

# Draft Memorandum for the Record

## Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

### November 3, 2016 Meeting

10:10 AM – 11:10 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:

- Elect the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) – as represented by Eric Bourassa – as vice chair of the Boston Region MPO
- Approve the minutes of the meeting of October 6, 2016
- Release Draft Amendment One to the Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for a 30-day public review period

### Meeting Agenda

#### 1. Public Comments

Steve Olanoff praised MassDOT for the removal of the toll booths on Interstate 90. He also expressed concern about the ticketing system at the Route 128 garage and asked MassDOT to address leaks in the garage that may present an ice hazard to pedestrians in the winter months.

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

The Chair did not have a report.

#### 3. Committee Chairs' Reports

Bryan Pounds, Chair of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee, reported that the UPWP Committee is scheduled to meet on November 17.

#### 4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Mike Gowing, Advisory Council Chair*

News from the Advisory Council included the reelection of Tegin Bennett as chair and the election of Mike Gowing as vice chair.

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

K. Quackenbush drew members' attention to a brochure with information about several programs through which the MPO staff elicits ideas from municipalities and the public during the year: Community Transportation Technical Assistance; Regional Transit Service Planning; Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways; and Addressing Priority Corridors. He encouraged members to bring these programs to the attention of those they interact with. He also announced that staff will hold an Office Hours event after the first MPO meeting of each month; this period of time is reserved for members of the public to talk in person or by phone with staff members about MPO matters and CTPS's work.

He also reported that a memorandum summarizing the MPO members' views on the topic of increasing up-front municipal contributions to projects would be provided to the MPO chair, who in turn will provide the information to the MassDOT Board of Directors.

## **6. Update on MPO Elections for Municipal Representation—*Eric Bourassa, MAPC***

E. Bourassa reported that the annual MPO elections were held last week at MAPC's Fall Council meeting. The election for the four open seats was uncontested and the following members were re-elected: the Town of Bedford, representing the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination; the Town of Framingham, representing the MetroWest Regional Collaborative; the City of Somerville, representing the Inner Core Committee; and the Town of Braintree, representing the South Shore Coalition.

## **7. Annual Vice Chair Election—*David Mohler, MassDOT***

D. Mohler nominated MAPC, as represented by E. Bourassa, as vice chair of the MPO for the coming year. There were no other nominations.

A motion to elect MAPC – as represented by Eric Bourassa – to the position of vice chair of the MPO was made by MassDOT (D. Mohler), and seconded by the City of Boston (Jim Gillooly). The motion carried.

## **8. Approval of Meeting Minutes—*Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff***

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of October 6, 2016 was made by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville, Tom Bent), and seconded by the MassDOT Highway Division (John Romano). The motion carried. The Advisory Council (M. Gowing) abstained.

## **9. Draft FFYs 2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program, Amendment One—*Alexandra Kleyman, MPO Staff***

A. Kleyman presented the Draft Amendment One to the FFYs 2017-2021 TIP. This amendment is being proposed to provide detail on MBTA transit program funding. When the MPO approved the TIP last summer, only preliminary figures were available from the MBTA. This amendment would align the programming of funds in the MBTA's Capital Investment Plan (CIP) with the programming in the TIP, and provide project level detail on transit projects. TIP tables were provided showing proposed changes to line items in the Section 5307, 5337, and 5339 transit funding programs.

### ***Discussion***

J. Gillooly observed that the total programmed amounts for the transit programs have increased in most FFYs (as compared to the original programming in the TIP), and he asked if more funding was made available to the MBTA. Eric Waaramaa, MBTA, explained that the original figures in the TIP were initial estimates and that the figures in this amendment represent the best estimate, based on assumed apportionments, for federal funding the MBTA expects to receive over the next five years.

Lara Mérida, Boston Planning and Development Agency, asked if the Bus Procurement Program will add buses to the MBTA's fleet or replace buses. E. Waaramaa replied that the program is generally for replacement of buses, and that he would get more information on those details.

David Koses, At-Large City of Newton, asked if there is another source with details on the Station and Facilities Program and the timelines for implementing specific projects. E. Waaramaa directed him to the MBTA's Capital Investment Plan (CIP) on MassDOT's website. He noted that, while the TIP shows federal funding, the CIP shows all funding sources and cash flows. D. Mohler also pointed to a table (that accompanies the TIP tables) that gives information about the specific stations and facilities addressed by the federal funding programs.

E. Bourassa inquired about the System-Wide Radio project in the Systems Upgrade Program. E. Waaramaa offered to get back to members with information on specific projects within the funding program.

### ***Vote***

A motion to release the Draft Amendment One to the FFYs 2017-2021 TIP for a 30-day public review period was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano), and seconded by the Advisory Council (M. Gowing). The motion carried.

## **10. Update on the MPO Certification Review Action Plan—*Elizabeth Moore, MPO Staff***

In 2014 the MPO's federal partners – the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) – conducted a certification review of the MPO. In May 2015 the federal review team issued a report on their findings. While there were no significant shortcomings, the team made some recommendations for improving the MPO's programs and processes. Staff distributed a matrix to members that summarizes the federal recommendations and how staff intends to respond to them.

Most of the recommendations were actions that staff could take without MPO board approval. These actions include improving outreach geographically and as pertains to protected populations, and incorporating other protected populations (such as seniors) in data collection and analysis for the MPO's Title VI and equity work. Addressing the latter issue will involve participation by MassDOT's Office of Diversity and Civil Rights, which is forming a Title VI working group.

Other federal recommendations require action by the MPO board. The review team recommended, for example, that the MPO update the TIP selection criteria and conduct and equity analysis of the TIP.

Some recommendations pertain to institutional arrangements. The review team suggested updating a 1996 memorandum of understanding (MOU) concerning air quality; MassDOT will take the lead on this task. The team also recommended that the MPO revise its regional inter-agency MOU and incorporate more coordinated planning between the MPOs in the Boston Urbanized Area. Staff recommends that the MPO wait to act on this recommendation until there is a determination on the US Department of Transportation's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform.

In addition, the review team advised the MPO to work with the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) and the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA) to ensure their representation on the MPO board. The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) calls for regional transit authorities (RTAs) to have equal representation on MPO boards, and allows flexibility in terms of how those entities are represented (i.e. by a local representative or another RTA). Staff suggests scheduling a discussion of this topic on a future MPO meeting agenda. Depending on how the MPO decides to address this issue, a revision to the MPO's MOU may be required.

### ***Discussion***

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), suggested that the MPO schedule the discussion about the RTA issue soon, preferably in the next month.

Members then discussed whether the MPO's MOU would have to be revised if new RTA members were added to the MPO board. E. Moore suggested that the MOU would likely need to be updated, even if the RTAs were represented by a subregional representative, in order to document how the RTAs are being represented. Staff was asked to distribute the current MOU to members.

M. Gowing asked whether MWRTA and CATA were notified. E. Moore reported that both RTAs were notified that the subject of RTA representation would be addressed at today's meeting, and that the MPO would not take action on the issue today. (A representative from MWRTA was present at this meeting.) FHWA has expressed that both RTAs should be involved in the upcoming dialogue.

E. Bourassa suggested that staff schedule a discussion about this issue and make sure that the RTAs in the region are aware of the meeting. E. Moore noted that the federal regulations require that the interests of all the RTAs operating in the region should be represented before the MPO, while the certification review focused particularly on ensuring representation for the RTAs that receive funding through the MPO. She also noted that the rulemaking on Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform could impact this discussion if it results in a restructuring of the MPO system.

E. Bourassa suggested that staff research how RTA representation is handled at other MPOs that have multiple transit authorities on their boards.

### **11. Prioritization of Dedicated Bus Lanes—*Scott Hamwey, MassDOT***

S. Hamwey reported on an analysis that resulted in the prioritization of locations for dedicated bus lane treatments. Nick Hart and Jonathan Belcher of Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) contributed to this study. The analysis was part of the Focus 40 effort. Focus 40 is the MBTA's long-range plan – or Program for Mass Transportation – which is emphasizing the bus mode, as this mode serves many low-income areas and provides an opportunity for improving the system at a modest cost.

For this study, a three-step process was used for prioritizing bus lanes: 1) identifying roadway segments with high transit ridership, 2) identifying locations where buses are significantly delayed because of traffic congestion, and 3) identifying locations where the share of roadway users on buses is high. CTPS used automated passenger counter

(APC) data to identify high ridership roadway segments. Roadway delay was calculated using historical speed data from CTPS's INRIX database, by comparing the average speed observed at the time of each trip and comparing it to the free-flowing speed (taken during uncongested night time conditions) or the posted speed limit, whichever was lowest. This difference in speed was multiplied by the average number of passengers on board each trip to estimate the total passenger-hours of delay for each trip, and total passenger-hours of delay along each roadway segment.

The information from this study was used to make the case for a dedicated inbound bus lane on the North Washington Street Bridge in Boston. Also, pilot projects are under consideration for bus lanes on Washington Street in Roslindale and Route 99 in Everett. Further, the City of Cambridge has a grant to enhance Massachusetts Avenue's multimodal attributes.

### ***Discussion***

Laura Gilmore O'Connor, Massachusetts Port Authority, asked why a map showing delay on roadway segments had some missing pieces. N. Hart explained that there were some roadway segments for which INRIX data was not available.

D. Koses asked how the length of a roadway segment was determined. N. Hart replied that segments were determined based on splits in the data – at bus stops (ridership changes between stops) or intersections (speed changes).

M. Gowing asked if multimodal locations, where bus ridership is high relative to other roadway users, were factored in to the study. S. Hamwey confirmed that these locations were considered.

M. Gowing asked if the study considered bus service for populations that are underserved by transit. S. Hamwey reported that the study considered existing bus routes only.

A member inquired as to whether buses and bicycles could use the same lanes. S. Hamwey explained that the MBTA generally does not prefer to have those two modes sharing lanes for safety reasons, but shared use can be considered on a corridor-by-corridor basis.

## **12.Members Items**

D. Giombetti commended MassDOT for the removal of toll booths on Interstate 90, which has created measureable travel time savings.

J. Gillooly announced that a meeting about the *Reconstruction of Melnea Cass Boulevard (Boston)* project will be held on November 10. A flyer was distributed.

### **13. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville). The motion carried.

## Attendance

<b>Members</b>	<b>Representatives and Alternates</b>
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 Planning and Development Agency)	Lara Mérida
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jim Gillooly
	Tom Kadzis
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	David Anderson
Massachusetts Port Authority	Laura Gilmore
	O'Connor
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
MBTA	Eric Waaramaa
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 Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Mike Gowing
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Dave D'Amico
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke

<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Ed Carr	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Karen Dumaine	Alewife/Neponset Valley TMA
Scott Hamwey	MassDOT
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council
Bryan Pounds	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Ellen Spring	Office of State Representative Denise Garlick



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**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director

Elizabeth Moore, Director of Policy and Planning

Lourenço Dantas, Manager, MPO Certification  
Activities Group

Maureen Kelly

Alexandra Kleyman

Anne McGahan

Jennifer Rowe

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