

**Draft Memorandum for the Record
Transportation Planning and Programming Committee of the
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

June 30, 2011 Meeting

10:00 AM – 12:30 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 & 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Clinton Bench and David Mohler, Chairs, representing Jeffrey Mullan, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee agreed to the following:

- approve the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2012 Operating Budget for Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)
- approve the Draft FFY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for public review
- approve Amendment Four to the FFYs 2011 – 2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for recommendation for MPO endorsement
- approve the minutes of the meetings of May 26, June 2, and June 9 with recommended changes

Meeting Agenda

C. Bench chaired the meeting through the first five agenda items then D. Mohler chaired the remainder of the meeting.

1. Public Comments

Victor Pap, Town of Weymouth, expressed concerns about the *Quincy/Weymouth—Fore River Bridge* replacement project. He noted that the cost of the project has ballooned to \$282 million. He also expressed concern about the plans to widen the channel, noting that MassDOT's project design would have detrimental effects from an economic planning perspective and would change the fabric of South Shore communities.

Gary Peters, Fore River Bridge Neighborhood Association, objected to the current design of the *Quincy/Weymouth—Fore River Bridge* replacement project citing the size and height of the proposed vertical lift bridge, which he said would change the landscape and alter the character of the South Shore. He also expressed that MassDOT has not been forthcoming with documentation that would allow members of the public to participate in the design decisions in a meaningful way. He provided documentation regarding his public records request and information on the benefits of alternative bridge designs. (See attached.)

Michael Lang, East Braintree Civic Association, also raised concerns about the large scale of the *Quincy/Weymouth—Fore River Bridge* replacement project, noting that the project is being designed to accommodate post panamax size ships which require a 50 foot deep channel to navigate. He raised the issue of the cost of dredging ports to

accommodate such ships. He also reported that MassDOT has denied members of the public access to the project planning documents and data used to determine whether millions of dollars of public funds are to be spent. In response to a question from the chair, he expressed support for the MPO's proposed action to remove the project from the FFY 2011 element of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Tom Yardley, Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization, Inc. (MASCO), expressed gratitude for the MPO's support of transportation projects in the Longwood Medical Area (LMA), such as improvements to Yawkey and Ruggles Stations. He noted that the MPO's Needs Assessment for the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) identifies gaps in service in the LMA area and he asked the MPO to fund components of the *Urban Ring* that could be implemented incrementally in the short-term, such as improvements to Ruggles Station and Melnea Cass Boulevard, and the addition of bus lanes on Albany Street. He also expressed support for including Illustrative Projects in the LRTP.

Richard Parr, A Better City, expressed support for including Illustrative Projects in the LRTP and stated that it is important to have a vision of what the transportation system should be.

2. Chair's Report – Clinton Bench, MassDOT

C. Bench commented on a series of roundtable meetings that the Secretary of MassDOT is holding to communicate more directly with MassDOT staff about issues of concern for employees. He remarked upon the cultural shift underway at MassDOT as transportation reform continues to be implemented and as the consolidation of the state's transportation agencies occurs. He invited members to attend the roundtables.

3. Subcommittee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

**4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report – Laura Wiener, Chair,
Regional Transportation Advisory Council**

L. Wiener distributed a letter prepared by the Advisory Council, which suggest changes to the state's Transportation Enhancements Program. (See attached.) She also reported that the Town of Belmont has joined the Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council will meet next in August to discuss the TIP and LRTP.

5. Director's Report – Karl Quackenbush, Acting Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)

There was none.

**6. CTPS Budget – Paul Regan, Chair, Administration and Finance Subcommittee, and
Karl Quackenbush, Acting Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)**

Members were provided with the draft FFY 2012 Operating Budget for CTPS. (See attached.) P. Regan reported that the proposed budget is conservative and level funded compared to the previous year.

A motion to approve the FFY 2012 Operating Budget for CTPS was made by P. Regan, and seconded by Jim Gillooly, City of Boston. The motion carried.

During a discussion of this motion, J. Gillooly asked for an explanation of why a \$100,000 line item for consultants that was in the FFY 2011 budget was dropped in the FFY 2012 budget. K. Quackenbush replied that last year CTPS, working with MAPC, released two RFPs to attract consultants to transfer an advanced model from another MPO to CTPS. There were no responsive bids and the line item went unspent.

L. Wiener asked about what assumptions were used in regard to the CTPS director's position. P. Regan replied that the budget includes the salary for the new CTPS director's position. He reported that the position has been advertised and that the search process will close in July.

7. Draft FFY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program – Stephen Woelfel, Chair, UPWP Subcommittee, and Mary Ellen Sullivan, UPWP Manager, MPO Staff
Members were provided with the Draft FFY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). (The document is available on the MPO's website.)

S. Woelfel reported that the draft UPWP is level funded as compared to last year's UPWP. The UPWP Subcommittee took an approach that favored lower-cost projects that could be done in the short term. He highlighted several new projects (shown in the attached table):

- *Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment*
- *Analysis of the JARC and New Freedom Projects*
- *Freight Survey*
- *MBTA Systemwide Passenger Survey: Comparison of Results*
- *Pavement Management System Development*
- *Regional Transit Service Planning Technical Support*
- *Safe Access to Transit for Pedestrians and Bicyclists*
- *TIP Project Impacts Before and After Evaluation*

K. Quackenbush added that the new projects represent about \$341,000 of the funding in the UPWP. Most funds are devoted to on-going projects.

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), noted that MAPC's activities in the budget pertain to on-going work for the MPO, the MPO election process, subregion work, regional demographics, and land use. He also highlighted a new project regarding development of the Framingham Technology Park, which will be funded through the UPWP and the Metro Boston Consortium for Sustainable Communities initiative.

A motion to approve the Draft FFY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program for public release was made by P. Regan, and seconded by J. Gillooly. The motion carried.

During a discussion of this motion, K. Quackenbush explained that the *Freight Survey* involves a survey of motor carriers to better understand the movement of commodities in the region. Also, Lourenço Dantes, Massachusetts Port Authority, requested a correction to the listing of the *MassPort Technical Assistance* project.

8. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment Four – Hayes Morrison, TIP Manager, MPO Staff

Members were provided with the draft Amendment Four to the FFYs 2011 – 2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a memorandum summarizing the changes, along with public comments received, and a matrix summarizing those comments. (See attached TIP tables, memorandum, and comment matrix.)

H. Morrison summarized the public comments received, which include requests to:

- include an earmark for the *Belmont – Trapelo Road* project
- fully fund the *Concord – Route 2 (Crosby’s Corner)* project
- support the Town of Acton’s *Dial-A-Ride* project
- include a \$539,000 of earmark for the *Framingham – Reconstruction of Route 126* project
- include the Town of Stow with the Towns of Acton and Maynard for the design of the *Assabet River Rail Trail*
- include an additional \$62,000 for the design of the *Franklin – Route 140* project

The attached memorandum, titled “Summary of Amendment Four – 2011 Element of the FFYs 2011-14 Transportation Improvement Program,” provides details of the staff-proposed changes to the TIP. H. Morrison discussed these changes including changes resulting from public comments, which include the following:

- the addition of the earmark for the *Framingham – Reconstruction of Route 126* project
- the exchange of one earmark for another to fund the *Somerville – Improvements to Broadway in Somerville Construction* project
- additional funding from an earmark for the *Franklin – Route 140* project
- changes to the Interstate Maintenance projects

Members asked questions regarding these changes:

D. Mohler inquired as to whether the City of Boston needs second year funding obligated now for the *Boston – Bike Share* project since the project will be launched this year. E. Bourassa stated that when the contract is approved, the City will need second year funding. He stated that he would work with the City to provide clarity on this issue. M. Pratt raised the possibility of using that second year funding (if it is not needed by the City) to purchase another head end power unit for the MBTA.

J. Gillooly asked why the project for Interstate Maintenance (IM) in Somerville and Boston was moved forward. David Anderson, MassDOT Highway Division, explained that part of the reason is due to the current work on the *Interstate 93 Fast 14* project. He stated that the IM project is expected to be ready in the spring of 2012.

J. Gillooly inquired as to whether the MBTA has discretion to determine what portion of program funds are directed to sub-projects within program categories. (See *Systemwide Accessibility Program*, for example.) H. Morrison replied that the MBTA does have that discretion and that the MBTA will be giving monthly spending reports to the MPO on those items. Those figures will also be reflected on the TIP Interactive Database.

Dennis Giombetti, Town of Framingham, asked about what is included in the *Parking Program* under the *Systemwide Facilities Upgrades Program*. P. Regan replied that the details can be found in the MBTA's Capital Investment Program (CIP).

D. Mohler asked staff to include listings of Section 5307 Toll Credit funding among the Section 5307 line items on the TIP tables in the future.

D. Mohler raised a concern about the possibility of Section 5309 award funds lapsing for the *MetroWest RTA Capital Assistance Program*, since the award was made in 2009. Jennette Orsino, Massachusetts Association of Regional Transit Authorities assured him that the funds are not lapsing.

P. Regan noted that the funding for the *Red Line Number 2 Car* project under the *Systemwide Vehicles Program* does not appear to reflect the full amount of funding for the project. D. Mohler stated that no federal funds are being spent on that line item.

It was noted that the *Boston Harbor Islands Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities* project will be implemented by the National Park Service.

D. Mohler asked if the funding for the construction of the *Framingham – Reconstruction of Route 126* project should be programmed in this amendment. H. Morrison replied that the project would be proposed for programming in the FFY 2013 element of the FFY 2012-15 TIP.

A motion to approve Amendment Four to the FFYs 2011 – 2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was made by Dennis Giombetti, and seconded by J. Gillooly. The motion carried.

9. Meeting Minutes – Pam Wolfe, Manager of Certification Activities, MPO Staff

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 26 – with changes recommended by Jen Molinsky, City of Newton, and L. Dantas to pages 5 and 7 respectively – was made by P. Regan, and seconded by David Anderson, MassDOT Highway Division. The motion carried.

At the request of the Cities of Newton and Somerville, staff was directed to report how members voted on a motion having to do with the Memorandum of Understanding at the May 26 meeting. Members then discussed the MPO's policy for recording votes. In the future, members may ask for a recorded vote and the chair will take a roll call vote.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 2 – with changes recommended by L. Dantas to page 4– was made by Ron Morgan, MBTA, and seconded by John Romano. The motion carried.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 9 was made by John Romano, MassDOT Highway Division, and second by P. Regan. The motion carried.

10. Long-Range Transportation Plan – *Anne McGahan, Plan Manager, MPO Staff*
Members were provided with copies of the public comments regarding the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that the MPO received since the last meeting on June 9. A. McGahan provided a summary of those comments for members. (See attached comment matrix.)

Members were also provided with three draft chapters of the LRTP (see attached summary sheets):

- Chapter 1, “Introduction and Plan Development Process”
- Chapter 2, “MPO Visions and Policies”
- Chapter 6, “Transportation Equity”

Chapter 1 defines the purpose of the LRTP and details the MPO structure, the relationship of the LRTP to other MPO planning documents, the LRTP development process, and future steps. Chapter 2 defines the visions and policies for seven topic areas of the LRTP, and describes how the MPO is implementing its policies. Chapter 6 defines the MPO's Transportation Equity Program, problems and issues identified by residents of environmental justice communities and community organization, and the MPO's work to achieve its visions for improving transportation equity.

D. Mohler suggested a text change to Chapter 2.

In response to a question from a member of the public, A. McGahan reported that the LRTP is scheduled to be released for public review in mid-July, assuming that the MPO receives transit finance information from MassDOT by that time.

Members then discussed whether to include Illustrative Projects in the LRTP. These are projects that the MPO would support if funding were available.

L. Dantas expressed concern about listing Illustrative Projects given that listing them might create confusion that the projects are actually in the LRTP when in fact they are not part of the fiscally constrained document. P. Regan added that the state has a backlog of highway and transit state-of-good-repair projects that would cost billions of dollars,

and that if the MPO had more funding it should prioritize maintenance projects rather than Illustrative Projects.

J. Gillooly spoke of a desire to recognize a vision for the region and suggested including an appendix to the LRTP that records the projects people have requested. He also suggested including language in the LRTP to explain that the MPO would support those projects if the MPO had the funds. A. McGahan noted that the Universe of Projects contains projects that were listed in past LRTPs and information about the project source (for example, if the project was suggested in public comments, generated from a study, etc.).

L. Dantas suggested that the MPO conduct a planning exercise that would involve modeling various scenarios for project implementation.

Members agreed not to include Illustrative Projects in the LRTP, but to add an asterisk to the projects listed in the Universe of Projects that were Illustrative Projects in the previous LRTP, as suggested by J. Gillooly.

11. Work Programs – *Karl Quackenbush, Acting Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)*

Members were presented with the work programs for the *Milford/Hopedale Commuter Rail Extension Feasibility Study* and *Low-Cost Improvements to Bottleneck Locations*. (See attached.) K. Quackenbush provided an overview of each work program.

The *Milford/Hopedale Commuter Rail Extension Feasibility Study* stems from a request MassDOT officials received from officials from the Town of Hopedale who asked for a feasibility study for extending the Franklin commuter rail line to Hopedale. CTPS conducted a similar study 14 years ago that examined the feasibility of extending commuter rail service to Milford. This study will build upon the last using new demographic and service level data.

CTPS will conduct ridership forecasts and analyses of operating and capital costs, projected revenues, and air quality impacts. CTPS will also examine community and environmental impacts, and the impacts and costs of relocating a commuter rail lay-over facility.

The work program for *Low-Cost Improvements to Bottleneck Locations* is the second phase of the work to identify ways to reduce congestion on express highways. The study will examine two locations. (The first phase of the study was presented to members by Seth Asante, MPO staff, on June 9.)

D. Giombetti suggested that MPO staff report on the results of the implementation of recommendations from the *Low-Cost Improvements to Bottleneck Locations* studies. K. Quackenbush noted that staff has an inventory of the status of recommendations from all studies, not just bottleneck studies, and that it could be updated if so desired.

Both work programs will be action items at the meeting of July 7.

12. Members Items

J. Romano updated members on the *I-93 Fast 14* bridge replacement project. Nearly half of the bridges are completed.

13. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn and to convene the MPO meeting was made by T. Bent, and seconded by J. Gillooly. The motion carried.

Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Meeting Attendance
Thursday, June 30, 2011, 10:00 AM

Member Agencies

MassDOT

MassDOT Highway

City of Boston

City of Newton
City of Somerville
Federal Highway
Administration
MAPC

Massachusetts Port
Authority
MBTA
MBTA Advisory Board
Regional Transportation
Advisory Council
Town of Bedford
Town of Braintree
Town of Framingham
Town of Hopkinton

Representatives and Alternates

Clinton Bench
David Mohler
David Anderson
John Romano
Jim Gillooly
Tom Kadzis
Jen Molinsky
Tom Bent
Michael Chong

Eric Bourassa
Eric Halvorsen
Lourenço Dantes

Ron Morgan
Paul Regan
Laura Wiener

Richard Reed
Christine Stickney
Dennis Giombetti
Mary Pratt
John Westerling

MPO Staff/CTPS

Michael Callahan
Robin Mannion
Anne McGahan
Hayes Morrison
Sean Pfalzer
Karl Quackenbush
Mary Ellen Sullivan
Alicia Wilson
Pam Wolfe

Other Attendees

Paul Barden
Will Brownsberger
Paul Christner
Mark Guenard
Erin Kinahan
Michael Lang
Kevin McHugh
Puja Mehta

Lara Ménda-Fernandes
Joe Onorato
Tom O'Rourke

Jennette Orsino

Victor Pap
Richard Parr

Town of Framingham
State Representative
Massachusetts Port Authority
MassDOT
MassDOT District 6
East Braintree Civic Association
Coneco Engineers and Scientists
Office of State Senator Karen
Spilka
City of Boston
MassDOT District 4
Neponset Valley Chamber of
Commerce
Massachusetts Association of
Regional Transit Authorities
Town of Weymouth
A Better City

Gary Peters	Fore River Bridge Neighborhood Association
Ken Petraglia	BETA Group
Julian M. Suso	Town of Framingham
Paul Talbot	Cape Ann Transportation Authority
Chris Walsh	State Representative
Tom Yardley	Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization, Inc.