

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

August 16, 2012 Meeting

10:00 AM – 12:15 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Clinton Bench, Chair, representing Richard Davey, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization agreed to the following:

- release Amendment Three of the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2015 – 15 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for a 15-day public review period
- approve the minutes of the meeting of August 2 with recommended changes and corrections

1. Public Comments

There were none.

2. Chair's Report—*Clinton Bench, MassDOT*

The Chair opened the meeting by noting that a new item has been added to the agenda regarding a proposed Amendment Three to the FFYs 2012-15 TIP. While the Open Meeting Law requires agendas to be posted 48 hours in advance of a meeting, it permits agencies to change an agenda after that time for emergency items.

The new item was added to address the programming of several discretionary grants that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently awarded to Massachusetts. The grants must be programmed by the end of this fiscal year (September 30) in order to be obligated. The programming of these funds would not affect the MPO's target funds.

The grant awards are for the following projects (total dollars to be programmed are given):

- \$2.68 million for the Blossom Street Waterfront Facility, Phase 3 in Lynn
- \$1.6 million for the Boston Inner Harbor Ferry Investment
- \$440,625 for the Fairmount Corridor Business Development and Ridership Initiative

- \$370,000 for the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway Information Kiosks
- \$929,840 for the Kendall Square Employer Transportation Benefit Pricing Trial

Members consented to adding the item to the agenda.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Steve Olanoff, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

The Advisory Council will meet next in September. The Membership Committee will be proposing changes to the Council's bylaws. The changes include moving the Council's elections to October to be consistent with the MPO's election schedule.

5. Executive Director's Report—*Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

At the last MPO meeting, a member requested that the MPO staff reschedule the MPO meeting of September 6 to September 13, because some municipal members have responsibilities associated with elections on that day. As there are no meeting rooms available in the State Transportation Building on the 13th, the MPO will have to meet on September 6 as originally scheduled. The meeting of September 20 will be held in Newton.

Ed Tarallo, North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn), called attention to the fact that the request to reschedule the September 6 meeting was not reflected in the draft minutes of the meeting of August 2, and should have been included. Pam Wolfe, Manager of Certification Activities, MPO Staff, agreed that this information should have been included and apologized for the omission.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), asked that agenda items of importance be kept to a minimum on September 6 given that some members will not be able to attend. C. Bench noted that Amendment Three to the TIP would potentially be an agenda item on that day (due to requirements to program grant funds by the end of September).

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), also noted that many members have other commitments on September 6. He suggested that the Chair survey members to determine if the MPO will have a quorum on that day. A straw poll among members revealed that 14 members (or their alternates) will be

attending. A quorum requires at least 12 members to be present. C. Bench assured members that agenda items would be kept to a minimum.

6. FFYs 2012-15 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment Three—Sean Pfalzer, TIP Manager, MPO Staff

Members were provided with TIP tables showing proposed changes for Amendment Three to the FFYs 2012-15 TIP. The changes include the addition of five discretionary grant awards (referenced previously under the Chair's Report).

S. Pfalzer gave an overview of each project.

The *Blossom Street Waterfront Facility, Phase 3* project in Lynn is the final phase of a project that includes the development of an accessible float system for passenger ferry vessels.

The grant for the *Boston Inner Harbor Ferry Investment* project will fund the purchase of two ferry vessels for a new ferry service in between East Boston, South Boston, Charlestown, and the waterfront. The City of Boston will provide matching funds.

The *Fairmount Corridor Business Development and Ridership Initiative* will promote the Fairmount commuter rail line service and improve signage at stations. The state will provide matching funds.

The grant for the *Essex Coastal Scenic Byway Information Kiosks* project will fund the installation of signs and information kiosks at visitor centers and locations along the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway.

The *Kendall Square Employer Transportation Benefit Pricing Trial* program will evaluate parking pricing strategies in the Kendall Square area. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology will provide matching funds.

Staff proposed releasing the amendment for an abbreviated public comment period of 15-days (rather than 30-days).

Members discussed the proposed amendment:

Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, asked if the awards are one-year grants or if they are multi-year grants. C. Bench replied that three of the grants are for capital expenses and would be awarded in one lump sum. The fourth, the Kendall Square program, is for a study.

P. Regan suggested that the MPO could approve the changes to the TIP as an administrative modification rather than as an amendment. Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), also noted that the MPO has the ability to waive the public review period.

C. Bench noted that adding new items to the TIP may not qualify as an adjustment under the MPO's Public Participation Plan. P. Wolfe, clarified that the MPO does have the ability to shorten a public review period, which would be an option in this case since the FHWA requires the grants to be programmed by mid-September. C. Bench then read the relevant text from the MPO's Public Participation Plan, which states that the MPO may shorten a public review period under extraordinary circumstances, such as to meet an unforeseen regulatory requirement or funding deadline, or the MPO may waive it to take advantage of an extraordinary funding opportunity that is in the public interest.

E. Tarallo asked whether the MPO would be voting on the amendment on September 6. C. Bench confirmed that the amendment would have to be on the MPO's agenda on September 6 due to the deadline for programming the grants. FHWA just notified MassDOT of the awards this week.

E. Tarallo also asked for more details about the source of the grant monies. This question was addressed by several members.

C. Bench explained that the Ferry Boat Discretionary grants are competitive at a national level. The program is not continued in MAP-21; rather the state will receive formula funds for such projects.

Joe Cosgrove, MBTA, provided details about the Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (TCSP), which is financing the Fairmount project. This discretionary grant program supports marketing and economic development strategies that connect transportation to land use. The MBTA applied for this grant in January and received notice of the award just recently.

C. Bench described the National Scenic Byways Program, another nationally competitive program focused on projects that preserve scenic byways and vistas. Richard Canale, At-Large Town (Town of Lexington), added that there are two designated scenic byways in the Boston region: the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway and the Battle Road Scenic Byway. He noted that this program is not continued as a distinct program in MAP-21.

Ned Codd, MassDOT, then described the Value Pricing Pilot Program (VPPP), which is funding the Kendall Square project. The City of Cambridge and MIT applied for this

grant with MassDOT as the sponsoring agency. The VPPP supports projects that develop strategies to encourage certain travel behaviors, such as those that encourage commuters to travel by means other than driving.

D. Crowley then raised a question about the matching funds for the Lynn project, which would be provided by MassDOT. He inquired as to who would make the decision about where the funds would come from and whether paying for the Lynn project would have an impact on other state-funded projects. C. Bench replied that the Secretary of Transportation would make the decision based on MassDOT's bonding authority, and that the decision could have an effect on other projects.

S. Olanoff noted that the Lynn project has been on and off the TIP in the past. He asked about the current status of the project. C. Bench replied that the City of Lynn has staff focused on developing the waterfront and that the project is far along in the design process.

A motion to release Amendment Three of the FFYs 2015 – 15 TIP for a 15-day public review period was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (John Romano), and seconded by the North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) (E. Tarallo). The motion carried.

7. Meeting Minutes—Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff

Staff recommended making two changes to the draft minutes of the meeting of August 2. The first would change the description of the *Assabet River Rail Trail* project to reflect that the project's earmark is for design, not construction. The second would add text regarding members' request to reschedule the meeting of September 6. J. Gillooly also asked that staff correct a misspelling in the attendance list.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 2, with the aforementioned changes and corrections, was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

8. Review of the MPO Memorandum of Understanding—Clinton Bench, MassDOT

The Chair opened the discussion about the MPO's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which describes the rules by which the MPO is governed and its composition. C. Bench said that the MPO's MOU states that the MPO will review the MOU each year. The Chair asked members to comment about how they believe the MPO has been

doing since it expanded its membership last year and if they have thoughts about ways the MPO could improve outreach.

J. Gillooly expressed satisfaction with the expansion of the MPO and noted that the additional viewpoints that the new members have contributed have been beneficial. He expressed support for continuing to have an annual review of the MOU.

D. Crowley noted that some municipalities in the region are not fully engaged with the MPO. He suggested that it might be helpful to send the minutes of the MPO meetings to each municipality in the region (perhaps to the Town Administrator). He asked staff to consider the suggestion and make a recommendation.

E. Bourassa noted that each municipality has a TIP contact who receives the MPO's materials and noted that in the past there has been concern about inundating municipalities with information. P. Wolfe added that the TIP contacts receive notifications regarding the TIP. R. Canale noted that the TIP contacts and municipal policy coordinators are not always on the same page. He also expressed satisfaction with the way the MPO has evolved.

C. Bench encouraged the MPO's subregional representatives and MAPC to discuss this question.

9. Statewide Household Travel Survey—*Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff, and Sanjay Kaul, Manager of Travel Model Development, MPO Staff*

K. Quackenbush opened the presentation on the recently completed Statewide Household Travel Survey by explaining how the survey pertains to the MPO's work, specifically in terms of providing information for the building of travel models. He emphasized that the chief purpose of CTPS is to bring information to the MPO and client agencies that will help with their decision-making. CTPS's regional travel model is an important tool for generating much of that information, and it, in turn, depends on household travel survey information.

The model is applied to many of the studies that CTPS completes for the MPO and other clients. The model is used to replicate travel made by people in the region on a daily basis and to forecast future travel. There are three main sources of information that are used to keep the model up to date: information about the transportation network; land use data and socio-economic data from MAPC and the census; and data on travel behavior from household travel surveys.

A household travel survey is conducted by recruiting participants, providing them with travel diaries to record every trip made by each member of the household for a set period of time, and obtaining demographic and other relevant information about the household (having to do with car ownership, income, etc.).

The first household travel survey in this region was conducted in 1963; it served as the basis for travel modeling for many years. In the early 1990s, the Boston Region MPO conducted another survey. As the data from that survey began to age, MPO staff began advocating for a new survey.

In 2007, the Boston Region MPO contributed \$600,000 and the commonwealth contributed \$2.4 million for a new survey for the whole state. MassDOT was the contracting entity. The steering committee for this project included: Bob Frey, project manager, MassDOT; Sanjay Kaul, MPO staff; Robert Sievert, MPO staff; Jim Gallagher, formerly of MAPC; and a representative of other MPOs in the state.

The objective was to obtain travel data from 15,000 households in Massachusetts, to get a statistically reliable sample for each MPO in the state, and to obtain statistically reliable data on “sub-markets” that have less common travel patterns (such as households with no cars, for example). This survey involved the use of innovative methods, such as the use of GPS units to record a sub-set of participants’ travel.

Bob Frey, MassDOT, followed this introduction by expressing his thanks to the MPO staff members who were a critical component of the steering committee. He noted that the results of the survey will be very important for helping MassDOT and the MPO to make wise investment decisions with limited funds. He noted that the survey is particularly valuable in that it provides information about how people actually travel. (Other types of surveys – opinion-based surveys – provide information based on what people say they do, rather than what they actually do.)

S. Kaul then gave a PowerPoint presentation on the travel survey and reported on its status. He recognized R. Sievert, Paul Reim, and other members of the MPO staff who worked on this project.

S. Kaul discussed the three aforementioned components of the travel model: the transportation network; land-use and socio-economic data; and travel behavior. He noted that travel behavior is the foundation of the model. He then discussed the need for conducting a new household travel survey given that there have been many changes in the region since the last survey was conducted in the early 1990s.

These changes relate to demographic factors (for example, the population is aging and household size is getting smaller), cost changes (such as higher fuel costs, tolls, and transit fares), changes to income levels, changes of employment centers (with the outsourcing of manufacturing jobs and an increase in service jobs), and changes to the transportation system itself (such as the construction of the Central Artery/Tunnel, the addition of new transit services, and a new focus on transit oriented development).

He described the four-step process for generating travel forecasts and noted that the survey data will update data used in each step. These data include trip length, mode choice, and trip paths. Using the results of the survey, staff intends, in the short term, to update the existing trip-based travel models, and, in the long term, to develop an activity-based model. Most large MPOs in the country are moving in the direction of developing activity-based models, which can supply more policy-oriented information.

The goal was to collect 15,000 samples throughout the state to obtain information on trip origins and destinations, trip purpose, mode use, and travel paths taken. Participants recorded this data in their travel diaries. A subset of participants was equipped with GPS devices to accurately record all trips. All participants recorded their travel during an agreed upon 24-hour period, which was a non-holiday, weekday. (A copy of the travel diary was provided to members.)

NuStats, a Texas-based company, was hired as a contractor for the survey work. This company has conducted surveys for other large MPOs in the nation. In early 2009, design of the survey began and a sampling plan was developed. Later that year, the survey was tested on 600 households and was refined. The full survey was conducted between June 2010 and December 2011.

The aim was to achieve maximum participation in the survey. To recruit participants, the team began by identifying households that have a mailing address and a residential phone number (a land line), and by using data from a vendor that identified households with particular characteristics (such as low-income, young, zero-vehicle, Hispanic, and African-American households, for example). This was done to develop a representative sample of the population. The sampling plan involved allocating a proportional number of sample households based on MPO areas and population density.

Approximately 320,000 households were contacted and asked to participate in the survey. Approximately 25,000 agreed to complete the survey, and 15,033 actually did complete the survey. The survey information was retrieved via mail and telephone. Follow-up calls were conducted to verify information.

Of the 15,033 participating households, 613 were equipped with GPS devices. The participating households represent 37,000 people (19,200 of which are workers) and 26,500 vehicles. Fifty-one percent of the households were in the Boston Region. In this region, the mode distribution was as follows: 18.5% walk trips; 1.2% bicycle; 7.4% transit; and 72.9% auto.

The next steps are to clean the survey data, make the data available to the public (while protecting the privacy of participants), develop new trip-based models in the short term, and develop activity-based models in the long term.

Following the presentation, members made comments and asked questions:

J. Gillooly asked how the appropriate percentage of bicyclists was determined for the sample. K. Quackenbush replied that the objective was to ensure that the sample had that market of users represented in statistically reliable numbers. The census data provides a general idea of that mode usage. A minimum number of households with that mode use needed to be achieved in the sample.

D. Crowley asked if the survey data could be made available broken down by municipality or subregion, as it might shed light on transit usage in those areas or provide information that could indicate whether certain transit services are being well marketed. K. Quackenbush stated that the data could be extracted in that way, however, it might not be statistically reliable at small geographic levels. The survey was not designed to be statistically reliable at the municipal level; rather it was designed to be statistically reliable within larger geographic sectors of which there are five or six in this MPO region. B. Frey added that the confidentiality of the participants must be protected when the data is made publicly availability (which may not be possible if the data is released at small geographic areas).

C. Bench asked about the plans for summarizing the data for the public. B. Frey emphasized that care needs to be taken to protect the confidentiality of the participants when releasing the data to smaller geographic levels. K. Quackenbush stated that there is a study in the MPO's FFY 2013 Unified Planning Work Program that will plumb the survey data and compare it to the data collected in the 1990s. A report will be developed to provide profiles of information.

S. Olanoff asked for a description of activity-based modeling as it differs from trip-based modeling. K. Quackenbush stated that activity-based modeling is an emerging tool that MPOs are starting to develop. It provides a more accurate representation of how people actually travel than does trip-based modeling. Activity-based modeling is done at a disaggregate level and allows for linking trips. S. Kaul added that it allows one to

understand the activities that drive a particular trip and, for instance, to understand trips made by particular markets (such as seniors or children). Staff would like to give the MPO a presentation on this topic in the future.

E. Tarallo asked how the survey data was geocoded. P. Reim replied that the data was geocoded to a specific point. He added that there are limits to what can be reported due to the need to protect confidentiality.

R. Canale raised a question about how transportation needs and latent demand fit into the model. K. Quackenbush replied that this survey was a “revealed preference” survey (as opposed to a “stated preference” survey). In a “revealed preference” survey, actual mode choices are recorded. This information can be used, for example, to infer usage of potential new transit services somewhere in the region that are similar to existing transit services elsewhere in the region.

C. Bench complimented the MPO staff for their work on the project and their level of expertise.

10. State Implementation Plan Update—*Matthew Ciborowski, MassDOT*

MassDOT has released its annual status report on the State Implementation Plan (SIP); it is posted on MassDOT’s website. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will hold a public meeting on September 6 to address questions and take comments on the SIP. Public comments on the document will be due on September 13.

M. Ciborowski gave an update on the projects in the SIP:

The *Construction of 1,000 New Parking Spaces* project is complete.

DEP will hold a public hearing on September 13 regarding MassDOT’s proposed amendment to remove the *Red-Blue Line Connector (Design)* project from the SIP.

The Federal Transit Administration has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) regarding the environmental impact of the *Green Line Extension* project, and MassDOT has received approval to enter into preliminary engineering. The acquisition of right-of-way is proceeding. Also, the MBTA Board of Directors gave approval to use a Construction Manager/General Contractor approach to the construction. The commonwealth, the MBTA, and the City of Somerville entered into an MOU for the transfer of land associated with the construction. The contract for final design is expected to be awarded in September.

Members asked questions:

J. Gillooly asked if the original SIP commitment for the *Red-Blue Line Connector* project was for the construction of the project. Anne McGahan, Plan Manager, MPO staff, stated that the commitment was originally for construction, but was changed to design only.

D. Crowley noted that the 2007 state transportation bond bill authorizes \$29 million for the *Red-Blue Line Connector (Design)* project. Given that \$3 million has already been spent on the project, he inquired as to whether the \$26 million balance would be reappropriated by the legislature. C. Bench replied that the state is now operating under a new bond bill. The bond bill provides authorization for agencies to float bonds for maintenance, project design, and work consistent with their plans and priorities. It also includes a set of earmarks that authorize agencies to spend bond funds for specific projects. Because the bond bill typically does not include enough authorization to cover all of an agency's priorities and earmarks, and because bonds funds are subject to the bond cap set by Administration and Finance, not all earmarked projects in a bond bill may be implemented.

11. Members Items

T. Bent reported that Hubway bicycle stations have been installed in Somerville and are in good use.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano) and seconded by the North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) (E. Tarallo). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	Richard Canale
City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)	Lara Mérida
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jim Gillooly Tom Kadzis
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Clinton Bench Ned Codd
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Joe Cosgrove
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Tina Cassidy
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Ed Tarallo
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Steve Olanoff
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)	Christine Stickney
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Dennis Crowley
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Calli Cenizal	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Matthew Ciborowski	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Bob Frey	MassDOT
Jim Gallagher	
Katie Hyde	Office of State Senator Thomas McGee

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Daniel Amstutz

David Fargen

Sanjay Kaul

Maureen Kelly

Robin Mannion

Anne McGahan

Elizabeth Moore

Sean Pfalzer

Paul Reim

Mary Ellen Sullivan

Pam Wolfe
