

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

April 28, 2016 Meeting

10:05 AM – 12:45 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:

- approve the minutes of the MPO meeting of April 7, 2016

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

Members heard comments about the following projects:

Green Line Extension (Somerville, Medford)

Mayor Joseph Curtatone, City of Somerville, addressed the *Green Line Extension* project. He remarked on the collaborative work between the Baker Administration, Secretary Pollack, the MassDOT Board of Directors, and the MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB) to recalibrate the project. He expressed the city's support for the recommendation that MassDOT would be discussing at this meeting (see agenda item 2 below) and emphasized that it is critical to keep Phase 2 of the Green Line Extension (extending the line from College Avenue to Route 16 in Medford) as part of the conversation. Despite the recent cost increases that stalled the project, the project's benefits remain, he said. It would bring economic development and activity to benefit the Commonwealth, create new jobs and housing, and address environmental, equity, and health issues caused by pollution from highways that run through the city.

Rich Rossi, City Manager, City of Cambridge, also thanked those involved in advancing the *Green Line Extension* project. He echoed Mayor Curtatone's comments and further discussed how the project would be beneficial to the region by improving quality of life, addressing impacts from traffic congestion, and creating jobs, revenue, and affordable housing. He expressed appreciation for Secretary Pollack's candid conversations, and stated that he would work with the Cambridge City Council to support the project. He

also expressed support for the recommendation that MassDOT would be discussing at this meeting.

State Representative Christine Barber thanked the MPO for supporting Phase 2 over the years. She recognized that Phase 2 cannot go forward until Phase 1 is built. She asked the MPO to make sure that they have information on all the cost savings that could be achieved on Phase 1 before voting to reallocate funds.

State Senator Patricia Jehlen also stressed the importance of the MPO holding off on the vote to transfer funds from Phase 2 to Phase 1 until they have information on all cost savings and can determine whether it is necessary to reallocate those funds. She remarked on the importance of Phase 2 in terms of environmental, mobility, and economic benefits, and for providing access to the Green Line for people in Medford and other surrounding towns. She thanked the MPO for their continued commitment to the project.

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, summarized the situation facing the MPO in regards to the upcoming vote to reallocate funds from Phase 2 to Phase 1. While he believes that the reallocation of funds is warranted if they are needed to save Phase 1, he expressed concern that if the funds are not needed for that purpose, the MPO's action would result in the loss of \$150 million in MPO funding to the state's General Fund and leave the Green Line extended only to College Avenue. He advised the MPO to take several steps before voting to reallocate the funds. First, they should seek information from Green Line Project Manager Jack Wright and others that allow them to draw their own conclusions about whether the MPO funds are needed for Phase 1. He called on members to request a detailed budget, ask critical questions, determine if any other entities (besides the Commonwealth and federal government) have committed funds to the project, and to fully explore cost saving measures. Lastly, the MPO should decline to take a vote until members have sufficient information to determine if reallocation of funds is necessary.

Ken Krause, Medford resident and member of the Green Line Extension Citizens Advisory Committee, thanked the MPO for supporting both phases of the *Green Line Extension* project. He summarized the history of the project, noting that in February 2009 the state considered the full project to Route 16 as the preferred alternative because of the public benefits it would provide including in terms of regional mobility, ridership, environmental justice, and air quality. In July 2009 the state announced that, while still supportive of the full project, it could not identify funding for the College Avenue to Route 16 segment within the timeline required under the State Implementation Plan. The MPO subsequently flexed funding from its highway program

to its transit program to support Phase 2 and programmed funding in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He cautioned the MPO to not make a decision about the Phase 2 funding prematurely, to wait until other potential funding sources have been evaluated, and to make a fully informed decision. He suggested that when voting on Phase 2 funding that the MPO stipulates that the funds revert back to Phase 2 if they are not needed for Phase 1.

Wig Zamore, Somerville resident, expressed that he is in favor of reallocating funding from Phase 2 to Phase 1 with the caveat that some funding be reserved for the design of Phase 2 and for the Community Path project (constructing it off-highway) for when funds become available in the future. He stated that Somerville is the most polluted municipality in the state from pass-through highway traffic emissions and the most polluted by per square mile from diesel emissions from the commuter rail. In terms of cost, he stated that the Green Line is five times more efficient than the Interstate 93 portion of the Central Artery/Tunnel project and the commuter rail portions. He also pointed out that the only portion of the Community Path that will be on the highway is in East Somerville, which is an environmental justice community. He expressed the need to reduce exposure to air pollution for bicycle commuters, noting that these non-polluting commuters should not be punished with detrimental health impacts. He then raised an issue of fairness in that there is not the same level of scrutiny on large highway projects in the state as there is on the Green Line Extension. Lastly, he called on the MPO to study near source exposures and the impact from black carbon from diesel. He also discussed non-polluting electric rail operating in Switzerland.

In response to public comments regarding the reallocation of funding from Phase 2 to Phase 1, Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, noted that if the MPO votes to move the funding to Phase 1, it is unlikely that the MPO will be able to program addition monies for Phase 2. He pointed out that the MPO is a source of funding for 101 communities in the region. W. Zamore then noted that the state has an opportunity now, while the interim project management team is up and running, to consider how to extend the line to Route 16.

Marc Draisen, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), remarked on the overall dearth of funding for the many highway, bridge, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian projects in the state, and that the overall problem for all MPOs, the Commonwealth, and municipalities has to do with how to generate enough funding for those good projects.

Reconstruction of Melnea Cass Boulevard (Boston)

State Representative Byron Rushing spoke in support of the *Reconstruction of Melnea Cass Boulevard* project and urged the MPO fully fund the project in the FFY 2018

element of the FFYs 2017-21 Transportation Improvement Program. The project is already programmed in the FFYs 2016-20 TIP, but there is insufficient funding to cover the costs of the project as designed.

Representative Rushing discussed the significance of Melnea Cass Boulevard to the Roxbury community, and how the existing design negatively influences the community. He noted that the Boston Transportation Department is working with the Roxbury community, Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard, and others as they advance the redesign of the roadway. The scope of the project includes a redesign of the roadway and streetscape between Columbus and Massachusetts Avenues to improve safety, make a pedestrian friendly environment, create more efficient traffic flows, accommodate transit vehicles and bicyclists, and promote neighborhood economic development. The project will adhere to city and state “complete streets” guidelines.

Representative Rushing was speaking on behalf of State Senator Sonia-Change Diaz and State Representative Gloria Fox, as well. (The legislators also submitted a letter.) And he was joined by several members of the Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard.

Kay Mathew, Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard, read a statement from a letter the Friends sent to Secretary Pollack. She expressed that the community members have worked with the Boston Transportation Department and elected officials over past four years to provide input into the redesign of the boulevard with the goal of creating a “complete streets” corridor. The Friends are heartened with the progress being made and request additional funds be programmed for the project.

Valerie Shelley, Roxbury resident, is a long-time supporter of the project having worked with residents, the Friends, the Boston Transportation Department, and elected officials to advance the project. She discussed the community support for the project, which has included walks in support of the project and meetings. She supports the Boston Transportation Department’s efforts to secure funding for the project.

Marah Holland expressed support for fully funding the project because it would help provide equity to a community that has not seen investment in its transportation infrastructure in recent years. She discussed how the project would address public health and safety issues by building a “complete street” where people would have a safe place for physical activity and social cohesion, and how it would help decrease community violence.

Reconstruction of Union Street (Route 139) (Holbrook)

State Senator John F. Keenan spoke in support of the *Reconstruction of Union Street (Route 139) (Holbrook)* project. He discussed how the project would have a significant

impact on traffic flow and pedestrian safety along the corridor. He noted that while Holbrook is a small town, it experiences larger scale traffic issues from the larger towns that surround it. Currently, the roadway is not pedestrian friendly or safe; some areas lack sidewalks entirely. He also pointed out that the project would contribute to the potential for commercial and residential development in the area, where there is a nearby commuter rail station. The project would provide pedestrian access to the station and allow for bicycle lanes on the roadway. He reported that the project has a federal earmark and is ready to go forward.

Matthew Moore, Chairman of the Holbrook Board of Selectman, remarked that he is representing a small community, like others in the Commonwealth, who are trying to help themselves to improve their way of life and economic viability. Holbrook has self-financed other projects that were previously in the TIP Universe. This project brings a federal earmark that covers 75% of \$2 million project cost; the town is asking the MPO to fund the remainder in the FFY 2018 element of the TIP. He noted that the project will connect the commuter rail station with the center of town, where there is a new overlay district.

Ken Miller, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), asked if the proponents have approached commercial interests to request contributions to help fund the project. M. Moore replied that they have not approached businesses because they are already contributing through taxes, and that the town has a high commercial tax rate.

Rehabilitation of Mount Auburn Street (Route 16) (Watertown)

Matt Shuman, Town of Watertown Department of Public Works, spoke in support of the *Rehabilitation of Mount Auburn Street (Route 16) (Watertown)* project. He described the roadway, a major connector between Watertown Square and Cambridge and an MBTA key bus route, as having significant truck, vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. He noted that the last redesign of the roadway in the 1980s and was auto-oriented.

The town is now seeking to take a “complete streets” and “green streets” approach to redesigning the roadway. The new design will include a road diet, bicycle accommodations, curb extensions, resignalization, reclaimed green space, and improved storm water management. He said that the town fully supports the project and wants to accelerate planning and design. The town held a public information meeting in May 2015 and plans to hold additional meetings this summer. Also, the town is proceeding with a road safety audit and advancing the 25% design plans.

Reconstruction of Atlantic Avenue (Hull)

Philip Lemnios, Hull Town Manager, and John Morgan, CHA Consulting, spoke in regards to the *Reconstruction of Atlantic Avenue (Hull)* project. P. Lemnios described Atlantic Avenue as one the three roadways leading into Hull which serves the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Nantasket Beach Reservation, which attracts 500,000 visitors each year. The roadway is bounded by Massachusetts Bay and Straits Pond, and Area of Critical Environmental Concern. The Commonwealth and the town are in the process of rebuilding the seawall that abuts the roadway, a \$6.8 million project. The design for Atlantic Avenue includes substantial improvements to manage water in the Straits Pond area. The roadway is a major connector between adjacent towns. This project has been in the MPO's TIP process since 2009, and is at the 75% design stage with all major permitting issues resolved. He asked that the MPO program the project on the FFYs 2017-21TIP.

Reconstruction of Main Street (Route 30) (Southborough)

Karen Galligan, Town of Southborough Department of Public Works, provided an update on the *Reconstruction of Main Street (Route 30) (Southborough)* project, which is currently programmed in the FFY 2017 element of the TIP. The project is at the 75% design stage and the town is waiting for a MEPA response. The project's readiness is temporarily stalled, however, because approval was not given at the town meeting in April to begin work on acquiring easements. K. Galligan asked the MPO to keep the project programmed on the TIP until the issue can be resolved at the next Board of Selectmen meeting in the fall.

M. Draisen inquired about the vote at the April town meeting. K. Galligan confirmed that a two-thirds vote was required and that a numerical vote was not taken. Attendance was higher than usual because of another agenda item. She indicated that the project was mischaracterized at the meeting, leading to a negative vote. The MPO will be informed of the Selectmen's decision regarding the calling of another town meeting to take up the issue again.

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), suggested that the Selectmen consider holding a special town meeting prior to their fall meeting to take up the issue. K. Galligan stated that she would request a July meeting.

Canal Street Rail Trail Construction, Phase 2 (Salem)

David Knowlton, City Engineer for the City of Salem, provided an update on *the Canal Street Rail Trail Construction, Phase 2 (Salem)* project. He began by reporting that Phase 1 of the rail trail has been advertised as part of the *Canal Street Improvement* project, which will begin this spring or summer. Phase 2 is designed, permitted, and

right-of-way has been secured. This portion of the rail trail was separated from the *Canal Street Improvement* project because of issues concerning the relocation of MBTA spur tracks and signal equipment. The city is working with the MBTA, Keolis, and MassDOT to move forward on Phase 2. MassDOT's Project Review Committee has approved the project with a cost estimate of \$2.4 million. The 25% design plans have been submitted and the design is expected to be complete by the fall for advertising next winter and construction the following spring. The design is fully funded and the city is requesting that the MPO fund construction.

Reconstruction and Widening on Route 18 (Main Street) (Weymouth, Abington)

Owen MacDonald, Traffic Engineer for the Town of Weymouth, spoke on behalf of Weymouth Mayor Robert Hedlund concerning the *Reconstruction and Widening on Route 18 (Main Street) (Weymouth, Abington)* project and requested the MPO's continued support. He discussed the benefits expected to accrue from the project in terms of safety, mobility, and economic vitality.

Regarding safety, he noted that the three signalized intersections and one unsignalized driveway within the project limits experience a higher crash rate than the state average. The project would include changes to traffic signal sequencing to reduce conflict between through vehicles and left-turning vehicles, and geometric changes at the driveway to reduce crashes at that location. There are crash clusters at lane-drops. The widening of the roadway would extend two lanes the length of the project area and reduce crashes at those locations.

Regarding mobility, the lane-drop areas cause congestion and delays during peak travel hours. The widening is expected to abate the congestion and reduce vehicle emissions. Also, the sidewalks are intermittent along the roadway and in poor condition where they exist. The project would provide five-foot curbed sidewalks for the length of project area, ADA-compliant crossings, and five-foot bicycle lanes.

In terms of economic vitality, he noted that development has picked up at the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station. Approximately one-million square feet of commercial space and 5,000 residential units are planned for the area over the next decade. Failure to widen Route 18 could stifle that development, and the associated jobs and housing, he said.

Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3 (Bedford, Billerica, Burlington)

Richard Reed, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) and Town Manager for the Town of Bedford, introduced the project engineering team for the *Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3 (Bedford, Billerica, Burlington)* project.

The project is programmed in the FFYs 2016 and 2017 elements of the TIP. The project is a partnership between two regional planning agencies, MAPC and the Northern Middlesex Council of Government (NMCOG). NMCOG is contributing \$1 million to the project through their TIP.

Trish Domigan, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc., provided an update on the status of the project and addressed an \$8 million cost increase that has occurred since the design progressed from the 75% design stage to the 100% design stage. The 100% plans were submitted to MassDOT in March. The project will be ready for advertisement in September 2016. Right-of-way acquisition is being completed ahead of schedule.

The design changes include the addition of sidewalks and bicycle lanes, which ensures the project adheres to “complete streets” and healthy transportation policies. Also there are modifications to the design for traffic signal equipment due to changes in regulations and to the pavement design. The towns are looking at opportunities to reduce costs. One option includes working with the City of Lowell to transfer fill to a redevelopment site in the city; this would save \$1 million. Handouts were provided with additional information.

K. Miller noted that the handout references cost increases having to do with “project development,” and asked if this refers to design changes. T. Domigan explained that those costs are due to changes to the project cross-section associated with temporary pavement design.

Marie Rose, MassDOT Highway Division, asked if the pavement design has been approved by MassDOT. T. Domigan replied that the proponents will be meeting with MassDOT staff on Wednesday to discuss the changes.

2. Green Line Extension Phase 1 Update and Presentation—*Stephanie Pollack, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, MassDOT; and Jack Wright, Project Manager for Green Line Extension Phase 1, MassDOT*

Secretary Pollack introduced a presentation about Phase 1 of the *Green Line Extension* project (Lechmere to College Avenue). She reported that the interim project management team will be making a presentation on May 9 to a joint meeting of the MassDOT Board of Directors and the MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB) to discuss the redesign of the project and the new cost estimate, and to address issues concerning project management, procurement, and funding. She emphasized that MassDOT and the MBTA understand the history and importance of this project and the benefits it will bring, however, she also noted the importance of evaluating whether, as costs change, the costs and benefits are still aligned. Because of

the importance of the project, significant effort has gone into finding out if there is a way to deliver an affordable version of the project in a way that gives confidence that the project can be delivered within budget, on schedule, and in a high-quality operating state.

Jack Wright then gave a PowerPoint slide presentation. He began by describing the role of the interim project management team. The team was charged with redesigning the project to reduce the cost while maintaining its anticipated benefits and functionality. This involved developing a new project scope and cost estimate, procurement method, management plan, schedule, and short-term action plan.

In redesigning the project, the team was guided by the need to maintain state and federal environmental commitments, meet the conditions of the Full Funding Grant Agreement (between the Commonwealth and the Federal Transit Administration), adhere to accessibility requirements, and to consider available revenue sources and public input.

He reviewed the major components of the redesign: minimizing the use of retaining walls, including those associated with the Community Path; preserving existing bridges; scaling back station designs to maintain functionality with less structure (open-air stations); streamlining the Lechmere Viaduct; scaling back the vehicle maintenance facility; using center catenary poles rather than outside poles; and building less expensive power stations.

He provided details on the redesign for the Lechmere Station, vehicle maintenance facility, and Community Path. The redesigned Lechmere Station would be an open-air station, but the four-car platform, elevators, and bicycle storage would be maintained. A planned bus loop to the station may be eliminated.

The redesigned vehicle maintenance facility would be half the size originally planned with room for 44 Green Line vehicles. The redesign meets the functionality needs for the Green Line Extension itself, while the old design would have allowed for the MBTA to conduct additional maintenance (which now occurs at Riverside) at this location.

The alternative design for the Community Path would provide 7,000 feet of path from Lowell Street Station to Washington Street Station, but there would be a gap in the path requiring bicyclists to travel on city streets. The redesign brings the path down to the level of the rail line, so does not require new retaining walls. The cost estimate for the path has been reduced from \$100 million to \$20 million.

This information was presented in several public meetings in March and April.

Secretary Pollack then discussed funding for the project. Both the MassDOT Board of Directors and the MBTA FMCB will need to approve the project for it to move forward.

The Commonwealth has committed \$1 billion (or \$1.3 billion including financing fees) to the project as part of the Full Funding Grant Agreement with FTA, which provides a \$996 million federal New Starts grant. The MBTA cannot access the state funds without MassDOT's approval and the federal funds are frozen until the MBTA prepares a new finance plan.

Following the consultant review that identified what went wrong during the initial construction period, the MassDOT Board and the FMCB adopted a series of conditions that would need to be met by the interim project management team before the boards would vote to continue the process. Among the conditions is the requirement that additional funding beyond that previously approved by the MassDOT Board for the project will need to be obtained from other sources, such as the Boston Region MPO, municipalities, and landowners and developers benefiting from the project. Further, additional Commonwealth funding shall be limited to requirements set forth by federal requirements only.

Secretary Pollack explained that a vote by the boards on May 9 to advance the project cannot be assured if the project cost estimate exceeds \$1.996 billion and there are no additional sources of funding. The Secretary requested therefore that the MPO vote on May 5 to reallocate funds programmed in the TIP for Phase 2 to Phase 1, so that these additional funds can be brought before the two boards on May 9. The timing of the amendment would allow the MPO to review forthcoming information that will be presented to the boards during the public review period for the amendment. And if the MPO subsequently determines that the funds should not be transferred, they can vote against the amendment after the 30-days public review period.

Showing the Commonwealth's continued commitment to Phase 2, the Secretary offered to use state funds to keep Phase 2 advancing so that the MPO's decision to reprogram the funding does not set the project back. She offered to commit in writing to the MPO prior to May 5 that MassDOT will file an Environmental Notification Form for Phase 2 and work with stakeholders to refine a construction cost estimate. This will allow for the project to advance through the MEPA review process.

Discussion

M. Draisen expressed concern about elements of the redesign of the vehicle maintenance facility that downgrade automation of maintenance functions, as these cost-saving measures might contradict objectives that focus on maintenance. Secretary

Pollack noted that this is the first time that the state is asking beneficiary communities to contribute to a major state-funded infrastructure project, thus the scope of the project must benefit the contributing communities rather than the MBTA system as a whole. The boards directed the interim management team to redesign the maintenance facility to service the Green Line Extension vehicles only (not to load additional uses on the facility). The board could, at a future time, decide to add to the facility with funding from the MBTA's facilities budget.

M. Draisen expressed concern that the redesign of the Community Path might present impediments to use since the track level path would be farther from the street. Secretary Pollack then discussed the process that led to the path redesign. She noted that the team was instructed to create the minimal design for the *Green Line Extension* project to meet the requirements of Full Funding Grant Agreement. The team focused first on the transit portion of the project with an aim to ensure that the project benefits that FTA used to evaluate the project in the New Starts process remained unchanged. The Community Path was not included in the FTA's original rating, but because of its importance to the community, the team restored the path to the design to be consistent with the redesigned transit portion. Based on incoming public input, the boards can consider whether to add more elements of the path into the design going forward.

M. Drasien then asked the Secretary to discuss the station designs in terms of user experience given that the new stations will play a role in catalyzing future development along the line. Secretary Pollack discussed that the minimal designs could be enhanced in the future in response to public feedback, while the focus now is to build the seven new stations before the opportunity is lost.

P. Regan asked if FTA has signed off on the redesign. Secretary Pollack explained that FTA has been involved in meetings about the redesign, but that FTA will not sign off on the project until MassDOT and the MBTA request a review the project. FTA will then review the new finance plan and the redesigned project to see if it provides the benefits of the original design that was the basis of the Full Funding Grant Agreement.

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston, asked if the station redesigns would preclude the future construction of more comprehensive stations. J. Wright indicated that future expansion would not be precluded. He explained, as an example, that by maintaining track separation beyond the 3-car platforms, the platforms could potentially be expanded in the future to 4-car platforms.

J. Gillooly asked when the MPO could know whether there are additional contributions to the project. Secretary Pollack noted that MassDOT and the MBTA have had

productive conversations with the Cities of Somerville, Cambridge, and Medford and are asking them to put their intentions to contribute in writing.

Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), expressed thanks to the Secretary, MassDOT and MBTA staff, and the interim project management team for their work and for holding public meetings. He remarked on the continued support for Phase 2 of the project, and asked whether MassDOT's commitment includes an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Secretary Pollack replied that the language of the commitment letter is being developed and that MassDOT will commit to an EIR subject to Phase 1 going forward.

T. Bent asked if Phase 2 would be programmed in any other plan. Secretary Pollack noted that state law would require that the project be programmed in the MBTA's Program for Mass Transportation (PMT). The new PMT, *Focus 40*, will be launched in May. Also, the MPO would decide whether the project is programmed in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

T. Bent asked if the redesign of College Avenue Station would affect Tufts University's air rights over the station and whether it would cause any interruption or additional cost if the line were extended to Route 16 in the future. J. Wright replied that there has not yet been a detailed study of how construction would be staged, but it is likely that construction of the future line would not affect College Avenue Station. The new design no longer includes a substantial station upon which Tufts would build on its air rights, however, there may be synergies with what Tufts is planning. Tufts, for example, may pay for the construction of a plaza that would provide access to the station.

D. Crowley asked if the revised budget for the project includes the costs incurred to date and a contingency for settling claims from contractors. Secretary Pollack and J. Wright confirmed that the budget will be comprehensive.

Tegin Bennett, Advisory Council, thanked the Secretary and the interim project management team for their work and this conversation. She asked what the process would be if the MPO voted to reallocate Phase 2 funding to Phase 1, and Phase 1 did not go forward. Secretary Pollack explained that, in that event, the money would return to the MPO for reprogramming.

3. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT*

There was none.

4. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

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

There was none.

6. Executive Director's Report—*Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director*

K. Quackenbush reported that the MPO staff is accepting ideas for candidate locations for study through the First-Mile-and-Last-Mile Transit Connections Studies program. One location, West Concord Station in Concord, has been selected. Staff is seeking one more location to study. He invited members to inform Project Manager Andrew Reker (areker@ctps.org) of candidate locations by May 4.

7. MPO Meeting Minutes—*Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff*

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of April 7, 2016 was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan) and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried. The Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) (Richard Reed) abstained.

8. FFYs 2017-21 Transportation Improvement Program Development: TIP Project Updates—*Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff*

S. Pfalzer provided an update on the development of the FFYs 2017-21 TIP. First, he noted that the MPO has received several letters in support of the *Green Line Extension* project from the Town of Winchester and Medford residents, a letter from Senator Keenan in support of the *Reconstruction of Union Street (Route 139) (Holbrook)* project, and a letter from Representative Bradley in support of the *Reconstruction of Atlantic Avenue (Hull)* project.

He then provided an update on project cost estimates and schedule issues regarding projects. Several projects are at risk of not being ready for advertisement in the years that they are currently programmed:

- *Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3 (Bedford, Billerica, Burlington)* – currently programmed in FFY 2016
- *Reconstruction and Widening on Route 18 (Main Street) (Weymouth, Abington)* – FFY 2016
- *Reconstruction of Massachusetts Avenue (Lexington)* – FFY 2016
- *Intersection and Signal Improvements at Route 9 and Village Square (Gateway East) (Brookline)* – FFY 2017
- *Reconstruction of Main Street (Route 30) (Southborough)* – FFY 2017

Other projects have increased in cost:

- *Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3 (Bedford, Billerica, Burlington)*
- *Reconstruction and Widening on Route 18 (Main Street) (Weymouth, Abington)*
- *Reconstruction and Related Work on Derby Street (Hingham)*
- *Signal and Intersection Improvements on Route 135 (Hopkinton)*
- *Reconstruction of Route 27 (North Main Street) (Natick)*
- *Improvements on Boylston Street (Boston)*
- *Reconstruction of Route 129 (Lynnfield Street) (Lynn)*
- *New Boston Street Bridge (Woburn)*

Due to project cost increases, there is a significant shortfall of TIP funding, particularly in the early years of the TIP. An additional \$35 million is needed between FFY 2016 and FFY 2020. The *Middlesex Turnpike* and *Route 18* projects represent a significant portion of the programmed funds in the TIP between FFY 2016 and FFY 2018. If either of those two projects were delayed, funding would be available in early years of the TIP, and other projects would have to be ready for construction advertisement in those years to be considered for TIP programming.

In developing the staff recommendation for the FFY 2017-21 TIP, staff will be seeking guidance from the MPO regarding how to address cost increases and their decision about reallocating funding for the *Green Line Extension* project.

Discussion

E. Bourassa asked if there is the ability to address project cost increases by using the Advance Construction method of financing. S. Pfalzer replied that staff would have to discuss this possibility with the MassDOT Highway Division. There may be limitations to changing the construction timelines of the projects.

E. Bourassa suggested that staff prepare scenarios of various options for TIP programming from members to consider.

Tom O'Rourke noted that if the *Reconstruction of Main Street (Route 30) (Southborough)* project is not ready for advertisement, there could be an additional \$7 million for reprogramming in this TIP. D. Crowley recommended that the MPO give the Town of Southborough an opportunity to hold a special town meeting before the project loses its TIP funding.

R. Reed remarked that a fair portion of the cost increases for the *Middlesex Turnpike* project can be attributed to price escalation, which is an issue for all projects. He noted that the *Middlesex Turnpike* and *Route 18* projects are well advanced in the design

process and have more precise cost information than less advanced projects. He advised against putting those fully designed projects in jeopardy in favor of less advanced projects. He suggested that the MPO find a way to accommodate the costs increases.

D. Mohler provided guidance to staff suggesting that they prepare scenarios for the TIP that protect already programmed projects and inflate projects to the year of expenditure.

Jay Monty, At-Large City of Everett, suggested reaching out to construction managers to better understand what is driving up costs.

Tom Kadzis, City of Boston, complemented the Town of Bedford for the detailed information provided on the reasons for the cost increases for the *Middlesex Turnpike* project. He asked if that same level of detail could be provided for the *Route 18* project. S. Pfalzer noted that staff would check with MassDOT Highway Division for those details. He noted that some of the cost increases are due to bridge work, earth work, drainage improvement, and staging area construction.

D. Mohler advised staff to include earmarked projects seeking MPO target funds, such as the *Reconstruction of Melnea Cass Boulevard* project, among the projects with cost increases. E. Bourassa noted that when *Melnea Cass Boulevard* was programmed on the TIP, only the earmark amount was programmed, and there was not an expectation that the MPO would provide target funds for it. He suggested that it might be appropriate to address such projects differently than projects seeking only target funds. D. Mohler expressed concern about punishing projects that bring earmarks to the table, noting that the question for the MPO is whether projects that increase in cost are worth the money the MPO is asked to spend on them.

E. Bourassa suggested that staff prepare a scenario removing some projects based on the scores they received in the evaluation process.

Laura Wiener, At-Large Town of Arlington, suggested that the MPO begin considering whether projects may be scaled back to reduce costs and whether there are other funding sources, as was done for the *Green Line Extension* project. She stated that those conversations should occur before projects are presented to the MPO.

Responding to T. Kadzis' previous comment, M. Rose noted that MassDOT Highway Division has received the 100% design plans for the *Route 18* project and is now studying the costs figures to get a better cost estimate.

D. Crowley inquired about the current cost programmed for the *Green Line Extension, Phase 2* project. D. Mohler replied that \$152 million in federal funds plus a state match are programmed over five years of the TIP (FFY 2016-2020) and into a sixth year (FFY 2021).

R. Reed stated that it is valid to ask municipalities, developers, and other beneficiaries to contribute to project costs, but that the requests should not wait until the year the project is advertised. He suggested that there could be a policy for requesting funding applied to all projects. This might reduce the number of projects submitted to the MPO because of additional actions proponents would have to take early on.

Christine Stickney, South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree), expressed agreement, noting that in the case of the *Route 18* project, there are several affected communities but only two proponents.

P. Regan suggested the possibility of adjusting the cash flows of the *Green Line Extension* project to address the TIP funding issues. D. Mohler noted that it is unclear when those cash flows would be available.

R. Reed noted that the *Middlesex Turnpike* project received \$18.5 million in community investment and additional private investment. D. Mohler added members should be mindful that communities have invested in design and right-of-way acquisition for most projects in the TIP; this is the reason why the MPO finds it difficult to remove projects from the TIP once they are programmed.

Brad Rawson, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), reinforced the latter point and noted that it would be helpful for MassDOT to provide guidance to municipalities on this matter.

9. FFY 2017 Unified Planning Work Program Development—*Bryan Pounds, MassDOT Staff*

This agenda item was postponed.

10. Members Items

There were none.

11. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan) and seconded by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members

Representatives and Alternates

At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
At-Large City (City of Newton)	James Freas
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Laura Wiener
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
	Patrick Hoey
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Mayor Joseph Curtatone
	Tom Bent
	Brad Rawson
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Stephanie Pollack
	David Mohler
	Marie Rose
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Port Authority	Laura Gilmore
	O'Connor
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Marc Draisen
	Eric Bourassa
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 Shore Coalition	Christine Stickney
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
Representative Christine Barber	State Representative
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT District 3
Scott Brunner	Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc.
Lauren DiLorenzo	City of Medford
Trish Domigan	Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc.
Jim Dow	Town of Hull
Karen Galligan	Town of Southborough
Timothy Gordon	Town of Holbrook
Marah Holland	Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard
Justin Howard	Northern Middlesex Council of Governments
Senator Patricia Jehlen	State Senator
Greg Karczewski	US2
Senator John F. Keenan	State Senator
David Knowlton	City of Salem
Timothy Kochan	MassDOT District 5
Ken Krause	Medford resident
Philip Lemnios	Town of Hull, Town Manager
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Kay Mathew	Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard
Owen MacDonald	Town of Weymouth
Anne McKinnon	Jacobs Engineering
Matthew Moore	Town of Holbrook
John Morgan	CHA Consulting
Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood)
Bob Penfield	Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc.
Bryan Pounds	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Constance Raphael	MassDOT District 4
Rich Rossi	City of Cambridge
Representative Byron Rushing	State Representative
Joseph Sgroi	City Point Partners
Valerie Shelley	Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard
Ellen Spring	Office of State Representative Denise Garlick
Matt Shuman	Town of Watertown, Department of Public Works
Pete Sorenson	Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc.
Trey Wadsworth	MassDOT
Wig Zamore	Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director

Scott Peterson, Director of Technical Services

Lourenço Dantas

David Fargen

Maureen Kelly

Alexandra Kleyman

Anne McGahan

Sean Pfalzer

Jennifer Rowe
