

Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Unified Planning Work Program Committee Meeting February 20, 2014 Meeting

1:30 PM to 3:30 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 January 23, 2014

Materials

Materials for this meeting included:

- a copy of the meeting agenda
- draft minutes for the January 23, 2014 UPWP Committee meeting
- a draft FFY 2015 UPWP Universe of Proposed New Projects
- a packet of supplementary materials, which include letters and emails from project proponents, along with a brief overview of the draft Universe development process
- a summary table that lists the proposed project names, along with related LRTP vision topics, project functions, and focus area review results

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Sree Allam, Chair, Unified Planning Work Program Committee (Massachusetts Department of Transportation) called the meeting to order at approximately 1:30 PM. UPWP Committee members, MPO staff, and other attendees introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 10.) Michelle Scott, MPO staff, reviewed the meeting materials.

2. Action Item: Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 23, 2014 UPWP Committee Meeting

A motion to accept the meeting minutes was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Tom O'Rourke, Town of Norwood). The motion carried. The representative for the At-Large Towns (Laura Wiener, Town of Arlington) abstained.

3. FFY 2015 UPWP Universe of Proposed New Projects

M. Scott described the process of developing the FFY 2015 UPWP Universe of Proposed New Projects, which contains projects from MPO and MAPC staff. She also provided some comments on the structure and content of the Universe document.

Supplementary Materials

The group discussed the Three Rivers Interlocal Council's comment letter on the UPWP Universe (provided in the supplementary materials packet). T. O'Rourke explained that this letter conveyed a TRIC member's interest in seeing the MPO go beyond planning improvements at specific sites and focus on how to improve the transportation system as a whole, such as by looking at opportunities to bring in innovations happening internationally. He noted that this would be a shift in focus regarding what the UPWP addresses, and acknowledged that it is important to remember other MPO planning activities.

E. Bourassa said the pricing of roadways will be an important solution to traffic issues in the future, and asked whether the MPO had ever considered conducting a larger regional study on the impacts of roadway pricing on travel behavior. Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director, indicated that this topic has been considered in the past, but that this research would need an agency to sponsor it, which has not happened.

Universe Document

S. Allam asked whether a proposed project needs to satisfy certain thresholds for the LRPT vision topics, functions, or focus areas. M. Scott explained that projects do not need to meet specific thresholds. S. Allam asked what would happen in the project selection process if two projects had similar ratings. M. Scott explained that staff would also be looking at other factors, such as federal guidance for the FFY 2015 UPWP, which may make one project a more appropriate choice than another. Geographic equity, another possible factor, is often taken into account at the study-location-selection phase of particular MPO projects and programs.

M. Scott provided an overview of the next steps in the FFY 2015 UPWP development. Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) asked whether MPO staff could provide a consolidated list of the projects and their associated financial information. M. Scott said MPO staff would provide that at upcoming meetings, along with any other comment letters.

Boston Region MPO Proposed Projects

D. Crowley asked MPO staff to identify projects in the Universe that were suggested last year but were not funded. These projects were identified during the discussion of proposed projects. M. Scott added that in some cases, MPO staff reviewed staff-proposed projects from last year and decided to propose a different type of project that addressed the same topic or issue.

For several of the 16 projects proposed by Boston Region MPO staff, there were questions or discussion:

- *Addressing Safety, Mobility and Access for Subregional Priority Corridors: FFY 2015 (A-1)*: Steve Olanoff (Town of Norwood) asked if corridors covered in past studies through this program could be listed in the project comments.
- *Regional Bicycle Crash Self-Reporting Survey (B-1)*. This project was proposed by MPO staff, based on their awareness of the City of Boston's self-reporting survey. E. Bourassa noted that MassDOT is pursuing an education and enforcement initiative around bicycle and pedestrian issues that would involve coordination with police departments in 15 to 20 municipalities. He indicated that RPAs would be called upon to coordinate with municipalities and police departments, and that this proposed project could complement this initiative.

S. Allam asked which geographic areas would be included in the survey, and how those locations would be selected. M. Scott explained that MPO staff would seek survey participation throughout the region, to the extent feasible. Mike Gowing, Vice Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Town of Acton) suggested that communities seeking Complete Streets certification from the state would likely be interested in providing data for this survey.

Bicycle Network Gaps: Feasibility Evaluations (B-2). K. Quackenbush explained that the gaps that would be recommended for study would be based on a prioritization scheme developed as part of the Bike Network Evaluation study, which is underway. Gaps recommended for, however, might not be the highest-

ranked on the prioritized list. Implementation possibilities would be considered in location selection. S. Olanoff suggested that the study selection process could consider whether a gap addresses a high-level need, or what the cost-effectiveness of making improvements might be.

- *Safety Analysis at Intersections near MAGIC Schools (C-1)*. D. Crowley asked what the geographic scope of the study would be. M. Scott explained that the selection process would need to be based around schools, and that the geographic distribution of the study locations would still need to be determined. Possibilities could include studying one school per community, or studying a set of schools in a priority area. D. Crowley asked if this issue would be addressed before UPWP committee members would be asked to select studies. M. Scott said that MPO staff could pursue this. K. Quackenbush said that, like other MPO studies, if this proposed project were to be selected, MPO staff could seek MPO approval for study locations once work was underway.

S. Allam asked whether MPO staff would bring recommendations back to school officials as a result of the study. M. Scott explained that the proposed project is more oriented toward providing information to municipalities and school districts to support their decision making.

L. Wiener noted that similar work has been done in Arlington through the Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program, and asked what was distinct about this work that would make it more appropriate for study through the UPWP. K. Quackenbush explained that the SRTS program is geared toward making specific improvements. This study would be more focused on juxtaposing information about problem locations around schools against information about how students are getting to school. This would help determine whether improvements made through the SRTS or other programs are appropriate for addressing the problem, or if there needs to be more coordination with school officials, etc.

L. Wiener asked whether the study work would happen at the school level or the MAGIC level. K. Quackenbush explained that schools would be selected, information would be mapped for the selected schools, and then MPO staff would analyze student travel information for a subset of those schools. M. Gowing said that he was at a MAGIC subregion meeting where this proposal was discussed. He referred to a past MPO study at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, which proposed to lengthen traffic queues within the school campus,

as opposed to on adjacent roadways, to reduce congestion issues around the school. He explained that studies like the one performed for Sudbury Lincoln High School address a symptom of an issue, as opposed to the actual problem. He added that this proposed study would address the issue at a high level, and then allow for more detailed analysis.

Community and Human-Services Transportation Support (D-1). K. Quackenbush noted that this proposed project's purpose is related to the purpose of the recent MPO-sponsored Transportation Equity Forum, which brought transportation service providers together to share success stories. M. Gowing provided examples of the human services transportation work conducted by the transportation management association (TMA) serving the Acton area.

- *Title VI Service Equity Analyses: Methodology Development (D-2).* Elizabeth Moore (MPO Staff) explained that in the past, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has been receptive to some of the methodologies that MPOs and others have developed, and that sometimes the FTA includes these methodologies in updates to FTA guidance circulars.
- *Core Capacity Constraints (E-1).* K. Quackenbush explained that this study would address Boston and adjoining communities. As part of this study, MPO staff would document current conditions, use the travel demand model set to generate information about the future, and provide information about the transportation systems ability to handle projected travel demand in the core area. The study would also include an examination of the ways that transit mitigation is handled as part of new development.

Members asked questions about the type of information that the Senator might seek to learn through this study. Tom Kadzis, City of Boston, noted that when Senator Brownsberger suggested research into this topic last year, there were a lot of initiatives underway that would impact the Senator's district, such as those related to turnpike access to the Back Bay and access to the Longwood Medical Center. T. Kadzis said he recalled that the Senator was asked to wait and see how these various initiatives would play out. He explained that he believes that the Senator has made this proposal again because there weren't any critical decisions made or critical mass that was reached since that time. K. Quackenbush added that the earlier proposal focused more on the Back Bay area, where the Bowker

Overpass work is occurring; in response MassDOT and others indicated that the timing wasn't right.

K. Quackenbush noted that the nature of this study is similar to work that would be done to update the Long-Range Transportation Plan needs assessment, but that this study differs in that it would examine these core communities in more detail.

L. Weiner noted that mitigation decisions are often made very locally, and that planning studies that look at mitigation issues from a more regional perspective would be beneficial.

D. Crowley noted that the capacity and development mitigation issues that have been raised focus on transit service provided by the MBTA. K. Quackenbush reiterated that while the proposal as a whole would address the entire transportation system, the study does have a transit emphasis. M. Gowing noted that the legislature would have the power to make more funding available for increasing transit capacity. K. Quackenbush noted that this would be a planning study to inform those future funding decisions.

Several members expressed concern about the project's anticipated cost. K. Quackenbush explained that there is a potentially large geographic area that would be addressed through this project. T. Kadzis noted that this project, given the population it would serve, might provide more benefits than similarly-sized projects proposed in the past. D. Crowley responded that this would be a valuable project for the MBTA to fund, and noted that the MBTA has a larger budget than the MPO does.

- *Public Health and Transportation Data Exploration (G-2)*. E. Bourassa noted that MAPC is doing a lot of work in this field, and that this project would be a good opportunity for MAPC and MPO staff to collaborate. He added that MAPC's public health staff is interested in relating public health to transportation and performance measures. M. Gowing asked how MPO staff could take advantage of the public health knowledge base in the MPO region; E. Bourassa noted that several MAPC staff members are in programs at the Harvard School of Public Health.
- *MPO Staff Independent Research and Idea Development (G-3)*. E. Bourassa explained that Marc Draisen, executive director of MAPC, has established a fund for staff to encourage development of new planning ideas. K. Quackenbush added that a similar fund for MPO staff would support staff creativity and engagement.

Metropolitan Area Planning Council Proposed Projects

There were questions or discussion for several proposed projects:

- *Right-Size Parking Tool (H-3)*. E. Bourassa explained that MAPC had applied for a Community Innovation Challenge grant for this proposed project.
- *Stream Crossing Inventory for Local Roads (H-4)*. E. Bourassa said that he has some reservations about this project, and would be meeting with its proponent, a member of MAPC's environmental planning staff, to gather more information. M. Gowing asked if this proposed project would tie into stormwater management issues. E. Bourassa said that though many entities address stormwater and watersheds, municipalities are responsible for addressing stormwater on municipally owned roads, and they often do not have the necessary expertise or ability to do that.

4. Next Steps in FFY 2015 UPWP Development Process

At the meeting, Committee members came to the following consensus regarding next steps in the FFY 2015 UPWP Development Process:

- On March 20, the UPWP Committee will meet to continue to discuss Universe of Proposed New Projects.
- MPO staff will develop a proposed FFY 2015 UPWP budget and recommend a set of new projects from the Universe.
- On April 3, MPO staff will present their recommendations for the budget and new projects to the UPWP Committee for their consideration.
- On April 10, the UPWP Committee will meet to discuss any updates to the staff recommendation based on Committee member feedback, and the UPWP Committee will finalize their recommendation on the UPWP budget and new projects.
- On April 17, MPO staff will present the UPWP Committee's recommendation on the draft UPWP budget and proposed new projects to the MPO.

5. Member Items

There were none.

6. Next Meeting

The next UPWP Committee meeting was scheduled for March 20.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30.

Attendance

UPWP Committee Members

Representatives and Alternates

At-Large City (City of Newton)

James Freas

At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)

Laura Wiener

City of Boston

Tom Kadzis

South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)

Dennis Crowley

Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Sree Allam

Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Eric Bourassa

Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)

Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees Affiliation

Steve Olanoff Town of Norwood, TRIC Alternate

Mike Gowing Town of Acton, Vice Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director

David Fargen

Elizabeth Moore

Efi Pagitsas

Scott Peterson

Michelle Scott

Pam Wolfe
