



Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

June 13, 2018, Meeting Minutes

3:00 PM–4:30 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4,
10 Park Plaza, Boston

Tegin Teich, Chair, representing the City of Cambridge

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

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

2. Chair's Report—*T. Teich, City of Cambridge*

T. Teich announced that the Advisory Council field trip will be held on July 11, 2018, at Logan Airport. Details will be sent to members in advance of the event. The field trip will be Advisory Council Liaison David Fargen's final official meeting with the Advisory Council before his retirement in mid-July.

The Advisory Council's comment letter on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) were received by the program managers Ali Kleyman and Sandy Johnston, respectively. A formal letter acknowledging and responding to the comments will be sent to the group.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 9, 2018, meeting (*posted*) was made and seconded. The minutes were approved.

4. Lower Mystic Regional Working Group (LMRWG): A Summary—Eric Bourassa, *Transportation Director, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)*

E. Bourassa explained that the Lower Mystic Regional Working group was created as part of the environmental permitting process for the casino in Everett. The process reviewed the casino's effects on traffic and transportation in the region in "affected areas." The working group included members from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), the City of Boston, the City of Everett, the City of Somerville, and MAPC. Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) and MAPC provided the work group with technical support and group facilitation. Other work group participants included the Executive Office of

Housing and Economic Development, Attorney General's Office of Massachusetts, Congressman Capuano's Office, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission, the Massachusetts Port Authority, and the Wynn Everett Casino.

The area of focus for this working group has experienced significant growth in recent years. The casino in Everett is tentatively scheduled to open later this year; there is development in Union Square in Somerville; Assembly Row continues to grow; and there is a planning vision for Sullivan Square that is being considered by the local community. The focus area is estimated to be the fourth largest development area in the Greater Boston area.

The group looked at population (29 percent increase) and jobs (55 percent increase) for the impact analysis area out to the year 2040. This growth is estimated to contribute to a 34 percent increase in trips based on the travel demand model. The study took the scenario-planning approach in modeling future projections. A number of scenarios were analyzed reflecting impacts on traffic congestion in the region, a cost-benefit analysis, and an accessibility analysis for looking at transportation improvements for low-income and minority population areas in the development area. Broadly, the theme of the analysis is transportation infrastructure and services, land-use policies and design guidelines, and transportation-demand management strategies.

The LMRWG looked at alternatives including:

- Additional highway ramps and lanes
- Increased Orange Line frequency
- Increased Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) bus frequency
- New bus routes in dedicated lanes (BRT)
- Orange Line spur to Everett
- New Medford Orange Line station
- Pedestrian bridges over Mystic River
- Network of separated bicycle facilities
- Commercial and residential parking policies
- Work-from-home policies

The additional ramps and lanes alternative study yielded mixed to negative results and was not pursued further.

Increases in bus service connections increased ridership based on the traffic model. Several of the transit developments are beyond the scope of this study and would require major funding investments.

The bicycle and pedestrian improvements increased walk trips to transit significantly, yet still represented only a minor increase in mode share for bike and pedestrian trips.

The group also reviewed a new Orange Line station at River's Edge that increased projected Orange Line boarding.

The group further reviewed parking and policy options, including reductions in off-street parking for new residences, market rate parking for commuters in high-growth areas, increases in flexible work schedules and telecommuting, Transportation Management Associations (TMA) services, and workplace employee benefits (transit passes and bike parking.)

The policy modifications and transit demand management alternatives yield positive results in improving overall transportation in the impact analysis area.

The final study recommendations will be considered at an upcoming planning meeting with the study group. The recommendations of the LMRWG are not part of the MassDOT capital investment planning and any roadway or transit funding would need to follow that planning process. Several of the proposed alternatives could be pursued through development mitigation activities or investment through a TMA.

Discussion

Paul Nelson noted the importance of a bus maintenance facility, especially in light of any increase in bus service. E. Bourassa noted that discussions with the MBTA pointed out that the service facilities (parking and service garages) would all have to be considered in their capital investment plans.

John McQueen asked about land use and quality-of-life improvements making pedestrian and bicycle extensions appeal more to users. E. Bourassa noted that the modeling inputs made assumptions about fully developed bicycle and pedestrian access encouraging people to walk and take transit.

Barry Steinberg noted that on the Orange Line headways were reduced from six minutes to 4.5 minutes, which would require a new signal system. E. Bourassa pointed to the assumed capital cost of \$400 million and increased operating cost of \$36 million.

B. Steinberg asked if downtown stations will be improved and made more accessible. E. Bourassa explained that the study group considered broad system-wide improvements and that urban design and access-planning concepts are considered in the project planning level.

In response to a question from B. Steinberg, E. Bourassa noted that the staff and the working group generated the ideas that were shared at public meetings. Water transportation alternatives were encouraged by several residents at the public outreach events and further considered by the study group.

David Montgomery commended the study group for the analytical approach to modeling some of the developmental ideas and scenarios for big projects such as the casino project. E. Bourassa mentioned several big site developments that will be analyzed in a similar manner to the Lower Mystic impact area.

Schuyler Larrabee asked if the group had considered rising sea levels. E. Bourassa said that this study was based on transportation connections and did not consider details such as climate change resilience.

Jon Seward asked about the bicycle facilities. E. Bourassa said that the group made assumptions that the bicycle connections were made.

E. Bourassa, in response to a question from T. Teich, said that the capital cost of the bus improvements includes the cost of expanding the maintenance facility. The bus improvements align with ongoing planning for bus and transit planning initiatives, according to E. Bourassa.

E. Bourassa also stated that the expansion of municipal partners to discuss the planned improvements would bring the stakeholders most impacted by the project into the discussion. E. Bourassa is hopeful that MassDOT and MBTA will stay involved in the process.

Lenard Diggins asked if the travel model incorporates transportation network companies (TNC) and rideshare services. E. Bourassa explained that TNCs are not yet incorporated in the travel model. There is an interest in new methodologies that allocate trips to TNCs based on assumptions related to household income. In the future, Massachusetts could update its household travel survey, which was last conducted before TNCs entered the market.

J. McQueen asked when the casino transportation mitigation will be completed. E. Bourassa noted that the recommendations can serve as mitigation guidelines for municipalities. The casino development is dedicating \$50 million mitigation mostly for Sullivan Square improvements, water transportation, an extensive employee shuttlebus network, and weekend Orange Line service support.

A member asked if the model looks at trips created by large, high-end residential buildings and how developer mitigation is handled. E. Bourassa stated that major intersections are reviewed for level of service using a traffic analysis modeling software. This was in addition to the regional travel demand model.

5. Medical Academic Scientific Community Organization (MASCO)—*Paul Nelson, Senior Transportation Planner, MASCO*

MASCO is a charitable corporation with 21 member and associate member organizations established to plan, develop, and enhance the Longwood Medical and Academic Area (LMA)

neighborhood of Boston for the benefit of the public and its members. MASCO offers a wide range of services including transportation planning and development, parking and transit, and travel demand management through its transportation management association, CommuteWorks.

P. Nelson displayed the LMA map. Daily travel to the LMA includes trips for 57,000 employees, 22,000 college students, 26,000 patients and their visitors, and 7,000 from other communities (contractors, volunteers, etc.).

Development trends in the LMA include academic institutions, which are adding high-density, on-campus housing and new student support buildings. Medical institutions are adding buildings; retrofitting and reorienting campus layouts; consolidating research space; and expanding regional services outside the LMA.

Three key transportation options provided by MASCO include shuttle transportation, travel demand management (CommuteWorks), and planning and implementation of transportation improvements. There are seven shuttle routes serving 11,500 passengers per day. Shuttles cost about \$8.5 million per year to operate.

Since 2000, drive-alone mode share dropped from 47 percent to 29 percent, and public transit use increased from 39 percent to 48 percent. Biking and walking as a mode share are up significantly since 2000.

MASCO advocated for added service at Yawkey Station prior to its opening in 2014. A new inbound platform at Ruggles Station is under construction as part of a \$20 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant from the US Department of Transportation. The station will provide better access to the MBTA.

Themes to the ongoing planning for multimodal access and safety for the LMA include bicycle and pedestrian accommodation; improved bus and shuttle circulation; patient and visitor access; and signal coordination along major roads.

Discussion

J. McQueen asked if the proposed West Station commuter rail stop would benefit service to the LMA. P. Nelson stated that the Yawkey Station better serves the LMA but bus and transit connectivity for the West Station development area would be an important link to the LMA. The same likely would hold true for any development in the Grand Junction area.

In response to a question from L. Diggins, P. Nelson noted that trip length is growing.

P. Nelson noted that the LMA Shuttles are available to employees but not the general public in response to a question from David Montgomery, who also asked a question about the planning relationship between the member groups and the planning activities at MASCO. P.

Nelson stated that there are other activities associated with MASCO including a day care center and call services.

6. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

T. Teich congratulated David Fargen for his years of service to the Advisory Council.

7. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion carried.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
Boston	Tom Kadzis
Cambridge	Tegin Teich
Marlborough	Walter Bonin
Millis	Ed Chisholm
Needham	David Montgomery; Rhain Hoyland

Citizen Advocacy Groups	Attendees
Association for Public Transportation	Barry M Steinberg
Boston Society of Architects	Schuyler Larrabee
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	Paul Moyer
MassBike	David Ernst
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
Medical Academic and Scientific Comm. Assoc.	Paul Nelson
Riverside Neighborhood Association	Marilyn Wellons
WalkBoston	John McQueen

Agencies	Attendees
Boston Planning and Development Agency	Matt Moran
MassDOT Aeronautics	Michael Garrity
MassRides	Patrick Kelsey
Three Rivers Interlocal Council	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees

Affiliation

Andrea Leary	Assembly TMA
Dee Whittlesey	Boston Resident
Ed Lowney	Malden Resident

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

David Fargen
Jen Rowe
Matt Archer
