

Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Unified Planning Work Program Committee Meeting November 7, 2013 Meeting

12:50 PM to 1:55 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Sreelatha Allam, Chair, representing the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee agreed to the following:

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of July 25, 2013

Materials

Materials for this meeting included:

- a copy of the meeting agenda
- draft minutes for the July 25, 2013 UPWP Committee meeting
- the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2013 UPWP Fourth Quarter Spending Report
- the FFY 2013 UPWP Fourth Quarter CTPS Schedule and Staff Assignment table
- a schedule detailing UPWP and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development activities occurring from November 2013 through June 2014

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Sree Allam, (Chair, Unified Planning Work Program Committee, Massachusetts Department of Transportation) called the meeting to order at approximately 9:15 AM. She explained that she is the new UPWP Committee chair, representing MassDOT, where she is a program planner and liaison to the Boston Region, Merrimack Valley and Old Colony MPOs. UPWP Committee, other MPO members, MPO staff, and other attendees introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 7.)

2. Action Item: Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 25, 2013 UPWP Committee Meeting

A motion to accept the meeting minutes was made by Tom O'Rourke (Town of Norwood) and seconded by Eric Bourassa (Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)). The motion carried.

3. FFY 2013 Fourth Quarter Spending Report

Karl Quackenbush (MPO Executive Director) described the structure of the report, explaining that it is produced every quarter and is designed to show the status of each CTPS project and activity in the UPWP. The report also includes projects that were not expected to be worked on during FFY 2013; these include projects that have been carried over from the previous UPWP or that have been added since the UPWP was endorsed. The report includes two sets of columns; the first set describes the FFY 2013 UPWP budget and spending during the UPWP timeframe. The second set describes spending over the whole project life, and the budgets in this second set have been defined by the project work scopes.

There is also a section of this report on the last page that summarizes expenditures for MPO-funded and non MPO-funded projects for the federal fiscal year. K. Quackenbush noted that the budgeted MPO work for FFY 2013 was \$3.9 million and that \$3.8 million was spent. He explained that fewer dollars were spent than budgeted because there was a vacancy among staff working on MPO-funded projects. Spending on non MPO-funded projects was on target with what was budgeted.

A member of the public asked for a clarification on the funding for the "MPO Freight Study, Phase II project, particularly on the difference between its FFY 2013 UPWP budget of \$36,400 and its total project budget of \$30,000." K. Quackenbush and Robin Mannion (MPO Deputy Executive Director), explained that while \$36,400 was budgeted for the project in the UPWP, it was ultimately budgeted for \$30,000 when its work program was subsequently written. R. Mannion noted that the \$6,400 in extra program capacity provided support for projects that unexpectedly carried over into FFY 2013. K. Quackenbush also noted that work on the "MPO Freight Study, Phase II" project has also carried into FFY 2014 as the MPO and the Regional Transportation Advisory Council continue to review the resulting work plan. Freight planning will be addressed through an ongoing program in the FFY 2014 UPWP.

A committee member asked for a definition of "discrete" projects. K. Quackenbush explained that discrete projects have a defined beginning, end, and set of products.

These projects are distinct from other activities, such as TIP development or support to the Advisory Council, which continue from year to year.

A committee member asked about how overruns on MassDOT-funded projects, such as the “South Station Expansion Project,” are paid for. K. Quackenbush explained that MPO funds and agency funds are never comingled and that, in any event, there have been no such overruns. In the case of the “South Station Expansion Project”, it was found that more work was called upon to be completed on this project during FFY 2013 than was anticipated at the time the UPWP was developed. The “South Station Expansion Project” budget covers multiple years, and the project is still within its overall budget.

R. Mannion explained that the quarterly spending reports show 1) FFY 2013 spending as compared to the level of work activity anticipated during UPWP development (as shown in the first set of columns), and 2) how well the MPO performed in terms of managing overall project budgets (as shown in the second set of columns). It was suggested that an additional column could provide clarifying text explanations about the budget figures for particular projects. K. Quackenbush and R. Mannion encouraged UPWP Committee members to continue to provide suggestions for these reports.

A committee member noted that MPO staff used to create reports for the UPWP Committee that highlighted projects of concern. K. Quackenbush explained that these were the “Red Flag Tables,” which were used to highlight projects with actual expenditure rates running significantly ahead of their budgeted expenditure rates. He added that the quarterly spending report highlights a different issue, which tracks spending against what was anticipated in the UPWP.

A committee member asked about the “MBTA Rapid Transit Station Intermodal Service Map Development” project, which is marked complete while only 27 percent of its budget has been spent. R. Mannion explained that this project is funded by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority’s (MBTA) American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) dollars, and the MBTA had not asked for the full budget’s worth of work on this mapping project before the timeframe to use the ARRA dollars had ended.

A committee member asked about how MassDOT is billed for projects that MPO staff work on. R. Mannion explained that invoices are submitted to MassDOT monthly.

4. FFY 2014 First Quarter CTPS Schedule and Staff Assignment

K. Quackenbush described the table structure and notation. Schedule and budget information in bold type reflects changes since the last report; in particular, budgets shown in bold on this quarter's report have been updated through the budget adjustment approved at the previous UPWP Committee meeting. Projects noted with double-plus marks (++) highlight projects with approved work scopes that are new to this report; single plus marks (+) denote upcoming projects. Recently completed projects are listed in the top right-hand corner of the report.

Several committee members asked why the Regional Model Enhancement project row is highlighted. K. Quackenbush explained that the formatting makes it appear highlighted but that it is not, in fact, highlighted.

A member of the public asked whether this report reflects information gathered as of October. K. Quackenbush confirmed that this is correct, and explained that there is always a lag time between the end of the quarter and when these reports are distributed to the UPWP Committee.

A committee member asked whether staff vacancies are reflected in this report. K. Quackenbush explained that the report notes a new position in the Transit Service Planning group for which MPO staff are actively recruiting. MPO staff may also recruit for a new staff person for the Traffic Analysis and Design group.

5. Update on FFY 2015 UPWP Development Activities

Michelle Scott directed attendees' attention to the schedule of TIP and UPWP development activities occurring between November 2013 and June 2014. She described several outreach activities occurring between November 2013 and January 2014, which include:

- MPO staff attendance at MAPC subregion meetings. The dates and time of meetings occurring in November and December have been listed on the monthly calendars distributed at the MPO meeting.
- TIP-and UPWP-Building Sessions. The dates, times, and locations of these two meetings are still being finalized.
- The MPO's "Be Informed, Be Involved" sessions, which will include discussion of TIP and UPWP Development among other MPO topics. These will be held in January in the State Transportation Building.

M. Scott encouraged members to attend these meetings.

A committee member asked whether the TIP and UPWP schedule was available on the website, and suggested that MPO staff could create a single place for people to view information about UPWP events. Staff responded that MPO-sponsored events are listed on the MPO meetings calendar; MAPC subregion meetings are not currently listed there because they are not sponsored by the MPO. MPO staff indicated that they could explore opportunities to include these events as well. R. Mannion added that MPO-sponsored events could also be incorporated into newsflashes on the MPO website.

A member of the public asked whether MAPC subregion meetings are open to the public. E. Bourassa explained that these meetings are open to the public but are specifically advertised to municipalities. The UPWP and TIP development processes will be discussed at all subregion meetings. MPO staff were complimented on recent efforts to engage the MAPC subregions. It was noted that subregions may benefit from informed advocates participating in MAPC subregion meetings, although the mix of types of participants tends to vary by subregion.

M. Scott explained also that during the November to early February period, ideas for the UPWP will be gathered from MPO staff and area transportation agencies. MPO staff will also work on refining the UPWP criteria. She clarified that these criteria are distinct from the quantitative criteria used to recommend TIP projects. The UPWP criteria are qualitative, and are used to flag whether a UPWP project might address particular MPO visions, goals, or policies; elements of federal guidance; state or regional priorities; and other items.

6. Member Items

A member of the public asked whether the MPO has recently reviewed the members of its various committees, as the Advisory Council would like to be represented on all committees. E. Bourassa explained that every year or two, the MPO Chair requests feedback on whether members would like to participate on different MPO committees, and then he selects committee members after reviewing this feedback. S. Allam indicated she would look into this issue.

A committee member suggested that the MPO encourage chief elected officials to attend the TIP and UPWP endorsement vote meeting anticipated for June 26, 2014.

A committee member asked that Committee Chairs encourage the MPO to stick to its anticipated schedule for document approvals before July and August. Another member asked whether the March 3 date for receiving target funding for the TIP and UPWP was a typical date or a best guess. K. Quackenbush explained that this is a best guess. He

added that in recent years, the schedule had actually been moved earlier in time to support document approvals before July and August.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on February 6, 2014. Topics will include the FFY 2015 UPWP Universe of Potential New Projects, the FFY 2014 First Quarter Spending report, and the FFY 2014 Second Quarter Schedule and Staff Assignments table.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:55 PM.

Attendance

UPWP Committee Members

Representatives and Alternates

At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
City of Boston	Tom Kadzis
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Sree Allam
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Southwest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Dennis Crowley
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood)	Tom O'Rourke

Other MPO Members

Representatives and Alternates

Regional Transportation Advisory Council David Montgomery

Other Attendees Affiliation

Steve Olanoff Town of Westwood
Wig Zamore Mystic View Task Force,
 Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director

Michelle Scott
