

# Memorandum for the Record

## Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

### June 19, 2014 Meeting

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

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 state fiscal year (FY) 2015 operating budget for Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)
- authorize the MPO staff to continue working on the MPO's Public Participation Plan (P3) in anticipation of returning to the MPO in August with a draft document for public review
- approve the MPO's 2014 Title VI Report

### Meeting Agenda

#### 1. Public Comments

There were none.

#### 2. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT*

There was none.

#### 3. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

#### 4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*David Montgomery, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

D. Montgomery thanked D. Mohler for attending the Advisory Council's meeting last week for a presentation and question and answer session. D. Mohler was the guest speaker in lieu of MassDOT Secretary Richard Davey, who was called away to another event.

The Advisory Council will be submitting a comment letter to the MPO regarding the draft FFYs 2015-18 TIP and the draft FFYs 2015 UPWP.

The Advisory Council's July meeting is hoping to include a status update on the South Station Expansion project.

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

There was none.

**6. CTPS Budget—*Paul Regan, Chair, Administration and Finance Committee***

The MPO's Administration and Finance Committee met earlier this morning to discuss the proposed FY 2015 operating budget for CTPS. At that meeting, K. Quackenbush gave a presentation on the proposed budget. The Committee voted unanimously this morning to recommend approval of the budget to the MPO. Documents were distributed showing the budget and individual line items.

CTPS expects to have \$5.9 million in revenues in FY 2015, which is fairly consistent with prior year's budgets. This budget would support 59 staff positions.

P. Regan explained the reason for two line items that differ substantially from previous years' budgets. The \$90,000 line item for Data Processing Equipment includes a one-time expense for the purchase of a computer back-up system. The \$52,000 line item for Miscellaneous and Petty Cash includes \$50,000 to replace the accounting system used by CTPS and MAPC.

A motion to approve the CTPS operating budget for FY 2015, as recommended by the Administration and Finance Committee, was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan), and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

**7. MPO Public Participation Program Update—*Pam Wolfe, Manager of Certification Activities, MPO Staff***

P. Wolfe discussed updates to the MPO's Public Participation Plan (P3), which staff is recommending in order to better support MPO decision-making and to ensure that the P3 is compliant with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

With the approval of the MPO, staff began to update the P3 last year. Staff then conducted a survey to gain public input on the existing program of activities and plan. Staff also researched the P3s of comparable MPOs, examined Title VI provisions, and conducted a self-assessment.

The responses to the survey revealed that people like to get information via MPOinfo (an extensive email list), the MPO website, and TransReport (the MPO's newsletter).

They also like to be involved by sending emails through [publicinformation@ctps.org](mailto:publicinformation@ctps.org) or directly to staff, or through the website. They also enjoy sharing their views at public meetings. Thirty percent of respondents reported that they feel that the MPO hears their views, 60% reported that they feel the MPO hears them sometimes, and 10% said that their views are not heard. This is an issue staff hopes to address through the update to the P3.

Staff learned through research that the substance of the MPO's P3 is comparable to those of other MPOs. Other MPOs conduct similar activities such as holding meetings, supporting advisory groups, and communicating through websites. Some MPOs conduct other activities, such as holding more special forums, organizing speakers' bureaus, actively seeking media coverage, using social media, taking more surveys, accepting public comments before MPO meetings, and accepting audio comments.

Staff's recommendations are focused on making better use of current resources, using contemporary formats, expanding outreach to underserved people, and reflecting what was learned in the survey and research. Specific recommendations include the following:

- write more news flashes for posting on the MPO's website, and press releases
- partner with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the Advisory Council on special forums
- develop a stronger relationship with public libraries
- create a web-based P3
- use more graphics to convey information
- translate more materials into other languages
- use Title VI analyses in meeting planning to identify languages spoken in specific areas
- consult with local officials when organizing meetings to identify language and cultural issues
- implement more surveys
- explore the use of social media

Staff proposes to ask the MPO at its August 7 meeting to release of draft of the P3 for a 45-day public review. Staff proposes to hold public meetings about the plan in September. The MPO could then take a vote on the P3 in October.

A motion to authorize the MPO staff to continue working on the P3 in anticipation of returning to the MPO in August with a draft document for public review, was made by

the MassDOT Highway Division (John Romano), and seconded by the At-Large Town of Lexington (Richard Canale).

### ***Discussion***

D. Montgomery discussed the Advisory Council's role in implementing the P3 plan, noting that the Advisory Council is charged with this task in the MPO's Memorandum of Understanding. Eric Bourassa, MAPC, then discussed the Advisory Council's possible role in coordinating forums and special events and in conducting outreach in regards to the MPO's certification documents.

E. Bourassa expressed support for staff's new ideas noting that, although the MPO's complicated processes make public engagement challenging, the proposed new tasks align well with the values of the MPO and will inform people about when to make comments to influence MPO decisions.

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, remarked that one of the challenges to public engagement is that people tend to be most interested in projects that have near term implementation. It is more challenging to engage people on projects that are in the early planning stages. He suggested that the MPO customize its public meetings for the locations where meetings are to occur and involve agency representatives who could be available to provide information on near-term projects important to the area and respond to questions.

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood), suggested that the MPO's public notices could be more interesting and use more conversational language.

D. Mohler asked how two of staff's suggestions for improving the P3 differ from the MPO's current practice. One suggestion was to "facilitate and accept public comments before MPO meetings." P. Wolfe explained that staff proposes to add another feature to the MPO website's comment feature that would allow a person to submit a comment to be read into the record by the chair during the public comment agenda item of an MPO meeting. D. Mohler noted that the MPO's current practice is to distribute public comments to members, but not to read them into the record.

The other suggestion was to "use audio recording devices to collect oral comments." P. Wolfe clarified that staff would make it possible for a person to submit an audio recording of their comment for or at an MPO meeting. This would benefit people who do not want to stand before the MPO to make an oral comment, those who are unable to attend a meeting, or people who are not able to write a comment. Elizabeth Moore, Deputy Director of Policy and Planning, added that this option could help people who

are blind and unable to write a comment or for people who cannot write because they are not native English speakers.

D. Mohler asked staff to consider making the audio recording option available to the public prior to meetings, as staff is proposing to do with the written comment option.

D. Mohler also commented on staff's proposal to use more graphical representations in its outreach materials. While supportive of the idea, he cautioned staff to make sure that graphics do not substitute for narrative text considering that many people, including those with visual impairments, may not be able to process information in a graphical form.

John Romano, MassDOT Highway Division, expressed support for staff's suggestion to work with public libraries to make MPO information available. He also suggested that staff consider working with cable access stations to post MPO meeting agendas. P. Wolfe replied that staff will make sure that those stations are included among staff's media contacts.

Melissa Santucci Rozzi, South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree), asked if members of the public could submit a comment in another language and have it translated for the MPO. P. Wolfe replied, yes, that staff would work with the University of Massachusetts' translation service to have comments translated. Also, there are people on the CTPS staff who speak other languages and could assist.

D. Montgomery raised a concern that offering translation services could have a significant impact on CTPS's budget if there were a significant number of requests. P. Wolfe replied that staff would employ a "test of reasonableness." Staff has been working with the Massachusetts Office of Diversity and Civil Rights on this issue. Currently, staff translates executive summaries of the MPO's certification documents. Future translation requests will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Members then voted to authorize the MPO staff to continue working on the P3 in anticipation of returning to the MPO in August with a draft document for public review. The motion carried.

## **8. 2014 Title VI Report—*Elizabeth Moore, Deputy Director of Policy and Planning, MPO Staff***

E. Moore gave a report on the MPO's Title VI triennial report. She began by discussing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. This law applies to direct recipients of federal funds and sub-recipients. (Regarding the MPO, MassDOT is a direct recipient

and the MPO is a sub-recipient to MassDOT.) Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin. National origin has been interpreted to include people with limited English proficiency. Discrimination is defined as any action or inaction that results in unequal treatment.

MassDOT and the MPO must comply with two different sets of Title VI requirements, those defined in the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) circular (C 4702.1B), and those specified in the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) Title VI/ Non-discrimination Program guidance. The MPO's triennial report, which is submitted to MassDOT's Office of Diversity and Civil Rights, covers both the FTA and FHWA requirements.

The report must include Title VI certifications and assurances that demonstrate that the MPO is aware of the Title VI requirements and that it is not discriminating. It also includes a Notice to Beneficiaries statement that informs people of their rights, and a Complaint Procedure for people who believe they have been subjected to discrimination. The MPO must keep a record of all complaints filed against the MPO.

The MPO must also demonstrate that it provides meaningful access to people with limited English proficiency by having a language assistance plan. The MPO must develop demographic maps showing the location of minority and non-minority populations, define how the MPO conducts outreach to minority populations and determines their needs, and analyze the distribution of federal funds in the region.

The MPO staff is currently working on a UPWP project that is analyzing how staff is conducting its Title VI research.

### ***Discussion***

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), inquired about the availability of the analysis of the impacts of the distribution of federal funds. E. Moore replied that the analysis is included in the triennial report. She also noted the MPO's Title VI work is an ongoing program. Staff will continue to refine its approach to analyses and outreach and provide updates to the MPO.

D. Mohler asked for clarification regarding the reporting of population figures for minorities in Table 2 of the report. He asked staff to add clarifying text to the report to address why the figures for each racial minority group do not add up to the total minority population figure. E. Moore discussed that a possible reason is that people who self-identified in the census as White Hispanics are included in the minority figure. Staff will check the numbers in the table and add clarification before submitting the report.

A motion to approve the MPO's 2014 Title VI Report was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the At-Large Town of Lexington (Richard Canale). The motion carried.

Members were asked to sign a form that will be added to the document to demonstrate that they have discussed and approved the triennial report.

**9. Minutes from MPO Meeting of May 15—*Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff***

The minutes were not circulated in time for them to be approved at this meeting.

**10. Members Items**

J. Romano announced that the Callahan Tunnel will be closed for repairs on the upcoming Friday and Saturday evenings. A detour will be in place.

**11. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

## Attendance

<b>Members</b>	<b>Representatives and Alternates</b>
At-Large City (City of Everett)	Tony Sousa
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 Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis
	Patrick Hoey
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	Marie Rose
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Ron Morgan
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	David Montgomery
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)	Melissa Santucci
	Rozzi
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Dennis Crowley
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)	Tom O'Rourke

<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Sreelatha Allam	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Derek Chamberlin	Conservation Law Foundation
Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood)



---

**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

---

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Elizabeth Irvin

Maureen Kelly

Robin Mannion

Anne McGahan

Elizabeth Moore

Scott Peterson

Sean Pfalzer

Pam Wolfe

---