

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Summary of July 14, 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 3:05 PM. Members, guests, visitors, and staff introduced themselves (see the attached attendance list).

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

The Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration are conducting a certification review of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) from July 27 to 29. The Advisory Council is participating in the meetings, and all members are welcome to attend. The meetings begin each day at 9:00 AM. Mike Callahan can provide information about the agenda for each day.

Amendment 5 to the federal fiscal years 2010 – 2013 Transportation Improvement Program was adopted by the MPO. It includes the Clean Air and Mobility Program projects and additional projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The MPO is holding an Open House on Thursday, July 15.

3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes of May 12, 2010 & June 9, 2010 – *Laura Wiener, Chair*

A motion to approve the draft minutes of May 12, 2010 was made and seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

A motion to approve the draft minutes of June 9, 2010 was made and seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Introduction to GreenDOT – *Bill Palmer, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning*

GreenDOT is the comprehensive sustainability policy of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

The GreenDOT vision is the following: The Massachusetts Department of Transportation will be a national leader in promoting sustainability in the transportation sector. Through the full range of activities, from strategic planning to construction system operations, MassDOT will promote economic development, protect the natural environment, and

enhance the quality of life for all the Commonwealth's residents and visitors. This will enable MassDOT to use resources in a manner that serves its existing customers while preserving our resources for future generations.

GreenDOT has three goals:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).
- Promote the healthy transportation modes of walking, bicycling, and public transit.
- Support smart growth development.

MassDOT is implementing the GreenDOT policy in order to coordinate its approach to sustainability, integrate sustainability into the responsibilities and decision-making of all MassDOT employees, and respond to several state laws and MassDOT policies and initiatives such as the Global Warming Solutions Act and the Healthy Transportation Compact.

The Global Warming Solutions Act requires Massachusetts to reduce economy-wide GHG 10 to 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. The 1990 baseline is 94.4 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. Currently transportation accounts for 31 percent of GHG emissions in Massachusetts, and is expected to account for 38 percent of GHG emissions in 2020. MassDOT estimates that the GreenDOT policy will reduce GHG emissions in 2020 by 2.11 million metric tons (7.3 percent) of carbon dioxide equivalent below 1990 levels.

MassDOT plans to work with the MPOs to integrate GreenDOT goals and sustainability criteria into their Regional Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs, and to reduce GHG emissions from their project programs. MassDOT will also promote its Complete Streets policies that are included in its *Project Development and Design Guide*.

MassDOT pursues sustainability during construction by using recycled materials, warm mix asphalt, and LED traffic signals. The agency also seeks LEED certification for new or rehabilitated facilities and uses best management practices for water and drainage resources during construction projects. MassDOT pursues sustainability in transportation system operation by purchasing low emission diesel-electric hybrid buses and low emissions vehicles for the MassDOT fleet. The agency has also funded diesel retrofits of school buses and regional transit authority buses. MassDOT also is working to expand existing renewable power installations in their right of way. A new ride matching system will be launched this fall and MassDOT will advance ecodriving internally and externally through education and promotion.

Member Questions

In response to members' questions, B. Palmer made the following additional comments:

- MassDOT and the MPOs will work together to evaluate projects for their ability to reduce GHG.

- GreenDOT is a concentrated effort to integrate sustainability into the entire MassDOT organization. The Boston Region MPO has already done a good job promoting sustainability.
- The MassDOT is collaborating with the Department of Public Health and the Department of Environmental Protection through the Healthy Transportation Compact.
- Municipalities can use several state grant programs to improve existing roadways and infrastructure. GreenDOT does not just apply to new construction.

Member Comments

- MassDOT should study Chicago's impressive Complete Streets policy. It considers drainage, planting, and pervious pavement. (Schuyler Larrabee, Boston Society of Architects)
- The three goals of MassDOT should be amended to include a goal to reduce vehicle miles traveled. (John McQueen, WalkBoston)
- Complete Streets needs to recognize the automobile. Eliminating bottlenecks by synchronizing traffic in a corridor can reduce delay, congestion and emissions by 15 to 20 percent. Transit signal priority can improve transit service and the flow of traffic. (John Gillon, City of Quincy)
- Safe Routes to Stations is a concept worth considering. It proposes a focus on the area around stations to improve pedestrian and bicycle access. This would make access to transit safer and easier and would make it more attractive. (J. McQueen)

5. Discussion and Vote on the Draft Comment Letter for Proposed FFY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program – Laura Wiener, Chair; and Hayes Morrison, TIP Manager, MPO staff

Hayes Morrison of MPO staff talked briefly about the Transportation Improvement Program. H. Morrison said the Boston Region MPO is already pursuing many of the GreenDOT goals through its policies and TIP criteria. All of the projects yet to be advertised in the FFY 2010-2013 TIP include a bicycle or pedestrian element or reduce GHG emissions.

At the June Advisory Council meeting H. Morrison informed the Advisory Council that approximately \$1.3 million was available for programming in the FFY 2011-2014 TIP after taking into consideration prior commitments in the FFY 2010-2013 TIP. The number increased to \$19.2 million since that meeting. All of the additional funds are available in FFY 2011. This allowed three projects to be added to the FFY 2011 element of the draft FFYs 2011-2014 TIP: Route 85 in Hudson, Route 139 in Marshfield, and Route 16 Intersection Improvements in Milford.

Member Questions

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

- The Somerville Community Path, Phase I project in the proposed FFYs 2011-2014 TIP includes design and construction for the portion to Lowell Street.

- The South Bay Harbor Trail was moved to the FFY 2014 element of the draft FFYs 2011-2014 TIP. It was programmed in the FFY 2010 element of the FFYs 2010-2013 TIP but will not be ready for construction in 2010.

Member Comments:

- Any projects necessary for mitigation of casino construction should come from the developer rather than the TIP. (J. Gillon)

Mike Callahan of MPO staff, and L. Wiener are working on a letter that may be sent to the state legislators. L. Wiener said the comment letter on the draft FFYs 2011-2014 TIP should stand on its own regardless of what happens with the letter to the legislators.

L. Rosenzweig made a motion to approve the Advisory Council’s letter on the proposed FFYs 2011-2014 TIP. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

6. Presentation of the Draft Federal Fiscal Year 2011 Unified Planning Work Program & Discussion of Comments – Mary Ellen Sullivan, UPWP Manager, MPO Staff

M.E. Sullivan discussed the proposed FFY 2011 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee’s UPWP Subcommittee considered 24 projects in the UPWP Universe of Projects. Approximately \$475,000 is available for new programming in FFY 2011. The Subcommittee selected 13 of the 24 projects in the Universe. Projects for the Universe are generated from public comments, existing planning documents and staff recommendations, and federal guidance. M.E. Sullivan discussed some of the specific projects in the proposed FFY 2011 UPWP.

Member Questions

In response to members’ questions, M.E. Sullivan made the following additional comments:

- Details on the *Impact of Walking Radius on Transit Frequency and Reliability* study will be worked out in the work scope. The UPWP is more broad brush.
- The *Bicycle Network Evaluation* will be done in conjunction with MAPC and will involve the municipalities.

Members Comments

- The Advisory Council advocated for three studies: *Regional HOV System Planning; MPO Freight Study, Phase II;* and the *Bicycle Network Evaluation*. The first phase of the freight study considers the effects of trucks and does not propose to recommend specific projects. Phase II should look at solutions to the problems. (Steve Olanoff, Westwood)
- The *Bicycle Network Evaluation* study should be done with the participation of the municipalities that can implement the recommendations. This will ensure buy in from the municipalities. (Chris Porter, MassBike)

- The *Impact of Walking Radius on Transit Frequency and Reliability* study should be more than a modeling exercise. It should include fieldwork at specific locations. (J. McQueen)

Richard Canale, representing the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination, made a motion for the Advisory Council to prepare a comment letter about the proposed FFY 2011 UPWP. C. Porter seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

7. Advisory Council Election Update – *Malek Al-Khatib, Chair, Nominating Committee*

M. Al-Khatib announced that the Advisory Council is holding the annual election of officers at the Advisory Council’s meeting on September 15. The Nominating Committee this year includes M. Al-Khatib as Chair, Lauren Rosenzweig of Acton, and Steve Rawding of the MassDOT Aeronautics Division.

Nominations for the offices of Chair and Vice Chair are due by Friday, August 13. Self-nominations are accepted. A list of nominations and each nominee’s biography will be distributed to members prior to the September meeting. Nominations are also welcome on the floor at the September meeting.

The Nominating Committee will discuss all nominees and may elect to make a recommendation to the Advisory Council.

L. Rosenzweig asked M. Callahan to send the e-mail addresses of Nominating Committee members to all Advisory Council members.

8. Member Announcements

There were no announcements.

9. Committee Reports

R. Canale, Chair of the Program Committee, discussed the Committee’s meeting earlier in the afternoon. The Committee discussed 13 topics for the upcoming year. The Program Committee is very interested in a discussion about improvements to the Longfellow Bridge. A field trip to the Bridge would also be of interest to the members.

J. McQueen said WalkBoston, MassBike, and the Livable Streets Alliance have submitted a design proposal to MassDOT. A Longfellow Bridge Task Force is considering the future of the bridge. A field trip would be timely.

M. Al-Khatib said the October meeting could be held at Massachusetts General Hospital so the Advisory Council could walk to the Bridge immediately after the meeting.

L. Wiener said the Committee also discussed holding a public health and transportation forum.

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 PM.

Attachments:

Attendance List for July 14, 2010

ATTACHMENT 1: Attendance List for July 14, 2010

Cities and Towns

Lauren Rosenzweig Morton, Acton
Laura Wiener, Arlington
John Gillon, Quincy
Jon Squibb, Revere
Steve Olanoff, Westwood

Agencies

Karen Pearson, Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Richard Canale, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC)
Donna Smallwood, MassRIDES
Ed Anthes-Washburn, Seaport Advisory Council

Citizen Groups

John Kane, Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA
Schuyler Larrabee, Boston Society of Architects
Malek Al-Khatib, Boston Society of Civil Engineers
Chris Porter, MassBike
Sue McQuaid, Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce
Chris Anzuoni, New England Bus Transportation Association
Monica Tibbits, Route 128 Business Council
John McQueen, WalkBoston

Guests and Visitors

Neil Angus, Devens Enterprise Commission
Ed Lowney
Marilyn MacNab
Wig Zamore, STEP, MVTF

MPO Staff

Walter Bennett
Mike Callahan
Romin Koebel, Fenway Community Development Corporation
Hayes Morrison
Bill Palmer, MassDOT