

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



Regional Transportation Advisory Council

March 8, 2017, Meeting

**3:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4,
Boston, MA**

Meeting Summary

Introductions

T. Bennett, Chair (Cambridge) called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 6)

Chair's Report - T. Bennett

T. Bennett announced that the last MPO meeting was held in Wellesley as an "MPO Away" meeting. The last few meetings have focused on the development of the 3C Certification Documents. Several topics have also been addressed including a discussion on performance-based planning, and analyzing the region in terms of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) instead of the number of trips. Once the 3C Certification Documents are approved it is anticipated that more diverse presentations and discussion topics will again be incorporated into the Advisory Council meetings.

The City of Boston's GoBoston2030 planning initiative has released its implementation plan yesterday. On March 15, MassDOT will sponsor a forum on the 25-year investment plan for the MBTA called Focus40.

Minutes - February 8, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 8 meeting was made and seconded. The minutes were approved with two abstentions.

Public Participation Plan Amendment Comment Letter - T. Bennett, Chair

A comment letter drafted by the Advisory Council regarding the proposed amendment to modify the MPO Public Participation Plan (PPP) changing all comment periods to 21 days

was discussed by members. T. Bennett explained that the letter asks the MPO Board not adopt the amendment as currently proposed. She explained the Council's concern with meeting short deadlines, and questioned the utility of implementing this change to all of the certification documents.

The Council voted to approve the comment letter asking the MPO Board not to amend the PPP.

Review of 3C Documents - C. Porter, 3C Documents Committee Chair

- ***FFY 2018 UPWP Universe of Planning Studies, S. Johnston, UPWP Manager, CTPS***

T. Bennett summarized the discussion at the 3C Documents Committee meeting which was held prior to this meeting. The committee discussed the UPWP Universe of Projects and identified its ten favorite and five least favorite proposals.

S. Johnston briefly explained the function of the UPWP to the group. He stated that the recent funding amount for all of the studies is roughly under \$600K per year. Last year there were eight new studies.

Members reviewed the summary of projects presented in spreadsheet format. The Advisory Council's 3C Documents Committee list of priority projects were presented for the following program areas:

Active Transportation

1. Before and After Studies of Bicycle- and Pedestrian-Related improvements in TIP Projects

Notes from discussion:

- a. The study should review modes used before
- b. The study should be cautious about the impact of inclement weather on active transportation and evaluation of the improvements
- c. The study should review the impact on abutters, particularly businesses

Land Use, Environment, and Economy

2. Transportation Mitigation of Major Developments: Review of Strategies
3. Shopping Behavior and Mode of Arrival

Multi-modal Mobility

4. Safety and Operations at Selected Intersections
5. Potential Impacts of Autonomous Vehicles
6. Metrics for Describing the Full Spectrum of Travel Needs

Transit

7. Low-Cost Improvements to MBTA Rapid Transit Service (Signage, Wayfinding)
8. Title VI Service Equity Analysis: Methodology Development Phase II
9. Considerations for Implementing Transit Signal Priority in the MPO Region
10. Allston Transit Study

Members discussed the Low-Cost Improvements to the MBTA study. The study would make recommendations to the MBTA for improvements in signage and wayfinding to improve better access to rapid transit stations and vehicles. Several members asked about or expressed concern about the receptivity by the MBTA to the study recommendations for improvement by the study. (D. Montgomery)

Smart phone applications would not be a part of the study, but it was pointed out that the new fare collection system will bring about many efficiencies which will be studied as the system is implemented. (M. Gowing)

T. Bennett explained that from her perspective at the municipal government level, the MBTA has been open to discussion of new and innovative programs. L. Dantas stated that the study of problem areas is guided by the idea that there is a proponent for the projects and plans that are advanced.

A member requested that the amount of literature review for the study (Low-Cost Improvements) be kept to a minimum. (P. Nelson) He felt that some of the low-cost improvements are often ideas that are new and cutting-edge and are not always documented in the literature.

A member commented that the study (Low-Cost Improvements) should include commuter rail stations. (T. Laubenstein) He explained that the biggest challenge to riding commuter rail is often getting to the train, especially regarding parking space availability.

In response to a question from a member, S. Johnston stated that the scope of the study (Low-Cost Improvements) was written for rapid transit but it could be expanded to incorporate bus routes based on input from the UPWP Committee. (S. Zadakis)

Regarding the Allston Transit Study, a member supported studying the transit connections for bus routes connecting Harvard to the Longwood Medical Area through the Allston area. (P. Nelson) He noted that transit service planning was considered beyond the scope

of the current planning study of the Allston interchange and the Beacon Yard freight area.

A member suggested that a study be made of the impacts of truck traffic on roadways and other environmental effects as a result of moving the CSX freight yard to Worcester. (M. Wellons) The study could be reviewed next year (FFY 2019) for viability as a stand-alone UPWP study. Where possible, it would measure the impact of the changed truck traffic patterns, identify air quality outcomes, changes in vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and determine changes in roadway safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other roadway users.

A member asked why the “First Last Mile “ study did not get a recommendation. (S. Olanoff) S. Johnston mentioned that MAPC is conducting some work on this topic on the North Shore, and it is being studied around the region. He explained that it would be better to advance work on other subjects before duplicating other peoples’ work on this topic.

- ***FFY 2018-22 TIP Project Evaluation Results, A. Kleyman, TIP Manager, CTPS***

A. Kleyman presented an overview of the TIP Project Evaluation results. There are twenty-eight projects in the list being considered this year. The projects are organized by type of MPO investment program. This year there are seven new projects being evaluated for the first time while the rest of the projects were evaluated in previous years but were not funded. All of the listed projects can be considered by the MPO for funding.

The next steps include creating the “first-tier” list of projects and making a staff recommendation. The evaluation score is not the only factor in selecting projects; other considerations include:

- Cost estimates and how that fits into target funding for the time bands of the TIP and the target funding categories
- Whether projects have been evaluated in the past but not yet funded
- Regional distribution of projects
- Sub-regional priorities

Project proponents currently have the opportunity to discuss the evaluation results with MPO staff and provide updated project information that was not available in the first evaluation. A. Kleyman stated that she will present the Draft TIP Evaluation at the next MPO meeting on March 16.

Questions and Discussion

T. Bennett explained that while evaluation scores can be biased towards certain kinds of projects, the categorization and funding goals help ensure that those projects still have a chance of being funded. For example, bicycle and pedestrian projects are listed even

though they have lower overall scores than other programs like Complete Streets or Major Infrastructure.

A member asked why the Natick bridge replacement project on Route 27 over Route 9 is on the TIP list and not a part of the MassDOT Bridge Program. A. Kleyman stated that this project is in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and that it falls within the time bands of the TIP which makes it a candidate for project evaluation.

In response to a member's question, A. Kleyman stated that a project on the TIP must be on the LRTP if its cost is over \$20M or if it adds capacity to the system. (M. Gowing) He asked if project placement on the evaluation list is directly correlated with the funding of the projects. A. Kleyman explained that project placement within the five separate time bands of the TIP depends on the priorities for program areas of the target funds.

A member asked about the presence of scoring criteria in the evaluation form. A. Kleyman explained that the MPO adopted these scoring criteria last year. The criteria may be updated in upcoming years. (D. Montgomery)

A member asked about the changes made to the evaluation score and whether there could be an indication of what impact that change had made. (M. Gowing) A. Kleyman explained that this year, the one change in score resulted in an increase in points. Last year's score was not included on this list but it is available in other documents.

T. Bennett commended A. Kleyman and staff for the manner in which program amendments are presented to the MPO in which the impact of the amendments are explicitly communicated.

L. Dantas updated the Council on upcoming TIP development meeting dates. MPO has a special meeting on March 30 to devote to the TIP. The April 6 meeting will also dedicate much time to the TIP. There may be a need for another TIP-related meeting on April 13. It is possible that the MPO could decide on the TIP projects as soon as April 6. L. Dantas said that historically, there is a time lapse of three MPO meetings from the staff recommendation to the final proposal.

T. Bennett announced that the 3C Documents Committee of the Advisory Council will meet before the next Advisory Council meeting on April 12.

Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

J. McQueen announced that Walk Boston Annual Conference and Meeting will be held on March 29 at the Microsoft NERD Center in Cambridge.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:20 PM.

Attendance

Municipalities - Voting

Acton
Brookline
Cambridge
Millis
Needham
Westwood

Citizen Advocacy Groups

American Council of Engineering
Companies
Association for Public Transportation
Boston Society of Architects
CrosstownConnect
MassBike
MASCO
National Corridors Initiative
Riverside Neighborhood Association
WalkBoston

Municipalities Non-Voting

Boston

Agencies Non-Voting

Boston Planning and Development Agency
MassDOT - Aeronautics Division
TRIC

Guests

Scott Englander
Hang Lee
Ed Lowney
Dee Whilleby

Staff

Lourenço Dantas
Ali Kleyman
David Fargen

Attendee

Mike Gowing
Todd Kirrane
Tegin Teich Bennett
Ed Chisholm
David Montgomery
Trevor Laubenstein

Fred Moseley
Barry M Steinberg
Schuyler Larrabee
Scott Zadakis
Chris Porter
Paul Nelson
John Businger
Marilyn Wellons
John McQueen

Tom Kadzis

Mark Moran
Steven Rawding
Steve Olanoff

Brookline Resident
MILCB
Malden Resident
Boston Resident

Sandy Johnston
Matt Archer