

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

February 2, 2017 Meeting

10:00 AM – 11:13 AM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

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

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on Page 10.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Chair's Report—*Steve Woelfel, MassDOT*

S. Woelfel reported that during the federal re-certification process for the Old Colony Planning Council, the issue of municipalities with membership in two regional planning agencies, and therefore two different MPOs, was raised.

Discussion

Eric Bourassa (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) clarified that Stoughton, Pembroke, Hanover, and Duxbury are members of both the Metropolitan Area and Old Colony Planning Councils and receive technical assistance from both agencies. They have furthermore been members of both the Boston Region and Old Colony MPOs. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has indicated that this is inappropriate as municipalities cannot receive funds via two MPOs. These municipalities may have to choose which Planning Council and MPO to retain membership of going forward.

Kenneth Miller (FHWA) clarified that federal regulations prohibit municipalities from membership of two MPOs.

Karl Quackenbush (Executive Director, MPO Staff) added that this issue has implications for funding formulas related to capital funds, and asked whether both MPOs and the Governor will have to weigh in on a solution.

E. Bourassa replied that all the implications have not yet been considered. S. Woelfel stated that the issue was raised very recently and MassDOT staff has not yet met regarding next steps.

4. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

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

T. Bennett reported that the next Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for February 8 from 2 to 4:30 PM. Discussion will focus on Advisory Council participation in the 3C process, the proposed amendment to the MPO's Public Participation Plan currently out for public review, and the issue of Regional Transit Authority (RTA) representation on the MPO Board.

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

K. Quackenbush reported that an MPO Away meeting has been scheduled for March 2 at the Wellesley Free Library.

K. Quackenbush also highlighted the recent professional accomplishments of two MPO staff members. In January, Transit Planner Nicholas Hart presented at the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board. His paper, "Title VI Service Equity Analyses: Development of a Comprehensive Method for Quantifying Adverse Effects and Assessing Disparate Impacts of Transit Service Changes," was accepted for publication in the proceedings of the meeting.

Also in January, Transportation Equity Program Manager Betsy Harvey attended the National Transit Institute's two-day invitation only Advanced-Level Environmental Justice Workshop at Rutgers University.

7. Draft Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2018-22 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): Development Schedule—*Ali Kleyman, TIP Manager, MPO Staff*

A. Kleyman presented the current development schedule for the *Draft Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2018-22 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*. In January and February, the initial Universe of Projects to consider for funding will take shape and staff will conduct project evaluations. By the end of February, staff will post project evaluations for review. In March and April, the MPO will receive municipal input and select projects to include in the TIP. March 9 is the deadline for municipal feedback. On

March 16, staff will present a list of projects with the best evaluation scores to the MPO. On March 30, staff will present a recommended list of projects to fund. On April 6, the MPO will vote to release the Draft TIP for public review. If necessary, the MPO can continue discussion and vote on April 13. If so, staff will post the draft for public review on April 19 and the public review period will officially begin on April 20. The public comment period will last until May 18. Staff will compile comments and provide them to MPO for review. The MPO will vote to endorse on May 25.

The key meeting dates for TIP discussions and votes are March 16, 30, April 6/13, and May 25. These dates are based on the proposed 21-day public comment period in the Public Participation Plan Amendment that is currently under public review. If the proposed amendment to the Public Participation Plan is not approved, these dates may change.

Discussion

Tom Kadzis (City of Boston) (Boston Transportation Department) asked about changes to the current FFY 2017-2021 TIP and where they fit in this schedule. He approved of the proposed accelerated schedule but wondered if the MPO was on track with changes that need to be made to the current TIP. A. Kleyman responded that MassDOT's "TIP Readiness Day" for the Boston Region is February 17. She expects to receive more information related to these issues at that point. Her understanding is that discussions related to changes to the current TIP will take place concurrently with the development of the new TIP.

E. Bourassa asked whether MassDOT and FHWA are on-schedule to provide the MPO with the financial information necessary to program the TIP by the end of January.

Kenneth Miller (Federal Highway Administration) responded that FHWA sent a letter regarding expected funding to MassDOT two weeks ago. S. Woelfel added that MassDOT has a meeting scheduled to discuss this and believes they are on schedule.

Rafael Mares (Conservation Law Foundation) asked to review the dates to see how the proposed 21-day public comment period impacts the TIP schedule. He stated that if the intent of the shorter public comment period was to have more time for staff to review and compile comments and submit them to MPO members, he wanted to make sure the schedule allows for that. A. Kleyman replied that the schedule has staff posting comments on May 18 for a vote on May 25.

Lourenço Dantas (MPO Staff) clarified that May 18 would be a regularly scheduled meeting and May 25 would need to be added.

R. Mares asked how long it takes staff to post the draft TIP for public comment after it is voted out. He observed that the schedule builds in six days between the MPO's April 13 vote to release and April 19, when staff are expected to post the draft for public review. He added that any extra time that could be provided to the public, should be. A. Kleyman clarified that this time is needed to have the Executive Summary translated, make any necessary edits, and process documents into accessible formats. She added that the MPO will need to be clear about what exactly is going to be posted. With the condensed schedule it may just be the Executive Summary and a list of projects.

R. Mares reiterated that he understood the pressures on staff but wanted to make sure members of the public know they are being given every day they possibly can to comment. He asked that the schedule identify the period needed for translation and editing by staff so that the public knows what this extra time entails.

A. Kleyman agreed that the aim of staff should be to have materials posted as soon as possible.

K. Miller commented that the proposed accelerated schedule has consequences for the current TIP in that identifying projects for FFYs 18-22 in early February may create holes in funding in 2017. He stated that FHWA strongly suggests that the state program a minimum of 50 million dollars going forward, which would also require planning related to the TIP. S. Woelfel replied that this is one of the inputs that will be discussed during the MPO's Readiness Day.

Steve Olanoff (Member of the Public) added to R. Mares' comments related to the shortened public comment period. He stated that he felt the shorter period was not a good idea, but if it is approved that documents should be posted for public review as soon as possible. He suggested that staff could translate documents in advance of a vote and have a contingency plan for the possibility that a document needs to be edited following a vote.

S. Woelfel stated that the proposed shorter period attempts to encourage other MPOs in the Commonwealth that do not meet as often or have as many people commenting or involved in their processes. The hope is to have more predictability in the process state-wide in order to involve more people in the TIP and STIP processes. He added that staff is working to make sure that documents are released to the public as soon as possible.

K. Quackenbush stated that this schedule has gone through repeated edits up to and until the night before this meeting. He stressed that MPO staff is doing their best to be as responsive as possible to the state's need for timely votes on both the TIP and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). He added that MPO staff cannot commit to

any shorter period of time between votes and when documents are posted for public review, but that if it is possible to translate documents or do other tasks in advance without duplicating work they will look into doing so.

L. Dantas pointed out that in the event that a draft is voted out for public review without any further changes, this material will already have been posted in advance of the meeting and thus available for public review. He reiterated that the lag time between the vote and the official start of the public comment period is to accommodate the staff time needed to translate and format materials for accessibility.

R. Mares pointed out that April 19, when the documents are planned to be posted, is during school vacation week, which may shorten the time for public comment further for members of the public.

8. Draft FFYs 2018-22 TIP Development: Universe of Projects—Ali Kleyman, MPO Staff

A. Kleyman presented the *Draft FFYs 2018 TIP Universe of Projects*. This is the initial list of projects to consider for funding with MPO target funds during the development schedule discussed above. A. Kleyman provided a handout to members consisting of two tables. Table 1, with blue headers, is the current Universe of Projects to consider for funding. Table 2, with red headers, lists projects currently programmed with MPO target funds in FFYs 17-21. The objective of presenting the Universe is to update MPO members on what she has heard from municipalities regarding their priority projects, discuss the universe and origin of projects, and solicit feedback from members. She asked that members inform her if there are projects they know are local priorities that are not listed as such, projects not designated as ready for evaluation that they know are ready, or projects that are not on the list that they know should be.

To create the Universe of Projects, A. Kleyman compiled last year's Universe and removed projects programmed in the current TIP and projects without MassDOT Project ID numbers. To this, she added a list of all active projects in the region, removed projects that were already programmed, inactive, conceptual, or pre-PRC approval. She additionally removed projects that fall more into DOT funding categories like Safe Routes to School, re-surfacing, and bridge maintenance and reconstruction. The table is further divided into the following four sections.

1. Municipalities have indicated that these are a priority and they have not yet been evaluated. These projects are ready for evaluation and project proponents have sent in evaluation information.

2. These projects were evaluated last year but were not programmed. Those highlighted in orange are municipal priorities.
3. These projects are municipal priorities but are not ready for evaluation.
4. These projects are PRC-approved or in some design stage, but are either not ready for evaluation or no proponent has reached out to indicate their status.

There are 109 projects in Universe table and they are organized by investment program.

Discussion

Tom Bent (Inner Core Committee) (City of Somerville) asked A. Kleyman to clarify that projects which are not highlighted in orange indicate that she has not heard from project proponents.

T. Bennett asked A. Kleyman to expand on the outreach that was done to solicit input from municipalities. A. Kleyman replied that she attended meetings in each MPO subregion, to which TIP Contacts were invited. She also hosted conference calls for TIP Contacts. She has also contacted MassDOT Highway District Project Engineers regarding the projects in Section 4, to see if they have information regarding the status of these projects.

E. Bourassa asked whether this chart has been communicated back to TIP Contacts. A. Kleyman replied that she will email TIP Contacts with the chart so they know the status of the Universe.

K. Miller asked about the 495 Interchange project and where it is located in the chart. A. Kleyman replied that this list only includes projects considered for funding with MPO target funds.

K. Miller asked about the Causeway Street project, which T. Bent clarified was subsumed by the target project.

9. Draft FFY 2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP): Development Schedule—*Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff*

S. Johnston presented the current development schedule for the *Draft FFY 2018 UPWP*. He summarized the subregional and agency outreach that occurred throughout the fall of 2017, prior to his joining the MPO Staff. On February 9, staff will release the initial draft Universe to the UPWP Committee. On February 16, the UPWP Committee will meet to review and discuss the Universe. On March 16 staff will present a formal draft of the Universe and the UPWP Committee will begin their formal review. The UPWP Committee will meet twice in April, on two of the following dates: April 6, 13, 20.

At the close of the second April meeting, the Committee will vote on its formal recommendation to forward to the MPO. On May 4 the MPO will vote to release these recommendations for public review. The public comment period will begin on or near May 15. The public comment period will last until approximately June 5. The MPO will vote to endorse the final UPWP on June 15.

Discussion

T. Kadzis commented that there is a two week difference between the TIP and UPWP public processes. He stated that it is confusing that they do not line up with one another. He felt the MPO should consider aligning them going forward.

K. Miller asked about the rationale for accelerating the UPWP schedule via the same Public Participation Plan Amendment that accelerates the TIP. If the rationale for accelerating the TIP schedule is to align it with the state's CIP process, he wondered if it was necessary to accelerate the UPWP schedule as well, given that FHWA will not be considering documents for approval until August at the earliest.

K. Quackenbush commented that he felt this was a return to attempts made in previous years to complete document production for the TIP and the UPWP prior to July, given that attendance of members then becomes an issue.

10. Route 20 East Corridor in Marlborough (a Subregional Priority Roadways Study)—Mark Abbott, MPO Staff

M. Abbott presented the findings of the *Route 20 East Corridor in Marlborough* study. This work was part of the FFY 2016 UPWP-funded *Addressing Safety and Mobility on Subregional Priority Roadways* study. To select this corridor for study, staff reviewed 24 possible corridors, presenting their selection of Route 20 East in Marlborough to the MPO in March of 2016. The selection of this particular corridor was based on criteria such as safety issues, multi-modal significance, subregional priority, and regional equity. Since 2013, staff has conducted similar studies on five corridors in four subregions. Two of these five studies are MassDOT projects in the design phase.

The objectives of the study were to identify the safety, mobility, access, and other transportation-related problems in the corridor and develop and evaluate potential multimodal transportation solutions. The study corridor is about 3.6 miles long. It extends from Route 85 in Downtown Marlborough to the Sudbury town line. Most sections of the corridor are under MassDOT's jurisdiction. Lanes vary from two to four throughout the length of the corridor. Volumes vary from 26,500 to 17,500 ADT. There are 9 signalized intersections. The main issues along the corridor are safety and access to the many businesses located on both sides of the roadway. There is one poorly

operating un-signalized intersection at Route 20 and Concord Road, which MassDOT is aware of and working towards signaling.

MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) Route 7C provides eight round trips daily along the corridor. The frequency appears to be sufficient, with no overcrowding conditions. Sidewalks exist in some sections but there are several major gaps. There is a lack of bicycle accommodations in the entire corridor, with limited and discontinuous sections containing wide shoulders of about 4 to 6 feet.

There were nearly 1,000 crashes along this corridor over the last 5 years. The total corridor crash rate is estimated as 7.30 crashes per million vehicle miles traveled, a rate much higher than the State average of 3.49 for principal urban arterials. Crash rates are especially high in the 4-lane business section of East Main Street and the 2-lane section of Concord Road between Concord Road and Farm Road. The crash cluster between Curtis Avenue and Hosmer Street is ranked as seven in the 2011-13 statewide top 200 crash locations. However, the study found that nearly 60% of the crashes in the cluster actually took place in the parking lot of Post Road Mall, not on Route 20. Pedestrian and bicycle crashes are also relatively high. In total, 12 pedestrian crashes and 9 bicycle crashes occurred between 2009 and 2015.

M. Abbott played several video clips of conditions at different locations along the study corridor which demonstrated various issues, including vehicles turning out of businesses and attempting to cross multiple lanes of traffic, shoulders that are not wide enough for bicycles, and a lack of sidewalks. Study recommendations include short-term improvements such as signage and marking at various locations, optimizing signal timing and phasing, lowering the speed limit to 35 mph in some sections, and narrowing travel lanes to eleven feet in sections where possible to accommodate wider shoulders for bicyclists. In the long-term, recommendations include adding sidewalks and sufficient shoulders in the corridor for pedestrians and bicyclists, and widening the roadway to three lanes in some locations. M. Abbot presented several graphic simulations showing what traffic patterns may look like if changes are implemented.

The short term improvements can be implemented as soon as resources are available from highway maintenance or local Chapter 90 funding. There are two projects underway including MassDOT Highway District 3's Route 20 Resurfacing Project, included in the TIP, and Marlborough's East Main Street Revitalization, a 2015 MassWorks Infrastructure Program, which can incorporate the vision for improvement provided by the study.

Discussion

David Koses (At-Large City) (City of Newton) asked about the staff time and effort it takes to input study data into a simulation to create the graphics used in the presentation. M. Abbott replied that the process can be time-consuming. He estimated that for this study it required a week of staff time.

Richard Canale (At-Large Town) (Town of Lexington) commended staff for their work on the study. He asked about sections of the roadway where the study indicated average vehicle speeds are lower than the posted limit, and inquired what the specific recommendations were for lowering the overall speeds on the corridor other than lowering the limit. M. Abbott answered that typically narrowing lanes to 12 or 11 feet encourages slower speeds.

T. Bennett asked whether the study considered widening sidewalks for separated bike-lanes at sidewalk-level. M. Abbott replied that the study did not consider this, but that typically 10 feet is needed to do so, which would be difficult at this location. He added that they would keep it in mind for future studies. T. Bennett asked about the wider radii allowed for truck turning. M. Abbott added that another challenge is encouraging businesses to change sidewalks because of the curb cut permits they have already secured.

Jim Fitzgerald (City of Boston) (Boston Planning & Development Agency) asked about widening the road outside Post-Road plaza and the possible addition of a median. M. Abbott replied that the businesses on the right side of the corridor are raised from the highway, and on the left the road drops off into the parking lot. These physical challenges in addition to the high volume of traffic constrain possible changes.

11.Members Items

There were none.

12.Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent). 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)	
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	Richard Canale
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Thomas Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Kenneth Miller
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Steve Woelfel Bryan Pounds
MassDOT Highway Division	
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Eric Waaramaa
Massachusetts Port Authority	Laura Gilmore
MBTA Advisory Board	Micha Gensler
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)	
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)	Richard Reed
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Tina Cassidy
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Tegin Bennett
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)	
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees Affiliation

Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Richard Simmons	Friends of the Lynnfield Rail Trail
Vince Inglese	Friends of the Lynnfield Rail Trail
Randall Russell	Friends of the Lynnfield Rail Trail
Steve Olanoff	TRIC
Geri Vatan	MassDOT Highway District 6

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
Mark Abbott
Lourenço Dantas
Róisín Foley
Sandy Johnston
Alexandra Kleyman
Robin Mannion
Anne McGahan
Elizabeth Moore
Scott Peterson
Jennifer Rowe
