

# Draft Memorandum for the Record

## Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

### September 12, 2013 Meeting

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, 60 Temple Street, Third Floor  
Conference Room, 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:

- endorse Amendment Six to the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2013-16 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) with the revisions discussed today (see the body of this document for details)
- approve the following work programs:
  - *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Corridors – FFY 2014*
  - *Safety and Operations Analyses at Selected Intersections – FFY 2014*
  - *TIP Project Impacts Before-After Evaluation – FFY 2014*
  - *Central Artery/Tunnel Project Backcasting*
- approve the minutes of the meeting of August 1

## Meeting Agenda

### 1. Public Comments

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, expressed that his organization is pleased that the MPO staff will be conducting the *Central Artery/Tunnel Project Backcasting* study. (He raised specific questions about the study methodology later during this meeting when this agenda item was discussed.)

Kristina Johnson, City of Quincy, requested that the MPO support the inclusion of the \$1.2 million *Quincy Center Multimodal Enhancement and Preservation* project in the proposed Amendment Six to the FFYs 2013-16 TIP. This project would fund the preliminary design of a new MBTA station at Quincy Center. The parking facility at the station has been closed for over a year since the MBTA deemed the structure to be unsafe. The station project is part of the revitalization of Quincy Center; the revitalization includes the MPO-funded *Adams Green* project which is going out to bid next week. K. Johnson noted that a fully functioning intermodal station is key to the revitalization of

Quincy Center. The City does not anticipate a lengthy federal environmental review (NEPA) process. The project will lead to a public-private partnership project. The City is considering seeking funding from the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program to complete the construction of transportation infrastructure.

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

There was none.

## 3. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

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

The Advisory Council last met on September 11. Beverly Scott, General Manager of the MBTA and MassDOT Rail and Transit Administrator, was the speaker. The Advisory Council also received a report from the election committee, which announced the nominees for chair and vice chair: David Montgomery and Michael Gowing. The election will take place at the October meeting.

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

The MPO will not be meeting on September 19. The next meeting will be held on October 3 at the State Transportation Building. The meeting of October 17 will be held in Framingham.

## 6. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment Six—*Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff*

C. Bench introduced the MPO's action on the proposed Amendment Six to the FFYs 2013-16 TIP. S. Pfalzer then gave an overview of the amendment. He noted that the MPO approved a draft amendment August 1 for a public review period that began on August 6. Since that time there have been several changes made to the original amendment.

The changes are as follows:

- removal of the *Somerville – Reconstruction of Beacon Street* project from the FFY 2013 element of the TIP; it will be reprogrammed in the FFY 2014 element using state funds and a federal earmark

- cost increase to *the Needham and Wellesley – Route 128 Add-a-Lane* project; target funds previously applied to the *Beacon Street* project will be applied to the *Add-a-Lane* project
- cost increase to the *Boston – Deck Patching and Superstructure Repairs on the Bowker Overpass* project
- programming of a Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program grant for the *Quincy Center Multimodal Enhancement and Preservation* project
- cost adjustments to the *Lexington and Burlington – Interstate Maintenance and Related Work on Interstate 95* project and the *Lexington and Burlington – Bridge Replacement, Route 2 (Eastbound and Westbound) over Interstate 95* project
- removal from the TIP of two Accelerated Bridge Program projects that will now be funded with non-federal aid: the *Framingham – Bridge Replacement of Winter Street over MBTA, Amtrak, and CSX Railroad*, and the *Revere – Bridge Replacement of Revere Beach Parkway over MBTA (Winthrop Avenue)*
- reprogramming of the *Everett and Medford – Bridge Replacements, Revere Beach Parkway (Route 16) over the Malden River (Woods Memorial Bridge) and over MBTA and Rivers Edge* project from the FFY 2013 element to the FFY 2014 element
- addition of a line item for *Preventative Maintenance* for the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA)
- addition of a Veterans Transportation Community Living Initiative Grant for the purchase of communications hardware and software for CATA
- adjustment to the of source of matching funds for line items for the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)
- addition of funding for MWRTA's *Route 9 Extended Service* project
- a revised cost estimate for the *Boston – Deck Patching and Superstructure Repairs on the Bowker Overpass* project
- the addition of a line item for CATA's *Gas Storage Tank*
- modifications to line items for MBTA carryover funding
- addition of a line item for the purchase of *MBTA Commuter Rail Locomotives*
- addition of a line item for the MWRTA's *New Transit Center*
- update to the cost estimate for the *Boston – Deck Patching and Superstructure Repairs on the Bowker Overpass* project to nearly \$14 million
- adjustments to the funding categories for MBTA line items for “super grants” to maintain consistency with the MBTA’s submissions to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); the lines items affected are as follows:
  - Facilities
  - Preventative Maintenance

- Stations
- System Upgrades
- programming of toll development credits for CATA's *Gas Storage Tank* project
- programming of toll development credits for MWRTA's *New Transit Center* project
- flexing of highway funds to transit for the *MBTA Commuter Rail Locomotives* and *MWRTA New Transit Center* line items, as reflected in the State TIP (STIP)

S. Pfalzer noted that the MPO received two letters of comment during the public review period. One is from CATA requesting that the MPO program its *Gas Storage Tank* project. The other is from MWRTA requesting that the MPO program its *New Transit Center* project.

#### *Discussion*

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston, asked if there is now a surplus of statewide Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program funds. S. Pfalzer and C. Bench explained that the source of funding was de-obligated funds that became available from other projects.

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), raised questions about the funding of projects that are removed from the TIP to be funded by non-federal aid, who is responsible for deciding if those projects receive non-federal aid funding, and whether those projects are more at risk of not being funded if they are removed from the TIP.

C. Bench noted that with respect to bridge projects there have been more of these funding changes than usual due to the ramping down of the Accelerated Bridge Program and the issue of unobligated balances in off-system bridge category (for those bridges not on the federal-aid highway system). MassDOT shifted as much federal funding as possible to fund those off-system bridges, while using non-federal aid to fund on-system bridges. He then noted that the MassDOT staff who oversees these projects can be held accountable for making sure they are accomplished.

Marie Rose, MassDOT Highway Division, added that MassDOT intends to fund two bridge projects – the *Framingham – Bridge Replacement of Winter Street over MBTA, Amtrak, and CSX Railroad*, and the *Revere – Bridge Replacement of Revere Beach Parkway over MBTA (Winthrop Avenue)* – with non-federal aid in FFY 2014, since the projects were not ready for construction in FFY 2013.

A motion to endorse Amendment Six to the FFYs 2013-16 TIP with the revisions discussed today was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Paul Regan), and seconded by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric Bourassa).

Members continued the discussion.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), asked about the delay in the *Framingham – Bridge Replacement of Winter Street over MBTA, Amtrak, and CSX Railroad* project and whether Framingham officials have been informed of the delay. M. Rose explained that MassDOT has been recently aware of the delay and noted that she would check to make sure the Framingham officials have been informed. The project was advertised in August.

M. Rose also noted that the *Revere – Bridge Replacement of Revere Beach Parkway over MBTA (Winthrop Avenue)* project has not been advertised yet, but will be advertised in FFY 2014 if not in the next couple of weeks.

S. Olanoff noted the high cost of the *Lexington and Burlington – Bridge Replacement, Route 2 (Eastbound and Westbound) over Interstate 95* project and asked for more details about the project. Richard Canale, At-Large Town (Town of Lexington), noted that some interstate maintenance costs are now included in this project. Joe Onorato, MassDOT Highway Division, added that the cost of the project includes the approaches to the bridge.

Members and attendees also discussed the way that toll development credits are accounted for in the TIP tables. Lynn Ahlgren, MWRTA, noted that historically the toll development credits have been calculated as part of the total project cost even though they do not represent purchasing power. This makes the toll development credit a 20% share of the project cost.

C. Bench asked staff to modify the way that toll development credits are accounted for in the TIP tables, so that the non-federal aid share is 25% of the federal cost when these credits are available, if required by the Federal Transit Administration. The modification would not affect the overall cost of the project. Members consented to the modification.

J. Gillooly asked about the MPO's policy for documenting projects funded with non-federal aid. S. Pfalzer replied that those projects are generally not documented in the TIP unless they are regionally significant. M. Rose added that Accelerated Bridge Program projects funded with Grant Anticipation Notes have been listed in the past for informational purposes.

Members then voted on the motion to endorse Amendment Six to the FFYs 2013-16 TIP with the revisions discussed today. The motion carried.

## 7. Work Programs—*Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

K. Quackenbush introduced four work programs:

- *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Corridors – FFY 2014*
- *Safety and Operations Analyses at Selected Intersections – FFY 2014*
- *TIP Project Impacts Before-After Evaluation – FFY 2014*
- *Central Artery/Tunnel Project Backcasting*

The first three are 3C-funded projects that are included in the FFY 2014 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). They represent continuation of past work. The MPO is the client for these projects. MassDOT is the client for the fourth project.

K. Quackenbush noted that the first two work programs address similar subject matter as the forthcoming *Priority Corridors for the Long-Range Transportation Plan Needs Assessment* project. While the first addresses corridors identified through the public process, the second addresses intersections, and the *Priority Corridors* study will address major arterial roadways.

### *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Corridors - FFY 2014*

The work program for *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Corridors – FFY 2014* is focused on corridors of concern identified through the subregional public outreach process. Staff is currently working on the FFY 2013 work program for this project, which focuses on the Route 3A corridor in Cohasset and Scituate, and the Route 127 and 127A corridor on Cape Ann. This new work program represents the second year for this ongoing project.

In this year's project, up to two other corridor segments will be analyzed with regard to level of service, safety, bicycle and pedestrian issues, and transit-related issues. Staff will begin the process for selecting the study areas by reviewing all subregional corridor segments of concern that staff is aware of, and then rank them based on issues related to safety, congestion, transit significance, regional significance, and geographic equity concerns. Staff will also consider the potential for study recommendations to be implemented. Staff will then seek the MPO's concurrence on the selected study areas.

Members discussed the work program

John Romano, MassDOT Highway Division, inquired as to which entities would be responsible for the construction work to implement recommendations from the study. K. Quackenbush replied that the implementation would depend upon the ownership of the facilities studied. MassDOT Highway Districts, MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning, and municipalities are all involved in these studies.

J. Romano suggested giving more weight in the selection process to those corridors where there is an interest on the part of facility owners to implementing the recommendations. K. Quackenbush replied that staff would give the MPO the information in that context, as has been done in the past. In this work program, as well as the other two associated work programs, staff will take into account whether there is strong interest in implementation. He added that these studies can serve as a catalyst for the implementation of improvements.

Efi Pagitsas, MPO staff, added that in most cases, the municipalities are seeking assistance in the development of a vision. Even if a municipality does not act right away to implement the recommendations, the study gives them a means to understand the issues they are dealing with and to convey that information to their public. When a municipality is ready to act, it will have a blueprint that can be shared with developers or can be used to articulate plans to its MassDOT Highway District Office.

K. Quackenbush added that staff is working to track the outcomes of MPO study recommendations. Sometimes the link between a study and improvements is clear and direct (such as the development of a TIP project), and other times there is a longer timeframe until implementation, he explained.

A motion to approve the work program for *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Corridors – FFY 2014* was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly) (Tina Cassidy).

Members continued to discuss the work program.

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, noted that the work program states that staff will follow the MassDOT Highway Division's guidelines for preparing functional design reports (FDRs). He asked what it would take for the study to actually produce a FDR. K. Quackenbush replied that these studies can provide basic information that could be used in an FDR, however, they do not meet all the requirements of an FDR. E. Pagitsas added that these studies are conceptual while FDRs are generally produced at the 25% design stage. FDRs include items such as assessments of wetlands that MPO staff does not currently engage in.

L. Dantas inquired about the level of expertise that would be required to take these studies to the next level and produce FDRs that would bring the recommendations closer to implementation. M. Rose discussed that it would be premature for the MPO staff to produce FDRs because the projects would not yet have Project Review Committee (PRC) approval from MassDOT. Also, by the time a project worked through the funding process, the data gathered for the FDR would be dated.

David Koses, At-Large City (City of Newton), spoke about the benefits of presenting the study findings to the relevant communities as a way to build support for implementing recommendations. He suggested adding a task to the work program to include a presentation to the community. K. Quackenbush noted that adding a task would increase the cost of the project. J. Gillooly then expressed concern about presenting study results to the public prematurely given that various parties may not be in agreement about whether the study recommendations are viable.

Christine Stickney, South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree), suggested that the study results could be distributed through the subregional groups. E. Bourassa and J. Romano concurred. J. Romano also expressed concern about presenting the results to the public too early given that the public is usually engaged at the 25% design stage. He suggested that it be given to the municipalities and subregions first.

C. Bench suggested that staff address this issue by gauging the sense of the community and if there is strong support, staff could make a presentation to the public. He noted that other funds could be identified to support presentations.

J. Onorato stated that such planning studies can serve as feasibility studies. He noted, however, that these studies have not addressed design or environmental issues. Therefore it would be too early to bring the results to the public. As projects move forward in the design process, public involvement is built into the process, he said.

D. Crowley asked whether staff would be selecting study areas from the list of congested areas identified by the UPWP Committee or if it would be taking other recommendations from municipalities and subregional groups. K. Quackenbush replied that in addition to those areas identified by the UPWP Committee, staff can accept ideas from other municipal and public agency officials. All suggested corridor segments that meet the requirements of the study will be evaluated under the same selection process.

D. Crowley asked whether staff intends to send correspondence to municipal officials and others, or whether staff will rely on MPO members to inform the municipalities. E. Pagitsas replied that staff intends to make a short list of possible study areas based on



the issues documented through the public process by the UPWP Committee. If the MPO would like staff to actively solicit new ideas, staff will change the process to include this outreach. C. Bench added that subregional representatives are welcome to report back to their subregional groups. E. Bourassa also added that corridor issues are regularly discussed at subregional meetings.

Members then voted on the motion to approve the work program for *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Corridors – FFY 2014*. The motion carried.

*Safety and Operations Analyses at Selected Intersections - FFY 2014*

The work program for *Safety and Operations Analyses at Selected Intersections – FFY 2014* represents the seventh round of work in this continuing program, which addresses safety and congestion problems at selected intersections. So far, 44 intersections in 35 communities have been studied. This new work program will fund the study of up to four more intersections. These studies have a multimodal emphasis and include the study of truck-related issues.

A motion to approve the work program for *Safety and Operations Analyses at Selected Intersections – FFY 2014* was made by the City of Boston (J. Gillooly), and seconded by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano).

Members discussed the work program.

Ed Tarallo, North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn), asked about the MPO's role in the selection process for study areas, which will winnow a list of 20 candidate locations down to four for detailed study. K. Quackenbush replied that staff will conduct an analytical process to select locations for study then bring those suggestions before the MPO for the body's concurrence.

E. Tarallo requested that language on a footnote on page four of the work program be revised to reflect that the selected locations for study will be presented to the MPO for discussion and approval.

A motion to approve the work program for *Safety and Operations Analyses at Selected Intersections – FFY 2014*, amended with a revised footnote on page four, was made by the North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly) (T. Cassidy), and seconded by the City of Boston (J. Gillooly). The motion carried.

*TIP Project Impacts Before-After Evaluation - FFY 2014*

The work program for *TIP Project Impacts Before-After Evaluation – FFY 2014* represents the second round of this program, which evaluates the effectiveness of

implemented TIP projects as required under the Congestion Management Process. The first project was conducted two years ago when staff examined three intersection projects and found evidence that those projects were effective in achieving intended safety and operational benefits.

For this project, staff will examine up to eight completed TIP projects to determine their efficacy. Projects for study must have had a functional design report (FDR) that is the source of the “before” data (for data on crashes and level of service, for example). They must also have been constructed recently, but long enough ago that three years’ worth of post-construction crash data are available. Staff will also conduct field work to gather “after” data.

Staff will aim to select projects of various types including intersection and interchange improvements, projects with bicycle and pedestrian amenities, and roundabouts. After conducting their analyses, staff will present the results to the MPO. Over time, this work will build on the MPO’s knowledge of the efficacy of various types of projects.

A motion to approve the work program for *TIP Project Impacts Before-After Evaluation – FFY 2014* was made by the North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly) (T. Cassidy), and seconded by the City of Boston (Tom Kadzis). The motion carried.

#### *Central Artery/Tunnel Project Backcasting*

The work program for *Central Artery/Tunnel Project Backcasting* will be conducted for MassDOT, which is required under the state’s new transportation finance law to determine the air quality impacts of the Central Artery/Tunnel project.

Staff will use the regional transportation model and emissions models (MOBILE and MOVES) to model four transportation network scenarios and produce air quality emissions estimates associated with these scenarios:

- the existing transportation network as of 2012
- the transportation network minus the Central Artery/Tunnel improvements
- the transportation network with the Central Artery/Tunnel improvements but minus the transit commitments associated with the Central Artery/Tunnel project
- the existing transportation network minus both the Central Artery/Tunnel improvements and the transit commitments

The four sets of travel and emissions estimates produced from the modeling will show vehicle miles traveled and associated pollutant levels. Traditionally the MPO has used the MOBILE emissions model, but now the federal government requires the use of the MOVES model. By using both models for this project, staff expects to determine what

differences there are between the two models, which will be informative for both the transportation planning and environmental community.

Members discussed the work program.

L. Dantas asked for clarification about the transportation network that would be modeled. K. Quackenbush explained that the changes to the network would affect only the core area around the Central Artery/Tunnel. Staff would not be seeking to replicate the entire transportation network as it was before the Central Artery/Tunnel was built.

J. Gillooly suggested that it would be important to include in the network the old surface street connections that existed where the Greenway is now, as they contributed to the need for the Central Artery/Tunnel project. He asked if staff will be comparing land use projections of development from 1990 to actual development, which has been more rapid than expected. K. Quackenbush replied that the work program does not include a task for making those comparisons, however, some insights will be gained on that subject by virtue of doing this work. The work will be based on today's land use and trip making patterns. It is unknown how today's land use patterns would differ if the Central Artery/Tunnel had not been built.

J. Gillooly asked that staff work with the Boston Redevelopment Authority when making comparisons of forecasts. K. Quackenbush noted that staff will be taking their lead from MassDOT on this project, and that staff will conduct the necessary research to ensure that the network replicates the land use as closely as possible.

Joe Cosgrove, MBTA, asked if the model will capture the air quality benefits resulting from transit state-of-good-repair and reliability. K. Quackenbush replied that there need to be discussions about how to reproduce those factors in the model. This work program does not attempt to address those factors, however.

Members then heard questions and comments from the public.

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, asked if the network to be modeled includes transit projects that have not yet been built. Specifically, he asked if the model would include the new stations on the Fairmount commuter rail corridor. K. Quackenbush explained that only the existing transit system would be modeled. Scott Peterson, MPO staff, added that staff will be modeling the transportation network as it existed in 2012 because that is the most recent year for which there is a complete set of travel count information. Staff will include the new Fairmount line stations, however, if it does not skew the base year modeling work.

R. Mares asked if calculations for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions could be added. K. Quackenbush and S. Peterson reported that staff would defer to the client, MassDOT, on this matter however, the addition of this task would not add substantially to the work. R. Mares asked MassDOT to approve the addition of GHG reporting in the work program, as the MPO has done for other work programs.

R. Mares then raised a question about how the land use issue would bias the study and he suggested that staff address that issue in the study. He also suggested that MassDOT inform the legislature if the study will be released later than is called for in the legislation.

Wig Zamore, Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership / Mystic View Task Force, expressed support for the use of the two emission models for comparison. He asked staff to pay attention to the difference in pollution generated by gas verses diesel vehicles. He also asked staff to keep in mind when modeling that in the midst of the Central Artery/Tunnel project there was a change in the emission technology which changed the location where emissions were released; the emissions are greatest at the tunnel vent portals. He also pointed out the need to distinguish nitrogen oxide in the air quality analyses and made reference to Tufts University resources on this subject, which include a mobile pollutant database.

In response to those comments, E. Bourassa noted that the work program does not address pollution at specific locations, rather the intent of the legislation is to determine whether the region is better off in terms of air quality from the Central Artery/Tunnel and associated transit projects. S. Peterson confirmed this point and noted that emissions data would be aggregated from the traffic analysis zone (TAZ) level to a neighborhood or regional level. Staff is not proposing to examine emissions at a level of detail that would be specific to a location such as a vent portal. W. Zamore then noted that nitrogen oxide is a pollutant that has an impact at the local level, not regional, and where the tunnel vent portals are will determine which TAZ is affected by that pollution.

A motion to approve the work program for the *Central Artery/Tunnel Project Backcasting* project was made by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent), and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

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

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 1 was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree) (Christine Stickney). The motion carried. The MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano) abstained.

**9. Freight Planning Action Plan for the Boston Region MPO, Meeting the Goals and Addressing the Issues—*Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff, and Bill Kuttner, MPO Staff***

Members were provided with a memorandum titled, *Proposed Freight Planning Action Plan for the Boston Region MPO: Meeting the Goals and Addressing the Issues*.

K. Quackenbush introduced the presentation on the Freight Planning Action Plan by summarizing the MPO's freight related work to this point. The MPO considers freight-related issues in the Long-Range Transportation Plan's Needs Assessment and during the project selection process for the TIP. The MPO staff has conducted several studies that are specific to freight planning: the *Regional Truck Study* in 2001, the *Boston Region Freight Study* in 2007, and the *Freight Study – A Profile of Truck Impacts, Phase 1* in 2010.

Following the 2010 study, staff decided to recommend halting the worthy but ad hoc work in order to conduct a comprehensive review of the region's freight-related concerns, including investigating what type of freight planning other MPOs are conducting, in order to determine what freight-related planning work this MPO should be conducting. The results of the study are presented in the memorandum, *Freight Planning Action Plan* and will be discussed at this meeting. The UPWP Committee concurred with staff's suggestion and directed that funds for a freight program be included in the FFY 2014 UPWP. K. Quackenbush asked members to provide feedback after hearing today's presentation regarding their views about the development of a freight program.

Bill Kuttner, MPO staff, then gave a PowerPoint presentation on this topic. He began by discussing the MPO's freight planning goals, which are to fulfill the MPO freight planning needs (including the freight aspects of MPO planning documents); complement state and other planning efforts; study specific freight-related issues; fulfill new analysis requirements of the federal transportation legislation, MAP-21; and acquire usable freight data and enhance MPO technical capabilities.

Federal regulations afford MPOs a wide latitude in their freight planning efforts. Around the nation, much freight planning is conducted on a multi-MPO or statewide basis. Few MPOs develop specific freight plans, though MPO travel demand models do account for and estimate truck traffic.

For its freight program, MPO staff is proposing to focus on truck traffic and intermodal connections to approximate regional freight. Trucks represent the largest mode with

87% of freight transported by truck statewide. Within the Boston Region MPO area, truck use is even higher. Other freight modes – rail, ship, and air – can be analyzed by observing trucks at key terminals.

B. Kuttner proposed an action plan for addressing freight issues, which include the following steps:

- Improving substandard highway interchanges
- Studying major freight corridors such as Beacham Street in Everett and Chelsea and using that study as a template for studies on other corridors
- Analyzing hazardous cargo truck routing
- Studying dedicated truck and commercial vehicle routes
- Understanding impacts from intermodal terminals and improvements to them (including those outside of the MPO region that affect the Boston region)
- Studying the northwest arc of Interstate 495, the most heavily traveled truck route in region
- Developing performance measures as required by MAP-21
- Integrating freight planning with other MPO studies
- Improving staff's analytic capabilities, including using new data to improve truck trip estimates

Members then asked questions and made comments.

S. Olanoff asked about the status of the second phase of the *Freight Study – A Profile of Truck Impacts* and how much of the project budget has been spent. K. Quackenbush explained that the original intent of that scope of work was to pivot off issues identified from the State Freight Plan process. However, following discussions with the UPWP Committee, staff determined that the best course of action was to supplant that work with the project presented today. The MPO approved this work program last year. He also noted that there is a line item for freight planning in the FFY 2014 UPWP. Staff is interested in hearing feedback from the members on the framework for planning and specific ideas presented by B. Kuttner today. B. Kuttner added that staff has conducted some exploratory technical analyses using newly gathered freight data and TransCAD software.

S. Olanoff referenced the letter of comment that the Advisory Council sent to the MPO regarding the FFYs 2014-17 TIP and the FFY 2014 UPWP. He noted that the Council is interested in getting a response to the issues it has raised. He discussed the Council's support for more concentrated effort on freight planning, as well as its interest in having issues addressed concerning the wear and tear on roadways caused by truck traffic and

the impact of heavier freight and more trucks on Interstates 495 and 95, the Massachusetts Turnpike, and connecting roads.

S. Olanoff suggested that the amount of funds programmed for freight planning in the UPWP may not be sufficient. K. Quackenbush noted that the UPWP line item is not the only source of funding for freight planning. There is a freight component to the MPO's regional travel demand model and upgrades to that model are funded through the Regional Model Development Program. Also, staff examines truck-related issues in the course of conducting intersection studies and other studies. He also noted that the UPWP Committee could choose to increase the freight planning line item in future UPWPs.

S. Olanoff raised other points from the Advisory Council's letter. He stressed the importance of upgrading the MPO's travel demand model to better account for freight movements. He noted that the model does not adequately account for truck movements and does not address other modes of freight movement. He also discussed the Council's recommendation for policies at the MPO and state level to shift truck traffic to rail and for studies on the impacts that could come from the Panama Canal Expansion Project.

E. Bourassa remarked upon the interest among freight advocacy groups to divert truck trips to rail, and he asked if staff is examining the potential for that shift. B. Kuttner explained that the idea of changing short distance truck trips to rail has not been considered by the freight carrier industry. Developing the technical and data foundation for freight planning would be a necessary precursor for such discussions. S. Olanoff suggested that the MPO's role could be to provide data to the freight carrier industry that could alert them to opportunities for switching modes.

C. Bench noted that MassDOT supports a mode shift from truck to rail where those opportunities exist. He asked staff to keep in mind that some freight carriers are in the process of locating their distribution points farther west in the state, near Worcester, rather than in the Boston MPO region. Further, the state is interested in having additional capacity for commuter rail service to Framingham and Worcester.

C. Bench asked staff to take into consideration the work underway by the Transportation Climate Initiative and the Council of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers. The latter has recently released resolutions concerning air quality and focused on freight transportation that calls for the creation of a baseline set of data on truck traffic and emissions and that promotes opportunities for the use of

alternative fuels in trucking. He suggested consideration be given to the infrastructure needed to support the increase of alternative fuel use in trucks.

James Errickson, At-Large City (City of Everett), inquired about the extent to which staff will be conducting local analyses and making recommendations for roadway changes. B. Kuttner explained that staff is focused first on building up its knowledge and data regarding truck activity on specific corridors such as Beacham Street. K. Quackenbush added that, as the freight program develops, staff will be interacting with members and seeking their expertise in terms of areas where further study should occur and where recommendations are needed. The program has not been refined to that point yet. J. Errickson emphasized that the interaction with communities will be important and that some may already have ideas and plans for freight travel improvements.

L. Dantas expressed support for staff's plans to build a foundation for planning by developing a freight database and by strengthening its analytic capabilities.

J. Gillooly asked what the expectation would be when the *Freight Planning Action Plan* is approved. K. Quackenbush replied that staff is seeking feedback from members about the action plan. Then, as a next step, staff would return to the MPO with a more precise work plan for this fiscal year.

C. Bench suggested that staff could make any necessary changes to the memorandum based on members' comments and then return the document to the MPO for consensus. Members would not have to take a vote to approve the memorandum, but after the approval, staff would then prepare a work program that the MPO would vote to approve.

E. Tarallo asked that staff provide any modifications to the memorandum to members in track changes.

## **10. Members Items**

The next MPO meeting will be held on October 3 at the State Transportation Building. The meeting of October 17 will be held in Framingham.

## **11. Adjourn**

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



## Attendance

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### Members

### Representatives and Alternates

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At-Large City (City of Everett)	James Errickson
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Laura Wiener
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
	Marie Rose
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
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)	Richard Reed
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

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<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Lynn Ahlgren	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Sreelatha Allam	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT District 3
Neema Chaiban	Conservation Law Foundation
Kristina Johnson	City of Quincy
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Joe Onorato	MassDOT Highway Division
Wig Zamore	Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership / Mystic View Task Force

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**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director  
Maureen Kelly  
Bill Kuttner  
Robin Mannion  
Anne McGahan  
Elizabeth Moore  
Efi Pagitsas  
Scott Peterson  
Sean Pfalzer  
Michelle Scott  
Pam Wolfe

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