

# REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

## Summary of January 13, 2010 Meeting

This meeting was held in Conference Room 4 of the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA.

### 1. **Introductions** – *Laura Wiener, Chair*

Laura Wiener, Chair and representative of Arlington, called the meeting to order at 3:07 PM. Members, guests, visitors, and staff introduced themselves (see the attached attendance list).

### 2. **Chair's Report** – *Laura Wiener, Chair*

L. Wiener made the following remarks in her report:

- The Advisory Council is pleased to welcome a new member, the Massachusetts Motor Transportation Association, represented by Anne Lynch.
- The Advisory Council submitted a comment letter on the second amendment to the federal fiscal years 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The letter supported removal of the Foxborough pedestrian bridge project.
- Marcy Crowley, a long-time representative of Wayland, is ill and has moved to Vermont. A card for Marcy was distributed.

### 3. **Approval of Meeting Minutes of November 18, 2009** – *Laura Wiener, Chair*

A motion to approve the minutes of November 18, 2009 was made by Domenic D'Eramo, representative of Millis, and seconded by Walter Bonin, representative of Marlborough. The minutes were unanimously approved.

### 4. **Briefing on the MPO's new Clean Air and Mobility Program** – *Hayes Morrison, MPO Staff*

The Boston Region MPO has launched the Clean Air and Mobility Program to fund a wider variety of projects that improve air quality and mobility in the region using federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. The program expands on three previously existing programs: Suburban Mobility, Transportation Demand Management, and Regional Bike Parking. These programs were funded at approximately \$1 million last year. Now \$2 million is available through the new competitive grant program. It applies to any of the existing programs, plus any other project that can be funded through the federal CMAQ programs.

Municipalities, regional transit authorities, not-for-profit transportation advocacy groups, transportation management associations, and chambers of commerce are invited to submit projects. Information on eligible projects can be found on the MPO's website.

All applications must be submitted online this year. There are three different applications depending on the project type: transit service, infrastructure, and transportation demand management/transportation systems management. There is only one component that is not online, which is a spreadsheet that must be sent to Jonathan Belcher by e-mail. A functional design report must be provided for infrastructure projects.

All projects are subject to the statewide CMAQ Committee review and approval. Infrastructure projects must be initiated with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division and are subject to their design guidelines. All projects must be ADA compliant, where applicable. Transit proposals must be for new service. Proposals are due on April 1, 2010.

**Member comments and questions:**

H. Morrison made the following additional comments in response to members' questions:

- Rail grade separation projects might be eligible for CMAQ. However, only \$2 million per year is currently allocated to the Clean Air and Mobility Program.
- The MBTA and other agencies are eligible to apply for funding. Chambers of Commerce may apply, but not for infrastructure projects
- A 20% cash match must be provided for infrastructure projects.
- There are no bounds on project readiness, but the project must be able to get through the state design and review process in the year it is programmed.
- Bike paths and ferry services are eligible. A new ferry service in Hull was recently funded.
- School bus retrofits are eligible for CMAQ, but any proposal to do so should go through the state, which has its own program for this work.
- Emissions reduction is the important consideration for evaluating projects.
- Eric Bourassa at MAPC, or H. Morrison should be contacted with any questions.

Steve Olanoff, of Westwood, said he represented the Advisory Council on the Transportation Planning and Programming Suburban Mobility and TDM Subcommittee and he hopes to continue in that role on the new Clean Air and Mobility Subcommittee. He encouraged Advisory Council members to promote the Clean Air and Mobility Program to their communities.

Chan Rogers, of the Southwest Advisory Planning Committee, said that infrastructure which supports transit service, such as bus shelters, should be funded by the Clean Air and Mobility Program. Those elements are important to make the service successful.

**5. Introduction to the Seaport Advisory Council – *Louis Elisa and Edward Anthes-Washburn, Seaport Advisory Council***

L. Elisa thanked the Advisory Council for giving the Seaport Advisory Council an opportunity to speak about their work. He introduced Edward Anthes-Washburn of the Seaport Advisory Council staff, who gave the presentation.

The Seaport Advisory Council's mission is to support economic development in the state by developing the commercial maritime resources of the state's ports. It was created by Executive Order #376 in December 1994. To date, the Seaport Advisory Council has spent approximately \$95 million on nearly 300 projects.

The Seaport Advisory Council works mostly with five key ports: Boston, Fall River, Gloucester, New Bedford, and Salem. Examples of recent projects are the following:

- Gloucester: I4-C2 land acquisition
- Salem: South River dredge engineering
- New Bedford: Four-phased dredge project
- Fall River: South berth expansion on the Fall River State Pier
- Boston: Charlestown Navy Yard Pier 4 dredging

They also work in smaller port municipalities. Examples of some projects are:

- Saugus: Lobstermen's Landing
- Winthrop: Multi-use town pier and landing

They have looked at water-based transit between ports on Cape Cod and Boston.

The Seaport Advisory Council is also involved in port security, having received \$3 million in port security grants. They also provide technical advice and make small grants available to port municipalities to conduct studies.

Promoting short sea shipping is one of the most important initiatives on which the Seaport Advisory Council is working. Only about 2% of domestic freight is shipped by sea in the United States. The share in Europe is approximately 40%. Short sea shipping has environmental benefits and could reduce wear and tear on highways. However, the Jones Act is a large barrier. This federal Act requires that shipments between two U.S. ports be on U.S. built vessels with an American crew. There are not many suitable vessels built in the U.S. but there is not currently much political will to change the law.

#### **Member comments and questions:**

In response to members' questions, E. Anthes-Washburn spoke about designated port areas, which are port areas protected by state law because they are viewed as essential to the state's economy. However, it has been challenged in several places because there is a lot of pressure to develop waterfront property for residential uses.

E. Anthes-Washburn said empty backhauls are a problem in Massachusetts. Fewer goods leave the state than enter it. Therefore, freight shippers distribute goods in the state and have to move empty containers or rail cars out of the state.

#### **6. Discussion of Themes and Topics for February Briefing by Secretary Mullan – *Laura Wiener, Chair***

Members are interested in hearing the Secretary speak about the following items:

- Urban Ring's future (Marilyn Wellons, Riverside Neighborhood Association)

- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act status. How much money has been spent and how many people have been put to work? (Tony Centore, Medfield)
- Movement of hazardous materials through the region. (Chan Rogers, SWAP)
- Explanation of how ARRA projects were selected, and how more transparency could be incorporated into the process. (Laura Wiener, Arlington & Sue McQuaid, Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)
- Criteria by which a transit general manager will be selected. What will be the responsibilities of the person? Will they consider freight planning? (Richard Flynn, Eastern Massachusetts Freight Rail Coalition & Marilyn McNabb)
- Future of the North-South Rail Link and South Station expansion. (Frank DeMasi, Wellesley, and S. McQuaid)
- Update on New England-wide transportation planning. (W. Bonin)
- Plans to address the backlog of MBTA state of good repair projects. (Malek Al-Khatib, Boston Society of Civil Engineers)
- Ideas on how to improve suburban transit and ways to connect commuter rail stations to origins and destinations in the suburbs.

L. Wiener said she, Mike Callahan, and Schuyler Larrabee will write a letter to the Secretary conveying this information.

**7. Committee Reports** – There were none.

**8. Member Announcements** – There were none.

**9. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 PM.

**Attachments:**

Attendance List for January 13, 2010

**ATTACHMENT 1: Attendance List for January 13, 2010**

***Cities and Towns***

Lauren Rosenzweig, Acton  
Laura Wiener, Arlington  
Tom Kadzis, Boston  
Todd Kirrane, Brookline  
Walter Bonin, Marlborough  
Tony Centore, Medfield  
Dom D'Eramo, Millis  
Kurt Mullen, Needham  
Kristina Johnson, Quincy  
Jon Squibb, Revere  
Frank DeMasi, Wellesley  
Steve Olanoff, Westwood

***Agencies***

Jim Gallagher, Metropolitan Area Planning Council  
Richard Canale, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination  
Ed Anthes-Washburn, Seaport Advisory Council  
Louis Elisa, Seaport Advisory Council  
Chan Rogers, Southwest Advisory Planning Committee

***Citizen Groups***

John Kane, Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA  
Schuyler Larrabee, Boston Society of Architects  
Elliot Paul Rothman, Boston Society of Architects  
Malek Al-Khatib, Boston Society of Civil Engineers  
Richard Flynn, Eastern Massachusetts Freight Rail Coalition  
Anne Lynch, Massachusetts Motor Transportation Association  
Tom Yardley, MASCO  
Sue McQuaid, Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Marilyn Wellons, Riverside Neighborhood Association  
John McQueen, WalkBoston

***Guests and Visitors***

Stan Franzeen, VPSI  
Ed Lowney, resident of Malden  
Marilyn MacNab, resident of Boston

***MPO Staff***

Mike Callahan  
Hayes Morrison