# Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting

### June 7, 2012 Meeting

10:00 AM – 11:45 PM, Carey Hall, 1605 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington

David Mohler, 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:

- approve the minutes of the meeting of May 17
- approve two work programs: the MBTA 2013 National Transit Database: Purchased Bus and the MBTA 2013 National Transit Database: Directly Operated

# **Meeting Agenda**

#### 1. Public Comments

State Senator William Brownsberger thanked the MPO for their support of the *Belmont/Watertown – Trapelo Road* project, which is programmed in the FFY 2012 element of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and provided an update on the project. He noted that the project has not increased in scope although the cost has increased due to issues associated with the operation of MBTA buses in the project area. The project proponents will be working with MassDOT to address those issues. He also noted that the right-of-way acquisition process is going well.

Hayes Morrison, City of Somerville, expressed the city's gratitude for two Somerville projects that are programmed on the TIP and provided an update on the projects. She noted that the 100% design plans for the *Community Path* have been submitted to MassDOT and that there has been no cost increase. She also noted that the city will be submitting the 25% design plans for the *Beacon Street* project to MassDOT in July. The original plan called for a cycle track, which would require the relocation of utilities and add cost to the project. The revised plan would accommodate a partial cycle track by taking parking and allow the project to remain within budget. She stated that the city would pay for approximately \$3 million worth of utility work.

Two members raised questions about the *Beacon Street* project. Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, asked whether the revised plans could be implemented under the cost currently programmed in the FFY 2013 element of the TIP. H. Morrison replied that the 25% plans must be resubmitted in order to fully understand the cost.

In response to a question from D. Mohler, H. Morrison provided background on the programming history of the project. She stated that original project design dates to 1999, that it has been on and off the TIP since 2007, and that in 2008 the city voluntarily agreed to move the project to FFY 2013 element. D. Mohler noted that the project was not at a state of readiness when it was moved to this later date in the TIP. H. Morrison stated that it would be ready by FFY 2013.

**2.** Chair's Report – David Mohler, MassDOT There was none.

## 3. Committee Chairs' Reports

Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, announced that the Administration and Finance Committee will meet after the MPO meeting.

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, announced that the Congestion Management Process Committee will meet after the MPO meeting. The meeting will include presentations from the MBTA and Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) on the congestion impacts of the MBTA fare and service changes.

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

The Advisory Council will meet on June 13 at 3PM. There will be presentations on the Green Line Extension project by the MBTA and its contractor, and on the TIP and the Draft Amendment to the Long-Range Transportation Plan by MPO staff. Preceding the meeting, at 10 AM, there will be a field trip to the location of the Green Line Extension project. The Freight and Membership Committees will each meet at 1 PM.

The Advisory Council has submitted its comment letter on the TIP and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to the MPO.

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

Members will notice a change in the font and style of the documents that are prepared by staff. These changes reflect the MPO staff's efforts at becoming fully accessible in terms of both its documents and operations.

- K. Quackenbush announced that he is going to begin contacting each MPO member to arrange , one-on-one discussions. The purpose is to get members' feedback on the MPO process, staff support of that process, what is working, what we might do differently, etc.
- **6. Welcome from Host Municipality** Deborah Mauger, Chairman, Board of Selectman, Town of Lexington, and Richard Canale, MPO Member At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)

- D. Mauger welcomed the MPO members to Lexington and expressed appreciation for the MPO's work. She introduced the MPO to the historic features of the town and discussed the town's transportation services and programs. The town operates the LEXPRESS shuttle bus. Recently, the town approved a municipally-funded subsidy for reduced fares to encourage parents to put their children on the bus to go to school in an effort to reduce congestion. LEXPRESS is also used by high school students after school. The Minuteman Bikeway, a multi-use trail, also runs through the town. The town has created a bike corral, to help meet the high demand for bicycle parking in the center on weekends. The town recently formed a task force on transportation services as it works toward a reorganization of its transportation services.
- R. Canale followed with an overview of the transportation projects and programs currently underway in Lexington. (Details were provided in a handout.) He remarked upon two MPO funded projects: one enabled the town to install bicycle racks in the town center (funded through the Regional Bike Parking Program); and another is improving the intersection of Marrett Road and Waltham Street near the town's commercial complex along Route 2.

He also discussed two projects for which the town expects to seek TIP funding. One would improve Hartwell Avenue near the commercial area by Hanscom Field. The project is at the conceptual design phase. Another would address three problematic intersections along Massachusetts Avenue. The 25% design plans are almost complete and the recommendations of a MassDOT safety audit are being incorporated into the design.

R. Canale also discussed other initiatives including intersection improvement projects, bicycle and pedestrian accommodation projects, the Safe Routes to School Program, the installation of electric charging stations, and streetscape improvements.

# **7. FFYs 2012-15 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment** – Sean Pfalzer, TIP Manager, MPO Staff

S. Pfalzer provided an overview of changes made to the FFY 2012-15 TIP tables since members last reviewed the document on May 17. Revised TIP tables were distributed.

The tables reflect the following changes to projects in the FFY 2012 element:

- cost increase from \$15.2 million to \$18.4 million to the *Belmont/Watertown* 
   Trapelo Road project due to costs associated with the MBTA bus service operations during project construction
- cash flow changes that affect the *Concord/Lincoln Crosby's Corner (Route 2)* project and the *Dedham/Needham Bridge Replacement on Route 128 (Contract 4)* project; approximately\$6 million has been transferred from the *Route 128* project to the *Crosby's Corner* project in FFY 2012

- the Belmont/Watertown Trapelo Road project and the Natick/Wellesley Route 9 and Oak Street project will also receive funds through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program
- removal of the Brookline Bike Share Year 2 project from the Clean Air and Mobility Program
- application of additional funds to the Somerville Multi-use Path Construction project in the Clean Air and Mobility Program to address project cost increases
- a \$2 million cost increase to the *Danvers Bridge Replacement, Route 35* (Water Street) project
- an increase in dollars programmed in FFY 2012 for the *Boston Bridge Replacement, Chelsea Street* project, since the project will be completed early; no funds are programmed for it in FFY 2013
- the reprogramming of an earmark for the *Assabet River Rail Trail Construction* project from FFY 2012 to FFY 2014
- the reprogramming of an earmark for the *Boston Improvement to Gainsborough and St. Botolph Streets* project from FFY 2012 to FFY 2013
- adjustments to Grant Anticipation Note (GANs) payments for the Central Artery/Tunnel project

Due to the cost increase to the *Belmont/Watertown – Trapelo Road* project, the TIP would not be in fiscal constraint if approved as currently programmed. There is a gap of \$2.68 million needed to fully fund the project, and available target funds are not sufficient.

David Anderson, MassDOT Highway Division, further explained the reason for the cost increase, which is due to the need to relocate catenary poles upon which MBTA electric buses run along Trapelo Road, and the cost to operate diesel buses in place of the electric buses. The Highway Division is working with the MBTA to estimate the cost of the MBTA-related work and to re-examine the project cost estimate. He noted that the scope of the project is not increasing.

Members then discussed the changes to the TIP.

Dennis Crowley, SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), asked whether the cost increases would be attributed largely to removing the catenary lines or if the funds would be used to buy and operate new buses. D. Anderson explained that the relocation of the catenary poles and wires may cost approximately \$400,000 and the cost of operating and maintaining the replacement diesel buses may cost approximately \$1.9 million. D. Mohler added that the cost does not include the purchase of new buses; the MBTA would use spare buses on that route. The cost would include the operation of those buses.

E. Bourassa asked about options available to address this problem in the programming of the TIP. S. Pfalzer noted that there are two programmed projects that have not yet been advertised in the FFY 2012 element: the *Natick/Wellesley – Route 9 and Oak Street* project and some projects in the Clean Air and Mobility Program.

D. Mohler asked which projects in the Clean Air and Mobility Program have not yet been advertised. S. Pfalzer stated that the *Somerville – Multi-use Path Construction* and the *Cambridge – Bike Share (Year 2)* projects have not been advertised, and that contracts are being developed for the *Acton – Rail Shuttle (Year 3)* and *CATA-Stage Fort Shuttle (Year 3)* projects.

David Koses, At-Large City (City of Newton), asked for more information regarding the need for increased spending on the *Concord/Lincoln – Crosby's Corner (Route 2)* project. S. Pfalzer explained that the overall cost of the project has not increased but that the new amount suggested for programming reflects changes in yearly cash flows. D. Mohler added that MassDOT is examining the cash flows for the project and will determine whether those cash flows can be adjusted to allow for the accommodation of the higher cost of the *Belmont/Watertown – Trapelo Road* project in the FFY 2012 element.

P. Regan asked whether the Town of Brookline was notified of the possible removal of the *Brookline Bike Share – Year 2* project from the Clean Air and Mobility Program. D. Mohler replied that the town was notified and that the town still has Year 1 funds to spend on the project.

Richard Reed, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) asked whether the MPO has had to absorb the cost of the MBTA's electrified bus service in other highway projects in the past. D. Mohler noted that since the *Trapelo Road* project is a highway project that is resulting in costs for the MBTA, the cost will have to come out of the highway budget (as is currently occurring on the *Longfellow Bridge* project). Joe Cosgrove, MBTA, added that it is standard construction procedure to build in such costs to the project cost estimate.

R. Reed asked whether the engineering company working on the *Trapelo Road* project knew to add in those costs to the project estimate. D. Anderson stated that project managers should know to add in those costs and that MassDOT is working to ensure that those costs are captured in the estimates.

Laura Wiener, At-Large Town (Town of Arlington), asked whether the *Trapelo Road* project could be split. D. Mohler replied that FHWA's policy states that a project's cost must exceed \$25 million in order for it to be split.

S. Olanoff asked whether contingency funds, which are built into project costs, could address the issue with the *Trapelo Road* project. D. Anderson and D. Mohler

stated that for all federal aid eligible projects, a 10% contingency is factored into the project cost estimate for the purpose of addressing issues during construction. Those funds do on apply to pre-construction issues.

D. Crowley asked whether the current cost estimate for the *Trapelo Road* project is realistic. D. Anderson replied that the figures for the MBTA portion of the project are currently about \$2.3 million. A second estimate will come after the MBTA reviews MassDOT's comments.

MassDOT and staff will gather additional information in order to identify options or a recommendation for resolving the fiscal constraint issue. The MPO will take action on the TIP amendment in two weeks.

Ed Tarallo, North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn), requested that staff provide information regarding possible implications that the upcoming amendment might have on the FFYs 2013-16 TIP.

### **8.** Meeting Minutes – Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 17 was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan). The motion carried.

9. Work Programs for MBTA 2013 National Transit Database – Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff Members were presented with two work programs: MBTA 2013 National Transit Database: Purchased Bus and MBTA 2013 National Transit Database: Directly Operated. K. Quackenbush introduced the work programs.

The two work programs represent a continuation of work that CTPS conducts for the MBTA. To be eligible to receive federal funding, transit agencies must report certain data about their operations to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). These data are entered into the National Transit Database. CTPS gathers some of these data, including total boardings by mode and passenger miles by mode, by conducting ridechecks and various surveys.

The *Purchased Bus* work program is focused on transit services that the MBTA contracts out. The *Directly Operated* work program focuses on services provided by the MBTA. In this new *Directly Operated* work program, CTPS proposes to use automatic passenger counter (APC) data for the motor bus mode, which is a different approach from previous years. FTA must agree to this approach, however, so staff has presented a work program and budget that describe two alternative approaches: this new one and the traditional one that relies on ridechecks.

Both work programs will be funded by the MBTA.

A motion to approve the work program for the *MBTA 2013 National Transit Database: Purchased Bus* was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan), and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

A motion to approve the work program for the *MBTA 2013 National Transit Database: Directly Operated* was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent). The motion carried.

**10. Designation of Internal Roadways, Logan Airport** – Lourenço Dantas and Suzanne Allie, Massachusetts Port Authority

The Massachusetts Port Authority (MassPort) is issuing a request through MassDOT to update the federal designations of roadways at Logan Airport. L. Dantas provided information regarding the action.

In a recent review of roadways at Logan Airport, several inconsistencies were found relating to the federal designations of roadways in the National Highway System (NHS) that are in the intermodal connector category (connecting a national highway to an intermodal facility). The current federal designation of certain roadways at Logan are not reflective of existing conditions that resulted following the implementation of the *Central Artery/Tunnel* project and other modernization projects. The existing designations are also not consistent with how designations are applied to roadways at other airports.

Members discussed the action.

- E. Bourassa inquired as to whether the re-designation would have an impact on the use of NHS funds on the Logan roadways. D. Mohler and S. Allie replied that MassPort does not use federal funds for its roads, rather MassPort itself pays for the reconstruction and maintenance of its roadways.
- S. Olanoff asked whether the proposed change in designations would affect the designation of the location where Interstate 90 and Route 1A meet. S. Allie stated that the location would remain part of the NHS.

In response to a question from D. Crowley, S. Allie noted that federal guidance calls for MassPort and MassDOT to consult with regional officials regarding this issue. The change in designation will have no traffic impacts.

The MPO will take action on this issue in two weeks.

11. Public Comments on Draft Documents – Mary Ellen Sullivan, UPWP Manager, MPO Staff, and Sean Pfalzer, TIP Manager, MPO Staff

Members were presented with public comments received during the public review period for the Draft FFY 2013 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the

Draft FFYs 2013-16 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Members received the full-text of all comments as well as summarized versions.

### **Unified Planning Work Program**

M. E. Sullivan summarized the comments received regarding the UPWP. The MPO received fourteen comments, including comments from a state representative, the City of Cambridge, the towns of Cohasett and Scituate, two subregions, the Regional Transportation Advisory Council, A Better City, the MetroWest Partnership, and one individual.

Support for the *Route 3A Corridor Study* in Cohasset was expressed by the South Shore Coalition, the towns of Cohasset and Scituate, and State Representative Garrett Bradley. There was also a request to add Route 2 to the *Priority Corridors Study for LRTP Needs Assessment* and to pay particular attention to the methodology used to evaluate the air quality impacts of recreational bicycle trails.

Staff is developing draft responses to the comment letters. The UPWP Committee will meet on June 21 at 9:15 AM. The MPO will take action on the UPWP on June 28.

### Transportation Improvement Program

S. Pfalzer summarized the comments received regarding the TIP. The MPO received over 500 comments, many of which voiced support for the *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2*, the *Assabet River Rail Trail*, the *Green Line Extension, Phase 2*, and the *Tri-Community Bikeway*. Other overarching themes and concerns expressed in the comments and heard in public meetings include the following:

- concerns that the MPO's TIP evaluation system favors projects in dense urban areas
- requests for better rationalization for the evaluation of projects, particularly bicycle and pedestrian projects
- requests for more data regarding the greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts of projects and that this data be used during the project selection process

Members were provided with a matrix of summarized comments sorted by project. Comments were received regarding the following projects:

- Assabet River Rail Trail: Supporters noted that the project would encourage
  the use of alternative forms of transportation and would provide bicycle and
  pedestrian access to the South Acton commuter rail stations. Opponents
  expressed concern about parking at the terminus of the trail and the need for
  an alternative parking plan. Supporters include State Senator James Eldridge
  and State Representatives Jennifer Benson, Kate Hogan, and Cory Atkins,
  and many residents.
- Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2: Many comments voiced support for the project as programmed in the Draft TIP. Supporters noted that the project

would provide an important resource for all age groups in the community, a safe corridor for bicycling and walking, connections to schools and businesses, and a closer connection to the West Concord commuter rail station. Opponents expressed that transportation dollars should be directed toward the existing transportation infrastructure, that the trail would not mitigate traffic or connect to places that people need to go, and that trail parking would be problematic.

- Cambridge Common: The City of Cambridge expressed support for the additional dollars programmed for the project.
- Brookline Carlton Street Footbridge: Supporters noted that the project would enhance mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians and improve access to parks and academic institutions along the Fenway. Supporters include State Senators William Brownsberger and Cynthia Stone Creem, State Representative Gloria Fox, and the Town of Brookline.
- Brookline Gateway East: Supporters expressed gratitude for the programming of the project. They noted that the project would increase access to the MBTA, Brookline Village, Longwood Medical Area, and the Brookline Housing Authority, and that it would provide a pedestrian crossing at Route 9. They also stated that it would enhance the development of Two Brookline Place. Supporters include Senator Stone Creem, State Representative Edward Coppinger, the Town of Brookline and various town boards, and the New England Institute of Art.
- Quincy East/West Squantum Street/Hancock Street: The City of Quincy supports this project and noted that the project incorporates recommendations from a CTPS study and advances the goals of the MPO.
- Green Line Extension, Phase 2: Supporters expressed that the extension of the Green Line to Route 16 will reduce air pollution by lessening auto traffic, produce economic development benefits by providing access to jobs and education, and serve an environmental justice community. Supporters include State Senator Patricia Jehlen and State Representatives Carl Sciortino, Sean Garballey, and Denise Provost. Opponents, who include the Green Line Advisory Committee for Medford (GLAM) and other Medford residents, stated that the public support for the extension is exaggerated and the process for the project is tainted. They expressed concern that certain populations (including the environmental justice and disability communities) were not included in discussions about the project, that the project is not a fiscal reality for the state, the extension would worsen traffic, and housing costs in Medford would escalate.
- Somerville Community Path: Some commenters on the Green Line also expressed support for funding the Community Path.
- Weston Signal Improvements at Route 30: Representative Alice Peisch requested that funding for the project be restored to the TIP. She noted that the project would address an intersection near a school and mitigate traffic at that location.

- Melrose Lebanon and Main Streets: State Senator Thomas McGee and State Representative Paul Brodeur voiced support for the project noting that it would have positive impacts on economic development and quality of life.
- Hull Atlantic Avenue: The Town of Hull expressed support for this project noting that the project has Complete Streets features which will help revitalize a neighborhood. As one of three roads to Hull it would improve emergency response and the ability for coastal evacuation during storms.
- Danvers Liberty Street: State Senator Frederick Berry, State Representative Theodore Speliotis, and the Town of Danvers voiced support for the project citing that its importance in terms of improving access to businesses, bicycle and pedestrian accessibility, and safety.
- Franklin Route 140 and Medway Route 109: The SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee expressed support for these projects.
- Wrentham Taunton Street: The Wrentham Board of Selectmen expressed support for the project noting that the street provides access to a senior center and municipal offices.
- Lynn/Saugus Route 107 over the Saugus River: State Senator McGee expressed that the project would address a vital link to the North Shore.
- Wayland Route 30/Route 27: The Town of Wayland and the MetroWest Regional Collaborative expressed support for the project noting that it addresses a high crash location.
- *Marlborough Route 85*: The Town of Marlborough opposes the removal of this project from the TIP.
- *Tri-Community Bikeway*: Supporters commented that the Bikeway would provide an active connection between three town centers, connections to the commuter rail, and a safe place for recreational activities. They also state that it will help promote physical activity and reduce roadway congestion. Supporters include State Senators Kenneth Donnelly and Katherine Clark, State Representatives Jason Lewis and James Dwyer, the Regional Transportation Advisory Council, shared-use path groups, and residents.

Several organizations and entities submitted comments on multiple projects:

- A Better City voiced support for about 20 projects in the Inner Core area.
- MASCO expressed support for projects in the Longwood Medical Area.
- the North Suburban Planning Council expressed support for 12 projects in its planning area.
- the Regional Transportation Advisory Council expressed support for trail projects and the *Green Line Extension to Route 16*.
- the South Shore Coalition expressed support for 7 projects in its planning area.

Eight comments were received by the MPO staff after the close of the public comment period, and are not included in the summary matrix. They include the

following: six more comments in support of the *Tri-Community Bikeway*; one comment opposing the *Green Line Extension to Route 16* and citing that Medford residents were not properly notified; and one clarification from a Green Line supporter noting that he supports the project but has concerns about the geographic definition used to determine Medford Hillside.

Members and attendees discussed the comments.

D. Mohler raised the comment that stated that the MPO's TIP evaluation system favors projects in dense urban areas. He asked if staff has plans to address those concerns. S. Pfalzer responded yes and that the TIP Criteria Committee could be convened this year to address those concerns.

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, provide a clarification to a comment submitted by Lee Auspitz. He explained that L. Auspitz supports the *Green Line Extension* project and has raised the issue of whether the Green Line terminus at College Avenue satisfies the legal requirement to extend the line to Medford Hillside.

S. Olanoff raised the concern voiced by a member of the public who questioned the TIP evaluation process and the practice of awarding points to trail projects for upgrading substandard pavement. S. Pfalzer stated that applying roadway criteria to trail projects has been problematic. The rationalization for awarding those points is based on the fact that some existing trails currently have unpaved surfaces and a project may improve those surfaces.

The MPO will take action on the TIP on June 28.

#### 12. Members Items

There were none.

# 13. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan) and seconded by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano). The motion carried.

# Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting Attendance Thursday, June 7, 2012, 10:00 AM

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Laura Wiener
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	Richard Canale
	Deborah Mauger
City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
·	David Anderson
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Joe Cosgrove
Massachusetts Port Authority	Lourenço Dantas
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination	Richard Reed
(Town of Bedford)	
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
SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Med	way) Dennis Crowley
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVC	CC) Tom O'Rourke

### **MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Maureen Kelly Robin Mannion Anne McGahan

Elizabeth Moore

Sean Pfalzer

Mary Ellen Sullivan

Pam Wolfe

#### **Other Attendees**

Suzanne Allie Massachusetts Port Authority

Sen. William Brownsberger State Senator

Callida Cenizal MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning

Glenn Clancy Town of Belmont Kien Ho Town of Natick Renee Hunter Town of Danvers

Bill Levison Lexington Transportation Advisory Committee

John Livset Town of Lexington

Hank Manz Lexington Board of Selectmen Rafael Mares Conservation Law Foundation

Maryann McCall-Taylor Town of Lexington Hayes Morrison City of Somerville Joe Onorato MassDOT Highway

Brittany Williams Conservation Law Foundation