

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



COMMITTEE REPORTS

December 8, 2010 - February 9, 2011

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Committees

Freight - Walter Bonin & Dom D'Eramo

The Freight Committee meeting on Wednesday, February 2 was moved to February 9 due to winter weather. The Committee is considering freight needs for the Boston region, which they will submit to the Advisory Council's Plan Committee and then to the full Advisory Council for discussion. The needs identified by the Freight Committee will be incorporated into the Advisory Council's comments on the Needs Assessment for the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Paths to a Sustainable Region*.

Plan Committee – Schuyler Larrabee

The Plan Committee is scheduled to meet on Thursday, February 17 at 3:00 PM in the MPO Conference Room of the State Transportation Building. The purpose of the meeting is to prepare a comment letter on the Boston Region MPO's Transportation Needs Assessment, which is being prepared as part of the LRTP.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Monica Tibbits

The TIP Committee met on Friday, January 28 in the MPO Conference Room. In attendance were Monica Tibbits of the 128 Business Council (Chair), Tony Centore of Medfield, Chris Anzuoni of the Massachusetts Bus Association, Schuyler Larrabee of the Boston Society of Architects, Laura Wiener of Arlington, Steve Olanoff of Westwood, Brian Kane of the MBTA Advisory Board, and Hayes Morrison and Mike Callahan of MPO staff.

H. Morrison, the MPO's TIP manager, provided an update on changes the Boston Region MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee made to the TIP evaluation criteria and the TIP development process.

On the TIP development process:

- The MPO will not hold Municipal TIP Days this year.
- Staff will provide a recommendation on which projects to include in the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2012-2015 TIP based on project evaluations, cost, and readiness.
- Staff will also provide a recommendation on which projects to include in a first tier. The first tier will include approximately \$120 million worth of projects. The projects in the first tier could replace a project in the event that a programmed project needs to be removed from the TIP.

On the TIP criteria:

- The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee revised the criteria by which projects are evaluated for inclusion in the TIP.
- They were changed to reflect the MPO's revised visions and policies, which were approved in April 22, 2010 (see www.bostonmpo.org/2035input).
- Criteria are organized by six evaluation categories: maintenance, modernization, and efficiency; livability and economic benefit; mobility; environment and climate change; environmental justice; and safety and security.
- In each category, projects are scored on several evaluation criteria. For instance, under the livability and economic benefit category a project is scored on how well it reduces people's dependency on automobiles.
- The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee decided that maintenance, modernization, and efficiency are their highest priority.
- A project can receive up to 153 points.
- The only category in which a project can earn negative points is environmental justice.

Monica Tibbits, Chair of the TIP Committee, then led a discussion of the Advisory Council's priorities for TIP development and project evaluation. The Advisory Council's priorities, as stated in the Advisory Council's comment letter on the FFYs 2011-2014 TIP, are mobility improvements for people and goods, regional benefit and connectivity, safety, modal split balance, and support of economic development. Attendees generally agreed that the changes are consistent with the Advisory Council's priorities.

Attendees made the following comments:

- Cities and towns should be rewarded for cooperating with each other. The MPO's job is to think regionally and it should reward projects that have regional support and cooperation by giving them additional points. This would advance the Advisory Council's priority of regional benefit.
- Considering the financial constraint, projects should also be evaluated on cost effectiveness. For instance, projects could be compared based on the cost per minute of delay the project will reduce. It was argued that this measure would favor large highway expansion projects.
- The new TIP development process will give project proponents a better sense of the likelihood of receiving federal funds.
- It would be easier for the public to understand project evaluations if the projects were evaluated on a scoring system with a 0 to 100 scale.
- Modal split balance should be evaluated based on the mix of projects in the entire TIP. It may be difficult to evaluate how well a single project promotes this priority.

The following committees did not meet and have not scheduled future meetings:

Executive – Laura Wiener

Membership – Steve Olanoff

Nominating – Malek Al-Khatib

UPWP – Steve Olanoff

Programs - TBD

Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Subcommittees

There was a Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) subcommittee meeting on February 3 to consider recommendations for and amendment and an administrative modification to the FFY 2012 UPWP. A Clean Air and Mobility Subcommittee meeting is scheduled to follow the February 17 Transportation Planning and Programming Committee meeting for the purpose of reviewing the projects and programs submitted for the FFYs 2012 – 2015 TIP.