to the Working Group's approval, was made by the MAPC (Eric Bourassa), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent). The motion carried.

8. Work Program for MBTA Bus Service Data Collection IX—Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director

K. Quackenbush introduced the work program for the *MBTA Bus Service Data Collection IX*. This work program is the ninth in a series that CTPS has conducted to assist the MBTA in the collection of transit ridership data. This new contract involves conducting pointchecks to monitor ridership on select bus routes, and analytic assistance to the MBTA regarding schedule adjustments. Some ridechecks may also be conducted, although in recent years, new fare collection and passenger counting technology has lessened the need for ridechecking.

A motion to approve the work program for the *MBTA Bus Service Data Collection IX* was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

9. MPO Meeting Minutes—Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 21, 2016 was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

10. FAST Act Legislation Update—Joanne Telegen Weinstock, Federal Transit Administration, and Leah Sirmin, Federal Highway Administration

L. Sirmin and J. Weinstock gave an overview of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The FAST Act, signed by President Obama in December 2015, authorizes \$305 billion nationwide over a five-year period, from FFY 2016-20, for improvements to the surface transportation system (all modes). Of that amount, \$226.3 billion will be available for highway projects.

The highway portion of the FAST Act builds off the programs and structures in the prior legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), and continues MAP-21's emphasis on performance-based planning. Ninety-two percent of the highway funding will be distributed through formula programs, including the following: National

Highway Performance Program (NHPP), Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Congestion Management and Air Quality Program (CMAQ), National Highway Freight Program, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Grade Crossings, Recreational Trails, and Metropolitan Planning.

A chart was shown giving the estimated apportionments for Massachusetts by funding program over the five years of the bill. The total amount is over \$3 billion.

Some notable changes from MAP-21's highway program include the following:

- NHPP funds may be used for vehicle-to-infrastructure communication technology and bridges that are not on the National Highway System.
- TAP and Recreational Trails programs are set-asides under the STBGP.
- CMAQ funds may be used for vehicle-to-infrastructure technology and diesel retrofits for port-related equipment.
- Specific project types eligible for HSIP funds are listed in the FAST Act; vehicle-to-infrastructure technology is among the eligible project types.
- A new formula freight program has been added; the program focuses on highway freight projects, but up to 10% of funds may be spent on intermodal projects.
- A new discretionary grant program for large freight projects – the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects program – has been established.
- State Freight Plans are required for eligibility for freight funding.

Some notable changes from MAP-21's transit program include the following:

- A new Bus and Bus Facilities Discretionary Grants Program has been established, which includes a set-aside for low- or no-emission buses.
- The Research and TCRP Program has been consolidated into the Public Transportation Innovation Program; anyone may submit a problem statement to this program for FTA staff to evaluate.
- The Technical Assistance and Workforce Development Program is another consolidated program.
- The Urbanized Area Formula Program has been modified; the program now supports operating costs for demand-response transit service operated by state or local authorities.
- The Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grants Program has been modified to reflect a maximum 60% share for New Starts projects, with up to 80% federal share (from other federal sources); those funds must be spent within four years of allocation.

- Also under the Fixed Guideway program, the Small Starts threshold is raised to \$300 million with a maximum share of \$100 million from the Fixed Guideway program.
- The Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program has been modified. FTA is developing a best practices guide for service providers. A new pilot program for Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility has been established.
- The Public Transportation Safety Program allows FTA to temporarily take over for an inadequate or incapable State Safety Oversight agency.
- The State of Good Repair Program retains the federal/local match share at 80/20% and specifies eligible local match funding.
- The “Buy America” requirements are increasing in a phased-in approach from 60% domestic content required in FFY 2016 to 70% by FFY 2020.
- Streamlining measures have been established to encourage innovative procurements and the leasing of assets.
- Federal transit funds may no longer be used for art and landscaping.
- The Metropolitan and Statewide Planning Program clarifies the role of transit agency representatives on MPO boards for MPOs in transportation management areas. The boards must include officials of agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation, as well as representatives of public transit operators. These representatives may also serve as the representatives for municipalities.

The FAST Act also makes changes to MPOs planning processes. It establishes two new planning factors: 1) improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and 2) enhance travel and tourism. MPOs should consult with agencies responsible for natural disaster risk reduction and tourism when developing TIPs. LRTPs must include an assessment of strategies to reduce the vulnerability of transportation infrastructure to natural disasters.

The act also adds public ports and intercity bus operators to the list of interested parties that should be engaged in MPO planning processes. In addition, it mandates that statewide plans shall include a description of performance measure and targets and a systems performance report assessing the performance of the transportation system.

The requirement for MPOs to maintain a Congestion Management Process (CMP) is retained in the FAST Act. MPO's now have the option to develop a Congestion Management Plan identifying demand reduction and job access strategies.

Discussion

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston, inquired about the restriction on funding for art and landscaping. In response, the presenters noted that it is only the transit program that restricts funding for decorative art and landscaping, not the highway program. Members may contact FTA staff if they have questions about project eligibility.

J. Gillooly also inquired about the Public Transportation Innovation Program. J. Weinstock provide examples of problem statements submitted to the program, which included topics such as improving bus shelters to protect bus customers from severe weather, protecting bus drivers from dangerous customers, and reducing bus bunching. An archive of topics is available on FTA's website. L. Sirmin also noted that FHWA operates highway cooperative research programs, and that problem statements can be submitted to those programs in a similar fashion.

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood), noted that if the FAST Act provides an increase in funding over MAP-21, then the MPO should have more money available to program in FFY 2016, considering that the MPO programmed funding for that year based on MAP-21 funding levels. D. Mohler noted that more information on this matter will be available after the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) meets in March to develop TIP targets for the MPOs in the Commonwealth. J. Weinstock added that some of the additional funding made available by the FAST Act could come from applications to discretionary programs.

11. FFYs 2017-21 Transportation Improvement Program Development: Universe of Projects—Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff

Members were provided with a schedule for the development process for the TIP and UPWP with important dates denoted. Regarding the TIP, staff has reached the point of compiling the list of funding requests that municipalities have submitted to the MPO for consideration during the FFYs 2017-21 TIP cycle.

S. Pfalzer presented the list of projects that will be evaluated this year. There are 168 projects in the MPO's "Universe of Projects," including projects ranging from conceptual to nearing final design. Of those projects, 56 will be evaluated this coming month – using the MPO's new project evaluation criteria – for consideration for funding in this TIP cycle. Eleven of those projects are newly submitted funding requests.

Of the projects to be evaluated, approximately half are Complete Streets projects, 20% are intersection improvement projects, 14% are bicycle network and pedestrian improvement projects, and the remainder are major infrastructure projects. There are

projects in all of the MAPC community types (i.e. inner core, regional urban centers, maturing suburbs, and developing suburbs).

Staff also provided a list of projects that are no longer in the Universe of Projects because they have already been advertised or because they are being implemented through another funding source.

Going forward, staff will evaluate the list of 56 projects and post the results on the MPO's website for review by members and project proponents in early March. Also in March, staff will coordinate with MassDOT to gather information on project readiness. Staff will then develop a First Tier list of projects and a staff recommendation for TIP programming in April. The current schedule would have the MPO voting to release the draft TIP for public review on May 5, and voting on the final document on June 23.

Discussion

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), raised the issue of projects that have been in the Universe for many years, but that have not advanced through the TIP system. He suggested that the MPO consider imposing a time limit on funding requests to give municipalities an incentive to continue advancing their projects if they are priorities. Projects could be removed from the Universe after a determined number of years, but municipalities would have the option to reinstate projects that timed-out of the project. Tom O'Rourke, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce), also expressed support for culling inactive projects from the Universe.

Referring to the list of projects that have recently been advertised, D. Crowley asked that staff provide information, when it becomes available, on whether the bids on those projects come in over budget. D. Mohler stated that the information could be provided to the MPO. He noted, however, that if MPO-supported projects come in over budget, MassDOT would not request additional funding from the MPO; rather state resources would be used to cover the overage.

Timothy Kochan, MassDOT District 5, suggested that staff distinguish the projects on the list that have been approved by MassDOT's Project Review Committee (PRC) from those that are at the conceptual stage. (On the project list, those projects with six-digit TIP identification numbers generally have been approved by the PRC. Four-digit identification numbers signify a project at a conceptual or early design stage.)

12. Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways: FFY 2015—*Chen-Yuan Wang, MPO Staff*

C. Wang presented the results of a study on Summer Street and George Washington Boulevard in Hingham and Hull. This study was undertaken through the MPO's Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways program. The objective of the study was to identify safety, mobility, access and other transportation-related problems in the corridor and to develop and evaluate potential solutions.

The corridor studied is under the jurisdiction of MassDOT District 5. It is a four-lane roadway with no bicycle lanes and insufficient sidewalks. Staff worked with District 5 and the towns of Hingham and Hull to identify the issues and concerns about this corridor. The primary concerns are the large number of crashes – particularly at the Route 3A rotary and North Street intersection – vehicles traveling at high speeds, insufficient access for pedestrians and bicyclists, and increased congestion during the summer when there is more traffic going to and from Nantasket Beach.

Staff used traffic count data collected by MassDOT in June and July of 2015 for the analysis of this corridor. The June data showed that the section of the corridor between North Street and the Route 3A rotary carries approximately 30,000 vehicles per day. (Volumes over 30,000 indicate that a four-lane roadway is reaching capacity.) The section near the Summer Street intersection carries between 16,000 and 18,000 vehicles per day, and George Washington Boulevard carries between 13,000 and 14,000 vehicles per day. During July, these volumes may increase by 30-50% with significant pedestrian crossings at the intersections near Hingham Harbor and Nantasket Beach during the weekends.

As a result of the analysis, staff proposed short- and long-term solutions to improve safety and mobility in the corridor. Short-term solutions include restriping the rotary to define travel lanes and installing advanced warning signs on the approaches to the rotary. Long-term solutions include converting the rotary to a signalized intersection and reconstructing the North Street intersection.

Also, staff proposed an upgrade to an existing sidewalk to make it a multi-use trail. One design option is to extend the trail from Hingham Harbor to Nantasket Beach. East of the existing rotary, the roadway could be converted from four-lanes to three lanes with two-travel lanes, a center median or left-turn lane, and a sidewalk and a dedicated bike lane on each side of the roadway.

Staff also made recommendations to address summertime traffic congestion, including providing parking at Nantasket Junction Station for people who could bicycle to Nantasket Beach.

Staff recommends implementing the short-term recommendations first, then implementing the long-term improvements in segments, beginning with the Summer Street segment Hingham Harbor, then the Summer Street residential segment and Rockland Street, and lastly, George Washington Boulevard. The cost estimate for the entire project – not including right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation – is between \$12.5 million and \$15 million.

Discussion

Tom Kadzis, City of Boston, asked for more information about the reason for proposing to convert the Route 3A rotary to a signalized intersection instead of a modern roundabout, and about how the intersection would be expected to perform on a summer day when there are high levels of traffic. C. Wang replied that staff did examine the roundabout option; however, staff slightly favors the signalization option. He explained that a double-lane roundabout would be required and the Chief Justice Cushing Highway approach would still endure noticeable delays during peak hours. The signalized intersection would perform better in terms of the overall intersection delay and require a smaller footprint on the land than the double-lane roundabout. In addition the intersection design would provide crosswalks with exclusive pedestrian signal phases for pedestrian crossings and a direct connection to the adjacent Lincoln Maritime Center. The intersection option would also allow for signal coordination to improve traffic flow at peak travel times. Staff evaluated the signal operation under 2040 projected summer traffic conditions and found it would operate acceptably.

Roger Fernandez, Town Engineer for the Town of Hingham, thanked the MPO and CTPS for supporting and undertaking this study. He reported that the Town of Hingham is financially and politically committed to moving the project forward. The town has already committed \$400,000 to the redesign of the corridor near Hingham Harbor and is also investing in the waterfront area. He discussed the safety concerns, remarking on the injurious nature of the crashes that occur in the corridor and noting that Route 3A is a barrier to safe pedestrian access to the waterfront.

E. Bourassa inquired about the next steps of for project initiation. T. Kochan noted that if MassDOT District 5 concurs with the plans put forth by the town, either District 5 or the town may initiate the project. He stated that District 5 supports making improvements to the corridor.

13. State Implementation Plan Update

This agenda item was not taken up.

14. Members Items

There were none.

15. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Paul Regan), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	Richard Canale
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jim Gillooly
	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Michael Chong
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)	Richard Reed
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Aaron Clausen
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Tegin Bennett
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Dennis Crowley
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Christopher Blacker	Boston resident
Roger Fernandez	Town of Hingham
Timothy Kochan	MassDOT District 5
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood)
Bryan Pounds	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Leah Sirmin	Federal Highway Administration
Ellie Spring	Office of State Representative Denise Garlick
Joanne Weinstock	Federal Transit Administration

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director
Elizabeth Moore, Director of Policy and Planning
Scott Peterson, Director of Technical Services

Mark Abbott
Lourenço Dantas
Maureen Kelly
Alexandra Kleyman
Anne McGahan
Sean Pfalzer
Jennifer Rowe
Chen-Yuan Wang
