# Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

#### April 7, 2016 Meeting

10:05 AM – 11:45 AM, 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:

- release Draft Amendment Three to the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2016-20
   Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for a 30-day public review period
- approve the minutes of the MPO meeting of March 3, 2016

# **Meeting Agenda**

#### 1. Public Comments

Members heard comments about the following projects:

# Pedestrian Improvements along Elm Street and Rustcraft Road Corridors (Dedham)

State Representative Paul McMurtry spoke in support of the *Pedestrian Improvements* along Elm Street and Rustcraft Road Corridors (Dedham) project. Joining him were Michael Butler, Chairman of the Dedham Board of Selectmen; Jim Kern, Dedham Town Manager; Rich McCarthy, Town Planner; and Tony Lionetta, BETA Group. Representative McMurtry also spoke on behalf of State Senator Michael Rush, who was unable to attend the meeting.

Representative McMurtry discussed the many benefits of the project for improving access to an area in Dedham that is being redeveloped and revitalized. The project area is near the Legacy Place retail center, affordable housing developments, and a commuter rail station. Stakeholders involved in planning for the revitalization of the area identified the need for sidewalks to improve pedestrian access to Legacy Place and the commuter rail station. In addition to improving access to transit, the project would enhance the performance of a bus run by reducing the schedule run time.

In response to a MPO member's question, the proponents reported that the town funded the project design, which is now at the 25% design stage. A favorable public hearing was held in February and the town's Conservation Commission is supportive of the work.

#### Reconstruction on Route 126 (Ashland)

Yolanda Greaves, Ashland Board of Selectmen, spoke in support of the *Reconstruction of Route 126 (Ashland)* project. She was joined by David Manugian, the Director of Ashland's Department of Public Works. Ms. Greaves noted that the project fully satisfies MassDOT's Complete Streets policy and Healthy Transportation directive. The project would build bicycle lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the roadway, create a new multi-use path and connection to the Bay Circuit Trail, and add new bus stop pull-outs for MetroWest Regional Transit Authority buses. She explained that the project would improve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as improve traffic operations, upgrade signals to improve emergency response, provide an opportunity to upgrade drainage system, and support economic development along the corridor.

She then provided an update on the status of the project. In response to the town's 25% design submission, MassDOT requested that the designers evaluate roadway alignment alternatives on portion of the roadway. MassDOT subsequently accepted a design for an alternate alignment; preliminary right-of-way plans now reflect the design change. A hearing regarding public utilities was held on March 29. The 25% design hearing will be held this spring, after which the project can move to the 75% design stage. A community group, the Pond Street Working Group, will be publicizing the project.

#### Reconstruction of Atlantic Avenue (Hull)

Joseph Stigliani, Director of the Hull Department of Public Works, spoke in support of the *Reconstruction of Atlantic Avenue (Hull)* project. He was joined by John Morgan, CHA Consulting, and Jim Dow, Assistant Director of the Hull Department of Public Works.

Mr. Stigliani noted that the project is a priority for the Town of Hull. He explained that the seaside roadway is subject to flooding from coastal storms, and is also next to an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Last year, the town repaired part of the road due to safety concerns. The town has also spent \$200,000 on engineering for the design of the reconstruction project.

Mr. Morgan then provided an overview and update on the status of the project. He explained that full pavement reconstruction is required. The town is proposing to widen

the roadway to accommodate bicyclists, reconstruct sidewalks and make ADA improvements, address a substandard drainage and storm water system, and make safety improvements, including the replacement of a substandard guardrail and improvements to intersections and pedestrian crossings.

The project was initiated in 2009. The town submitted the 25% design plans to MassDOT in 2010, held a public hearing in 2013, and submitted 75% design plans in December 2015. He stated that the town is committed to the project and that it is ready to go forward.

Pamela Haznar, MassDOT District 5, reported that the District Office is working with the town on this project and is reviewing the 75% design plans.

In response to a member's question, Mr. Morgan noted that the project cost estimate is \$6 million including utilities and contingencies.

#### Reconstruction of Union Street (Holbrook)

Tim Gordon, Town Administrator for the Town of Holbrook, spoke in support of the *Reconstruction of Union Street (Holbrook)* project. He discussed the importance of the project to the town noting that it connects the downtown area to the commuter rail station and that the town recently passed a new overlay district that is expected to result in more development. A public hearing about the project was held on April 6. The project, which has a cost estimate of \$2 million, has a \$1.4 million federal earmark; the town is requesting that the MPO fund the balance.

He also noted that the town had another project, addressing Pine Street and Sycamore Street, in the TIP Universe previously, but the town has since spent \$750,000 to fund the project because the roadway condition was a public safety issue.

Ms. Haznar, MassDOT District 5, reported that the District Office is working with the town on this project. She stated that the town has been doing work on the project to keep it advancing, and using town funds for design, while saving the earmark for construction. She added that the earmark is among those eligible to be repurposed. (See the Chair's Report below for more details.)

# 2. Chair's Report—David Mohler, MassDOT

D. Mohler reported that under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act states have the option of repurposing earmarks (dating from 2005 that have not spent 10% of their obligation) by September 2016. Any repurposed earmark must be used for a Title 23 eligible purpose at a location within 50 miles of the original earmarked project location. Massachusetts has approximately \$93 million worth of unspent earmarks that

qualify; MassDOT is currently reviewing these earmarks to determine which ones may be repurposed.

Ken Miller, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), added that the state must inform the federal transportation agencies of their repurposing decisions by August 2016, and the funds must be obligated by 2019.

Marie Rose, MassDOT, inquired if there are deadlines for using earmarks for their original purpose. D. Mohler replied no.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), asked if the review of earmarks will include a public review or public participation. D. Mohler replied that currently MassDOT is reviewing the earmarks internally and that the public will be notified prior to repurposing.

D. Mohler also announced that MassDOT expects to make a presentation on the *Green Line Extension (GLX)* project at the next MPO meeting. Then, at the following MPO meeting, the MPO will be asked to consider an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to reprogram funds from *GLX Phase 2* to *GLX Phase 1*.

## 3. Committee Chairs' Reports

Bryan Pounds, Chair of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee, gave an update on the progress made to date on the development of the FFY 2017 UPWP. The Committee met on March 31 to discuss the prioritization of new discrete tasks to include in the UPWP; they voted to include eight new discrete tasks. The Committee will meet prior to the next MPO meeting to discuss the budget for the UPWP.

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

T. Bennett announced that the Advisory Council will meet next on Wednesday, April 13. The meeting will focus on the TIP and UPWP.

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

K. Quackenbush notified members that the MPO website has been refreshed with a new design intended to make materials easier to find and to incorporate more visualization. He commended Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director of CTPS, for spearheading the website redesign.

K. Quackenbush also announced that Sean Pfalzer will be resigning his position as TIP Manager after May 5. He praised Sean for his superlative work at the MPO. The Chair and members also applauded him for his excellent work.

# 6. Draft Amendment Three to the FFYs 2016-20 Transportation Improvement Program—Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff

S. Pfalzer introduced the proposed Amendment Three to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP. The proposed amendment includes new line items that reflect the programming of federal funding for commuter ferries, and changes to the programming of funds for MBTA line items.

The proposed changes include the programming of a discretionary grant for capital expenses for a ferry running from Winthrop to Rowes Wharf in Boston, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds for operating expenses. The Town of Winthrop would provide a local match to these federal funds. CMAQ funds would also be provided for the operating expenses of a ferry running from Lynn to Fan Pier in Boston. The City of Lynn would provide the local match.

Proposed changes to the MBTA's funding program, under Section 5307, include the removal of a \$73 million line item for *System Upgrades* and the addition of a \$159 million line item for *Bus Procurement Phase* 2.

Proposed changes under Section 5337 include the removal of two line items and the addition of three new line items. The line items to be removed are \$20 million for *Stations - T-GAPS*, and \$25 million for *System Upgrades*. The new line items are nearly \$35 million for the overhaul of Green Line Type 7 vehicles, \$37.6 million for the purchase of Kawasaki coaches for the commuter rail, and \$154.8 million for the implementation of positive train control.

With the MPO's approval, staff would release the amendment for a 30-day public review period, then the MPO would vote on the amendment at their meeting on May 19.

#### **Discussion**

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), asked where positive train control will be implemented on the MBTA system. Thom Dugan, MBTA, replied that the MBTA plans to implement positive train control systemwide over the next three to five years. The MBTA is working with the federal agencies on a financing package that includes federal loans from the Transportation Innovation and Finance (TIFIA) and Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) programs. Positive train control technology is mandated by the federal government. It allows for the automated

stopping of trains in the event there is a problem with a train operator or a speeding train.

Tom O'Rourke, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce), asked if the changes to the transit programming are largely a recategorizing of funding. T. Dugan confirmed that the changes reflect a recategorization of programmatic line items to align with MassDOT's Capital Investment Plan (CIP).

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), inquired about the status of positive train control on the MBTA's light and heavy rail lines. T. Dugan reported that implementation of the technology is advancing on the Green Line and that the new CIP references the implementation of the technology on the commuter rail. D. Mohler added that the use of the technology on the commuter rail is federally mandated in response to a nationwide safety problem.

- K. Miller inquired about the ownership of the ferry on the Winthrop-Boston ferry.
- D. Mohler replied that the Town of Winthrop owns the ferry.
- K. Miller then asked about the operating costs of the proposed ferry services, whether they are new services, and how subsequent years of service would be funded.
- D. Mohler reported that both the Winthrop and Lynn ferries are new services. Both projects are undergoing CMAQ analyses; the results of those analyses will be available by the time the MPO votes on this amendment. If approved to receive CMAQ funding, the services would be eligible, with MPO approval, for three years of funding.

Tom Kadzis, City of Boston, inquired about the MBTA's total exposure to positive train control and the method of repayment for the TIFIA and RRIF loans. T. Dugan replied that the contract is approximately \$451 million and the loans will be repaid from the MBTA's operating budget, which includes revenue sources from the sales tax and fare revenue.

- T. Kadzis asked if the transit line items proposed to be removed from the TIP in this amendment, such as *System Upgrades*, are being deferred. D. Mohler and T. Dugan explained that the proposed changes reflect an interest in providing more specificity about funding in the TIP and making it easier to track spending. In the past, line items were organized in broad program categories.
- T. Bennett asked about when positive train control will go into effect. T. Dugan offered to get back to her with that information.

#### Motion

A motion to release Draft Amendment Three to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP for a 30-day public review period was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the City of Boston (T. Kadzis). The motion carried.

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

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 3, 2016 was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the At-Large Town of Lexington (Richard Canale). The motion carried. The following members abstained: At-Large Town of Arlington (Laura Wiener); At-Large City of Newton (David Koses); MassDOT (Marie Rose); Massachusetts Port Authority (Hayes Morrison); and North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) (Tina Cassidy).

# 8. Draft FFYs 2017-21 Transportation Improvement Program Development: Final Project Evaluation Results and Next Steps—Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff

S. Pfalzer presented revised evaluation results for projects under consideration for the FFYs 2017-21 TIP, provided comment letters regarding specific projects, and discussed the next steps in the TIP development process.

#### **Project Evaluation Results**

In March, staff posted the original project evaluation results on the MPO's website and distributed the results to municipal TIP contacts. Staff accepted feedback from project proponents over a two-week period. In some cases, the proponents provided additional information or made a strong case for increasing the points awarded to their projects. As a result, staff updated the evaluation scores of seven projects. Also, staff updated the evaluation scores related to an air-quality criterion for several other projects; these updates are due to staff's transition to using new emission factors for air quality analyses. All the changes were highlighted in a spreadsheet that was distributed to members.

#### Discussion

R. Canale, At-Large Town of Lexington, inquired about whether the project to improve Kelley's Corner in Acton is eligible to be evaluated for consideration in this TIP. S. Pfalzer replied that this project has recently been approved by MassDOT's Project Review Committee, but that there is not yet a functional design report (FDR) for the project. As this project moves towards the 25% design stage, and an FDR becomes available, staff will be able to evaluate the project.

Denise Deschamps, North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly), noted that the total evaluation scores for two projects in Beverly have decreased, and she asked about the affect the reduction would have on the funding or design of the projects. S. Pfalzer explained that, as a result of the rescoring, the *Commonwealth Avenue*, *Phase 3 and 4 (Boston)* project now scores higher than the *Traffic and Safety Improvements at Three Locations (Beverly)* project, and the *Reconstruction of Union Avenue (Framingham)* project now scores higher than the *Rehabilitation of Bridge Street (Beverly)* project.

D. Mohler asked for an explanation of what staff considers when evaluating projects under the criterion for "leverages other investments (non-TIP funding)" and how staff determines the score. S. Pfalzer explained that this criterion was added to the TIP project evaluation system this year. Staff considers whether there are non-TIP funding sources contributing directly to a project, or if there are investments that are complementary to a project, such as MassWorks grants or other state funding. The scoring is based on the percentage of the investments compared to the project cost. D. Mohler asked staff to provide a list of the investments that staff considers when giving points under this criterion and why they are scored.

K. Miller asked if staff considers private investments under the criterion for "leverages other investments (non-TIP funding)." S. Pfalzer noted that staff looks at whether other investments in the project area are tied to state grant awards.

#### Comment Letters

Members were provided with letters submitted by subregional groups, state representatives, and businesses and organizations expressing support for specific projects.

The letters from subregional groups – the North Suburban Planning Council, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination, South West Advisory Planning Committee, and Three Rivers Interlocal Council – discussed their transportation funding priorities.

A number of letters from businesses in Dedham and the town's state representatives expressed support for the *Pedestrian Improvements along Elm Street and Rustcraft Road Corridors (Dedham)* project.

State representatives for Sudbury wrote in support of a project to improve Landham Road and Route 20 in Sudbury.

More comment letters are expected as the TIP development process continues.

#### **Next Steps**

S. Pfalzer discussed the next steps in the development of the FFYs 2017-21 TIP. Going forward the MPO will be addressing issues regarding projects currently programmed in the FFY 2016-20 TIP that would affect programming in the new TIP, such as project schedule and cost changes.

He gave an overview of the funding levels available for the new TIP. MassDOT released figures of funding available for the statewide highway program over the next 5 years. The funding levels range from \$615 million in 2017 to \$640 million in 2021. Before funding is allocated to MPOs, MassDOT will take money off the top for repayment to the federal government on the Accelerated Bridge Program. The remaining funding would then be allocated to three main programs: the Bridge Program, Statewide Items, and Regional Targets.

The Boston Region MPO receives approximately 43% of the funding in the Regional Targets Program. For the five years of the FFY 2017-21 TIP, the MPO can expect to receive a total of approximately \$464 million. Yearly amounts range from approximately \$89 million in FFY 2017 to nearly \$95 million in FFY 2021.

S. Pfalzer then gave an overview of project schedule issues. MPO staff will be meeting with MassDOT staff on April 15 to discuss project schedule and cost changes, and project readiness. This information will be factored in to the development of the staff recommendation for the TIP.

MassDOT has already notified staff of several projects that may not be ready for construction in FFY 2016, the year that funding is currently programmed for them:

- Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3 (Bedford, Billerica, Burlington)
- Reconstruction and Widening on Route 18 (Weymouth, Abington)
- Reconstruction of Massachusetts Avenue (Lexington)

There is also concern about the readiness of one project programmed in FFY 2017, the *Intersection and Signal Improvements at Route 9 and Village Square (Brookline)* project.

Several projects have recently increased in cost. The cost estimate for the *Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3 (Bedford, Billerica, Burlington)* project has increased by \$6.5 million with the submission of the 100% design plans. The total cost estimate is now \$35.8 million. The cost estimate for the *Reconstruction and Related Work on Derby Street (Hingham)* has increased by nearly \$1 million. The total cost estimate is now \$4.9 million. A cost increase is expected for the *Reconstruction and Widening on Route 18* 

(Weymouth, Abington) project when the 100% designs are submitted in the coming weeks.

Projects that are ongoing commitments and have multi-year funding are:

- Green Line Extension (Somerville, Medford)
- Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue (Boston)
- Reconstruction and Widening on Route 18 (Weymouth, Abington)

After addressing scheduling and cost increase issues, the remaining target funding can be used for selecting and programming new projects. Factors that will go into the project selection include the following:

- project evaluation results
- project readiness information
- allocation of funds based on investment programs in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (i.e. Major Infrastructure, Complete Streets, Intersection Improvements, Bicycle Network and Pedestrian Connections, and Community Transportation and Parking)
- consideration of geographic equity to ensure that funding needs are addressed across the region

Further discussion of TIP projects will occur at upcoming MPO meetings and a draft TIP is expected to be prepared in May for release for public review.

#### Discussion

R. Canale asked if staff plans to characterize for the members what the new scoring system has done in terms of prioritizing projects based on geographic equity and community type. S. Pfalzer then discussed the findings from a sample evaluation that staff conducted earlier this year, before the MPO adopted the new project evaluation system. The sample evaluation revealed that projects addressing safety at high-crash locations scored higher in the new evaluation system, and that the adoption of an expanded definition of the populations covered under Title VI also influenced the scoring. The same findings are likely to carry forward with the full evaluation for this TIP.

D. Mohler summarized the issues that will be facing the MPO in regards to the programming of funding for FFY 2016. If the *Middlesex Turnpike* and *Route 18* projects are not construction ready in FFY 2016, the MPO will have to find other ready projects to spend approximately \$25 million on in FFY 2016. (About \$20 million would be available from *Middlesex Turnpike* and \$5 million from *Route 18* in FFY 2016.) Also,

additional funding will be required to address significant cost increases of the *Middlesex Turnpike*, *Route 18*, *and Derby Street* projects going forward.

- K. Miller proposed the option that the additional funding that might be available in FFY 2016 could be used to accelerate the pay back of Advance Construction costs on already advertised projects.
- D. Crowley inquired if earmarks eligible for repurposing could be used to cover project cost increases. D. Mohler stated that he believes that it would be possible to add earmark funds to existing projects. K. Miller added that this might be a more likely option for FFY 2017.
- M. Rose noted that MassDOT Highway Division staff are aware of the schedule issues with the *Middlesex Turnpike* and *Route 18* projects and are doing everything they can to ensure the projects are ready for advertising by September. The *Middlesex Turnpike* project requires a Chapter 91 license and municipal right-of-way acquisition. The *Route 18* project requires a right-of-way certificate; MassDOT's Right-of-Way Bureau is fairly confident that they will be able to issue the certificate in time.

Richard Reed, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford), provided an update on the right-of-way acquisition for the *Middlesex Turnpike* project. Twelve permanent easements are still required. The Bedford town meeting authorized right-of-way takings last week and the Town of Billerica is proceeding with its right-of-way acquisition, also. A wetlands variance hearing for the project took place in March; MassDOT is scheduling another hearing.

Pamela Haznar, MassDOT District 5, asked if there is a deadline for substituting projects in FFY 2016, in the event that projects currently programmed in that year are not ready in time for advertisement. D. Mohler indicated that there will be a deadline, but it has not been determined yet.

## 9. State Implementation Plan—Bryan Pounds, MassDOT Staff

B. Pounds provided an update on the State Implementation Plan (SIP). He reported that MassDOT prepared draft responses to public comments received during the public review period for last year's annual SIP status report, and submitted those responses to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). MassDOT is awaiting a response and certification letter from DEP. MassDOT will be preparing this year's annual SIP status report in a few months. MassDOT expects to provide the next update to the MPO on May 5.

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, asked if MassDOT is continuing to prepare written updates on the SIP and post them online. B. Pounds confirmed that MassDOT is still preparing written updates, however recent efforts have been focused on coordinating the annual SIP status report submission with DEP.

#### 10.Members Items

Hayes Morrison, Massachusetts Port Authority, introduced Laura O'Connor, who will be representing the Port Authority on the MPO board going forward.

D. Mohler announced that MassDOT's Draft FFYs 2017-21 Capital Investment Plan will be presented to the MassDOT Board of Directors and the MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board on April 11 and the boards will vote to release it for public review. Fourteen public meetings will be held across the state during the public review period. He encouraged members and others to submit comments.

### 11. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa) 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)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Laura Wiener
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	Richard Canale
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	Marie Rose
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Port Authority	Hayes Morrison
MBTA	Thom Dugan
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)	Richard Reed
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Denise Deschamps
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
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT District 3
Michael Butler	Town of Dedham
Joe Domelowicz	Town of Winthrop
Jim Dow	Town of Hull
Tim Gordon	Town of Holbrook
Yolanda Greaves	Ashland Board of Selectmen

Pamela Haznar MassDOT District 5
Jim Kern Town of Dedham
Timothy Kochan MassDOT District 5

Tony Lionetta BETA

Rafael Mares Conservation Law Foundation
David Manugian Ashland Department of Public

Works

Rich McCarthy Town of Dedham

Representative Paul McMurtry State Representative

John Morgan CHA Consulting

Laura Gilmore O'Connor Massachusetts Port Authority
Steve Olanoff Three Rivers Interlocal Council

(Town of Norwood)

Bryan Pounds MassDOT Office of Transportation

Planning

Constance Raphael MassDOT District 4

Ellen Spring Office of State Representative

Denise Garlick

Joe Stigliani Town of Hull

#### **MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director Scott Peterson, Director of Technical Services

Lourenço Dantas David Fargen Maureen Kelly Alexandra Kleyman Anne McGahan

Sean Pfalzer

Jennifer Rowe