REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

January 8, 2014 Meeting

3:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

Meeting Summary

1. Introductions

David Montgomery, Chair (Needham) called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance see page 9)

2. Chair's Report—*David Montgomery, Chair*

The MPO met on December 19, preceded by a meeting of its Congestion Management Committee, of which the Advisory Council is a member. There was a discussion of the recently acquired INRIX database data that facilitates tracking travel patterns and can be mined by planners and modelers. At the full meeting of the MPO, the LRTP Amendment Three and FFYs 2014-17 TIP Amendment One were approved. A presentation on the Community Transportation Technical Assistance Program considered several corridors and intersections for in-depth study. Route 140 in Franklin and Washington Street in West Newton are the proposed corridors while intersections in Milford, Weymouth and Westwood are proposed for study to be conducted in FFY 2014.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes – *David Montgomery, Chair*

Approval of the November 13 and December 11, 2013 meeting minutes were deferred to the next meeting, pending the presence of a quorum required under the Advisory Council bylaws.

4. Committee Reports and Upcoming Activities:

The Chair asked members to consider committee membership and recommended that MPO staff and committee work be coordinated with the production of documents that the Advisory Council comments on including the LRTP, TIP and UPWP.

5. Old Business & New Business:

Members of the Advisory Council discussed membership and attendance issues. F. DeMasi expressed concern over the lack of attendance by communities over the last six months. He wondered if there is something that can be done to improve attendance. Less than 10 percent of the 101 municipalities in the MPO are on the Advisory Council. D. Montgomery explained that staff is in the process of reaching out to members who do not attend regularly and communities that are not formally represented and inviting their participation.

F. Osman expressed the thought that more outreach and public relations might help the attendance. The work output of the committees may improve the awareness of the Advisory

Council. M. Gowing, Vice Chair, said that his major emphasis over the year will be to conduct member outreach initiatives.

F. DeMasi stated that many cities and towns have a direct representation on the MPO now and thereby have a limited interest in the Advisory Council. He stated that some help from the MPO itself might increase interest in the Advisory Council including timely responses to comment letters.

R. McGaw asked about the status of the TIP/UPWP comment letter that was sent to the MPO in June, 2013. P. Wolfe was expecting to have received the response recently, and will investigate its progress.

M. Gowing felt we should focus on the communities served by commuter rail first and then fill-in the other areas. D. Montgomery expressed a concern that representation issues relate to membership across the board. The Advisory Council does have membership attendance criteria, but as a voluntary association, it is hard to rigidly enforce attendance rules and that may be more disruptive to the organization in the long-run.

D. Montgomery addressed the need for engaging excellent speakers. F. DeMasi said that he understood the need to hear from the MPO staff on the certification document work, but that there is also a need to hear from those involved in the private sector or in private-public partnerships; such as people who run railroads, trucking and commercial bus transportation companies. He also suggested that a broad search for speakers should include advocacy groups and developers, particularly around the convention center where growth is very strong. Advisory Council interests might continue to include the ports and the airport as was the case with speakers invited in 2013.

D. Montgomery explained his view that the presentations should be related to issues that are connected to the certification process and the work before the MPO so as to inform members' understanding as advisory comments are developed.

M. Wellons expressed interest in the toll lane realignment that will follow conversion to remote-sensor tolling. M. Murray would like to see a follow-up with ongoing issues that arise in the delivery of contractual service with the MBTA.

S. Olanoff felt the Advisory Council should send letters and conduct follow-up to the communities primarily through town managers and Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) representatives. The communication should make evident the benefits to municipalities of being on the Council.

M. Gowing stressed the need to let people know that local and regional projects can be highlighted through cooperative presence at the Council. J. McQueen suggested that holding a panel discussion that would bring in a broader set of speakers – from private business and from other areas of transportation, like the transit agencies – would be interesting.

F. Osman felt taking a survey of community interests in the Advisory Council would shed light on what might encourage people to attend more meetings.

D. Montgomery recommended that discussion continue on this issue. He also stated that he had discussed with the MPO Chair how the Council might get more input from MPO/MassDOT to better help the Council understand the issues of greatest concern throughout the comment process.

6. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – *Anne McGahan, LRTP Project Manager, MPO Staff,* Overview and Schedule for the Next Two Years

The current LRTP, Paths to a Sustainable Region*,* was adopted in 2011 by the MPO. The LRTP outlines current strategies to address transportation planning needs through 2035. This financially constrained document reflects the MPO's visions and goals and is required to be updated every 4 years. A new LRTP is required in 2015.

The LRTP includes all projects that either add capacity to the system or cost more than $10 million. Examples of capacity expansion include adding a new travel lane or new transit service. Capacity-adding projects must be in the LRTP before they can be included or programmed for construction in any TIP. The LRTP also includes programs that move the region toward realizing the MPO's visions and goals. This allows smaller projects that are not specifically named in the LRTP to be programmed in the TIP. They are nonetheless considered part of the LRTP because they help to implement programs included in the LRTP. Programs of this nature include, for example, mobility and state of good repair and bicycle and pedestrian projects under $10 million.

The LRTP is the guiding long range planning document for the MPO. The new forecast year is 2040. The MPO recently voted on a work program for the new LRTP. The work scope has three major parts, needs assessment, development of performance measures and document preparation. The Needs Assessment for the region gathers, organizes and analyzes information about the state of the region's transportation system. This involves updating the needs assessment from the most recent LRTP and includes collecting current data on the transportation system and folding it into tables and databases in order to incorporate changes that have occurred since the last needs assessment was conducted. The original needs assessment was a static printed document outlining the region's needs and framing those needs by corridors. The new LRTP will be web-based and interactive. This will allow users to access data for their own purposes. The update of the needs assessment is scheduled to be completed by May of 2014. This would be a good time for the Advisory Council LRTP Committee to look at the data being developed.

The second part of the LRTP is the development of performance measures and performance based planning. Currently, the MPO is working on the development of performance measures based on stated MPO's visions and goals. The performance measures will be used to help the MPO to analyze various strategies for choosing projects and programs to be recommended for the LRTP.

Staff has presented the MPO with two memoranda on the development of performance measures. The first was on baseline information and served as an introduction to performance based planning; the second was on the next steps in the development of the measures.

The third component of the LRTP is the development of the applicable documents. Staff will develop and analyze alternative land use and transportation scenarios. Staff will work with MassDOT to develop a projection of future revenues through 2040 available for funding the projects and programs set forth in the document, ensuring that the document is financially constrained (fits within reasonable budgetary expectations).

Document preparation includes a review and update of the universe of projects list using information from public outreach and the needs assessment. This component also involves the development of a set of land-use and transportation networks. The MAPC is developing 2040 land use projections to establish alternative land use scenarios which will also be taken into account by MPO staff. Alternative transportation networks will be developed using needs assessment data and the universe of projects. Staff will model and evaluate the scenarios on how likely they are to meet performance goals to advance the MPO's policies and visions.

Different scenario themes can be developed to advance particular benefits. Themes might include addressing climate change, increasing mobility, or system preservation or a state of good repair alternative.

Once the various scenarios are modeled, staff will perform a transportation equity analysis and a greenhouse gas analysis on each. From these analyses, the MPO will choose a preferred land use alternative to be used for all remaining analyses in the LRTP. All information will be circulated for public review before the MPO chooses its recommended list of projects and programs to be included in the LRTP.

After the preferred land use scenario and a recommended list of projects have been chosen, staff will conduct EJ analysis, air quality conformity analysis and a final greenhouse gas emissions analysis on the draft recommended LRTP and prepare the draft document for circulation. Upon MPO approval to circulate the draft document, there will be a 30-day public comment period. After the MPO reviews any comments received during this public comment period, the MPO will adopt the final plan which will in turn be submitted to the federal government.

The MPO is scheduled to approve the draft document in June 2015 with a final plan endorsed and delivered to the federal government in September 2015.

Discussion:

In answer to a question by C. Porter, A. McGahan stated that the testing of land use and transportation scenarios may consider alternative revenue projections mentioned in the UPWP. A tool to help in the comparative analysis of scenarios is being discussed.

Several members posed questions on the role of the Advisory Council on the decision making process of the MPO. In response to a question from R. McGaw, A. McGahan noted that the Advisory Council has a vote on the MPO and that Advisory Council's LRTP Committee will channel their input to the Council and then on to the MPO. This involvement along with public outreach process will bring ideas and issues to the MPO.

M. Gowing was concerned about the timeliness of projects reaching the LRTP, such as the possible casino projects, and how they are incorporated into the LRTP while they are at the forefront of the planning process. A. McGahan stated that the MPO is responsible for prioritizing federal funding within the regional planning process.

In response to a question from L. Elisa, A. McGahan explained the role of the MPO. She stated that as a means of keeping planning activities current, the LRTP is updated every 4 years and that in this process, the supporting documents also receive public review. In the interim, the plan can be amended to become aligned with significant changes. The Advisory Council's LRTP Committee will engage in ongoing discussions of the projects and programs that are advanced through the LRTP project selection process. D. Montgomery added that the Advisory Council Chair brings to the MPO the breadth of knowledge based on what transpires in the Advisory Council meetings and those of its committees.

D. Montgomery asked about the timelines of upcoming documents to support the LRTP. A. McGahan indicated that a memorandum on performance measures will be ready in February, 2014.

D. Montgomery explained two take-away points that relate to the role of the Advisory Council in the MPO planning process:

- The Advisory Council has questions about what our role is (we need reinvigorated committee process to do this)
- The Advisory Council needs to have committees that are truly proactive in reviewing programs, plans and policies of the MPO

The current members of the LRTP Committee were announced: S. Larrabee, C. Anzuoni, J. McQueen, M. Wellons, M. Gowing and D. Montgomery.

7. Transportation Demand Model and Support the LRTP – *Scott Peterson, Director of Technical Services, MPO Staff,* An overview of Transportation Demand Model and Tools to Support the LRTP

In support of the LRTP, MPO staff uses the so-called "Regional Travel Demand Model," developed when the MPO was created to measure transportation projects. Data inputs consist of demographic and land-use information, data on travel times and congested speeds. The recently purchased INRIX data set is derived from GPS satellite data. Information derived from this data

set includes a year's worth of detailed information on when people travel and their travel speeds. The data set spans eastern Massachusetts.

Transportation assumptions of the model include roadways and their capacities, travel speeds, transit service availability, and bike and pedestrian facilities in use. This multi-modal data set is processed by the model and it provides information on the usage that different travel modes experience.

The land-use model is a new tool used to review interaction with the travel demand model. If more access is provided to an area, more development can occur; the development has a feedback to the travel model in terms of increased use of the transportation system.

When all data sets are brought into the model set, there are many outputs that define the influence on a given area. Congestion reduction, air-quality and greenhouse gas analysis are specific topics of interest in evaluating the LRTP.

The regional model covers an area that is larger than the MPO region because of the broad reach of the transportation system. The modeled area goes to the New Hampshire border, out beyond I-495 and down to Plymouth/Plainville. Future expansion may include covering the commuter rail to Worcester and Fitchburg.

Types of uses of the travel demand model include EJ analysis, support for other models, air quality analysis, transit ridership and revenue forecasts, mode shift analysis, site impact analysis, corridor studies, freight analysis and the LRTP.

The mode choice model is used to identify the effect of time and cost on people when a change is made to the transportation system.

The household travel survey was conducted recently and has increased understanding of system users travel patterns. New traffic counts and transit counts are ongoing. In conducting the household survey, data was also acquired on pedestrian and bicycle and new transit networks.

Computer software, TransCAD, has been updated to benefit the planning and modeling process. Mapping is a major improvement to display an easier understanding of the data. The software allows for more fare analysis capability. This software is much more efficient allowing for testing more scenarios with faster turnaround time.

Air Quality modeling tools include MOVES (Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator) the EPA's new modeling tool for estimating emission from roadway vehicles is another modeling tool used in compiling and analyzing data for the LRTP.

A land use model allows staff to model the interaction between real estate markets and the transportation system and examine how households and jobs re-allocate based on changes to land use policies or the transportation system. Staff may use this for an analysis of gentrification

and its impact on the displacement of people over time. Davis Square might be a test case to check the sensitivity of this tool.

The economic impact assessment tool will allow staff to quantify the economic benefits of changes in travel time and access for different transportation options. Measuring the benefits of providing South Coast Rail access to the system could be measured. A cost-benefit type economic impact analysis can be made using this tool.

Discussion:

S. Peterson responded to questions from several members regarding model runs for impromptu planning scenarios. In response to D. Montgomery's question on unforeseen model runs, S. Peterson said there is a potential for doing this as long as the underlying assumptions can be developed. J. McQueen questioned what impacts modeling applications might have on local project planning activities. S. Peterson indicated that this was used in the planning of the Callahan Tunnel traffic diversion plan, and might be used to test scenarios to projects like the Rehab of the Longfellow Bridge planning process. J. McQueen stated that the testing scenarios will allow for making better decisions. R. McGaw also asked about the ability of non-plan related activities, such as the availability of these tools to casino planners in making use of the travel demand model for impact assessment purposes. S. Peterson reiterated that underlying assumptions would need to be made and that the appropriate state agency would have to contract for the service, or it would need to be programmed in the UPWP.

L. Elisa asked who develops the scenarios and how the level of analysis is determined. He also asked what is being done to review the future of land-use planning and how does it interface with design or programming for subsequent processes. Specifically, the Longwood Medical Area planning scenarios and the impact on local streets was discussed. S. Peterson stated that the travel demand model looks at times and costs. One issue is of scale in measuring the flow of people from one area to another. In conducting an EJ analysis, the question is whether the area is minority or low-income in terms of the origin or destination, and whether changes in times and costs to travel between them is affected.

The access to different types of services is also reviewed. Questions of access to schools, health care and employment are posed in the analysis. A scenario is advanced that measures the collective benefits or burdens on a given analysis area. There can be a comparison of scenarios, but it does not show effects at local levels. This is not a solution for any type of EJ analysis but does give a performance measure from a regional flow standpoint. When dealing with air-quality analysis the question is whether emissions change for better or worse when adopting a policy.

In response to a question from F. DeMasi on the supply chain and its impact on economic development, S. Peterson said that supply chains feed in from a much larger base than the MPO. The MPO modeling area does not cover much of the distribution in the MPO. Truck movements do get into the model, but not freight by rail. Including sea and rail as part of the modeling activity would require a larger geographic region and would be a project that might best be visited by the appropriate state agencies.

8. Announcements:

F. DeMasi announced that the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative will have a public meeting at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in Springfield, Jan 23, 2014, at 7:00 PM. Topics will include the Boston Inland Route, and the Boston-Montreal Corridors.

9. Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded at 4:45 PM. The motion passed, unanimously.

Attendance:

Agencies (* MPO & other non-voting)	Representative
MAGIC*	Franny Osman
EOHHS	Theodora Fisher

Agencies (Voting)

Joint Legislative Transportation Committee	Meagan Hamil
MassRides	Catherine Paquette
Seaport Advisory Council	Louis Elisa

Municipalities (Voting)
*MPO Member

Acton	Mike Gowing
Belmont	Robert McGaw
Boston*	Tom Kadzis
Cambridge	Cleo Stoughton
Needham	David Montgomery
Wellesley	Frank DeMasi
Westwood	Steve Olanoff

Citizen Groups

AACT	Mary Ann Murray
Association for Public Transportation	Barry M Steinberg
MassBike	Chris Porter
Riverside Neighborhood Association	Marilyn Wellons
WalkBoston	John McQueen

Guests
Ed Lowney, Malden resident

MPO Staff
Pam Wolfe, Manager, Certification Activities

David Fargen	Matt Archer
Anne McGahan	Scott Peterson