



Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

May 9, 2018, Meeting Minutes

3:00 PM–4:30 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4,
10 Park Plaza, Boston

Tegin Teich, Chair, representing the City of Cambridge

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Chair Teich called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 8.)

2. Chair's Report—*T. Teich, City of Cambridge*

T. Teich announced that Lourenço Dantas will be leaving Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) in May for the private sector. Ali Kleyman will assume responsibility as manager of the Certification Document Activities group. A. Kleyman managed the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) prior to undertaking this new position. T. Teich also announced that David Fargen will be retiring from CTPS in July.

The last MPO meeting covered a work scope from CTPS implementing interim shuttle service to Buzzards Bay using the Middleborough Line in conjunction with the advancement of planning and permitting for the South Coast Rail project.

CTPS also proposed a short-term bus service study relating to the Allston/I-90 project. There are various planning projects underway at this location.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2018, meeting ([posted](#)) was made and seconded. The minutes were approved with corrections noted. Marilyn Wellons abstained.

4. 3C Documents Comment Letters—*Chris Porter, 3C Documents Committee Chair, MassBike*

C. Porter distributed the comment letters on the 3C Documents to the MPO. Regarding the TIP, the Advisory Council supports the direction to fund smaller projects as opposed to major investments. The letter also raised the question of the equity associated with how the universe of projects is developed. For example, a project in less wealthy communities might

not get advanced because they lack the funds for design engineering. The Advisory Council supports spending a consistent dollar amount for the Community Transportation program each planning period to provide stability and predictability of this program. The Council also supports the MPO's Public Participation Plan and retaining its 30-day public comment period for the major 3C documents—the TIP, UPWP, and the LRTP. The Advisory Council supports allowing sufficient time for comments to be submitted from citizens' groups that meet once a month or less. The comment letter also points out several TIP projects that require clarification on the presence of multi-modal accommodations.

Discussion

Ed Chisholm emphasized the importance of the scheduling of projects and the impact this has on smaller towns.

Advisory Council members emphasized the importance of a 30-day comment period for the TIP, UPWP, and LRTP.

A motion to accept the TIP Comment letter was made and seconded. The motion passed.

Regarding the UPWP, C. Porter explained that much of the initial discussion of the proposed project list was covered in the draft version of the document and that the MPO staff's consideration of feedback provided by the Advisory Council was appreciated.

The Advisory Council encourages the MPO to continue to better track the outcomes and follow-up actions taken as a result of UPWP studies so that the MPO can continue to identify projects with the greatest impacts.

John McQueen asked if there is a formal session where previous UPWP studies are reviewed to determine if the study findings are implemented. T. Teich said that Sandy Johnston, CTPS, is developing a database to track progress made as a result of study recommendations.

A motion to accept the UPWP Comment letter was made and seconded. The motion passed.

5. MBTA Systemwide Survey Results—*Katie Pincus, Transit Service Planning Manager, CTPS*

The most recent systemwide transit system passenger survey was conducted from 2015–17 as required by Federal Transit Administration for large transit providers such as the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA). The results of the survey are used for Title VI analyses and other planning purposes.

The process began with an online instrument and outreach campaign in the fall of 2015. Survey announcements included an online advertisement on the MBTA website and signs mounted in MBTA buses and stations. CTPS distributed surveys for one year beginning

spring 2016. The survey allowed recipients to complete the form or complete it online. Both versions were available in seven languages.

Staff collected approximately 35,000 responses, half of which were filled out online. The responses represented approximately 56,000 unlinked trips.

The survey collected demographic information; trip characteristics including origin and destinations; and information on fare collection with questions about the individual trip segments.

After data cleaning and analysis were completed, CTPS developed an interactive application to present the tabulated results of the survey. K. Pincus introduced the application featuring bus, commuter rail and ferry service, and rail rapid transit and silver line. The interactive application can be accessed at www.ctps.org/apps/mbtasurvey2018/.

Discussion

K. Pincus stated that people with disabilities and elderly riders were contacted through various community organizations in response to a question from Franny Osman.

Lenard Diggins appreciated the availability of the data, which has been anticipated by the Rider Oversight Committee.

K. Pincus stated that system summaries were weighted based on response rate by volume at stations in response to a question from C. Porter.

David Montgomery asked if people responded more than once. K. Pincus explained that the data cleaning methods checked for duplicate responses.

K. Pincus explained some of the limitations of making comparisons with the previous survey. In response to a question from Matt Moran about overall takeaways from the survey, K. Pincus referred to the key findings listed in the Executive Summary of the Report (http://www.ctps.org/apps/mbtasurvey2018/2015_2017_Passenger_Survey_Final_Report.pdf).

F. Osman asked if there was information explaining Commuter Rail trips from North Station to South Station in considering the passenger demand. K. Pincus explained that trips covered were unlinked and that sample sizes were not large enough to consider highly individual system segments such as the North/South Rail Link or other station-to-station activity.

In response to a question from Barry Steinberg, K. Pincus explained that the results of the survey are used for Title VI analyses when studying service or fare changes. The equity analysis conducted determines if changes have a disparate impact or disproportionate burdens on minority or low-income populations. Without this data, the analysis would have to

fall back on general census data, which will not match the specific bus, rail, and rail transit services.

6. Transportation Equity: Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden Policy—Betsy Harvey, Transportation Equity Program Manager, CTPS

B. Harvey presented the upcoming meeting schedule for public meetings and workshops by the MPO for outreach relating to projects in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (Destination 2040) regarding the transportation equity policy, Disparate Impacts/Disproportionate Benefits (DI/DB).

Disparate impacts are the high and adverse effects of transportation investments on minority and low-income populations. The main goal of the outreach is to develop a working group to consider DI/DB. The group will attempt to develop policy analysis techniques and metrics that will be used in measuring the presence of negative effects of identified transportation investments.

The goal of the working group will be to develop a policy recommendation for MPO consideration and to recommend to the MPO the measures that will best test DI/DB to the minority and low-income communities.

All meetings are open to the public with time available for public comment. Working group meetings will be held on the following dates:

- May 21, 2018, 5:30–7:30 PM
- June 5, 2018, 5:30–7:30 PM
- July 17, 2018, 5:30–7:30 PM

A public workshop also will be held on June 26, 2018, 5:30–7:30 PM. This is designed for the general public. This workshop will discuss DI/DB in detail and why it is important to the MPO. Small group settings will help to identify challenges facing some of the minority and low-income groups in the region.

The stakeholders in the working group include T. Teich and three other MPO members. Eight other entities from across the region also will be represented. Further information on the workshops is available at www.bostonmpo.org/disparate-impact.

Discussion

In response to a member's question, B. Harvey identified the locations of the four outreach meetings. The working group meetings will be at Northeastern Crossing conference facility on Tremont Street in Roxbury. The public workshop meeting will be held at the Bruce C. Bolling Building in Dudley Square, Roxbury.

F. Osman asked if all of the other MPOs in the commonwealth are undertaking the same transportation equity initiative. B. Harvey stated that the DI/DB process is not being undertaken by other MPOs in Massachusetts. Some of the larger MPOs in the country are beginning to become involved in the process.

7. Members Present: Cambridge-Watertown Bus Priority Pilot—*Tegin Teich, Chair, Transportation Planner, City of Cambridge*

T. Teich introduced the Bus Priority Pilot as a collaborative undertaking between the municipalities of Cambridge and Watertown, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), MBTA, and grantors. Two other pilot projects are being undertaken in Arlington and Everett. These projects are good examples of various governmental entities working together.

The project is within the study area for the DCR Mt. Auburn Corridor Study, which looked at the transit service and other mobility needs in the Mt. Auburn Street and Fresh Pond Parkway areas. Community input included considerable conversation on safety and transit operations. There is a significant amount of traffic on Mt. Auburn Street and Fresh Pond Parkway and much of the discussion focused on trying to encourage people out of their cars and into transit (mode shift). This public process continued for two years, after which DCR advanced a Short-Term Implementation Plan. The plan includes some traffic channelization and lane modifications at the Mt. Auburn Street and Fresh Pond Parkway intersection. These planned modifications are critical to the success of the Bus Priority Pilot.

Other longer-term projects in the corridor that will follow the pilot include the reconstruction and Complete Streets projects of Belmont Street by Cambridge and Mt. Auburn Street by Watertown. The Watertown project is funded in the TIP for 2022. The Bus Priority Pilot will provide input into these two reconstruction projects.

Bus routes 71 and 73 together carry an estimated 12,000 weekday passenger trips. This compares to an estimated 19,000 daily vehicle trips. In addition, there are business and hospital shuttles. T. Teich said that even though buses take only a small percentage of vehicle roadway space, they support the trips of more than half of the people traveling the corridor in the morning peak hours. Getting more people on those buses is the most efficient way to meet increasing mobility needs.

Several goals of the Bus Priority Pilot Study are to improve transit movement and safety for all vehicular traffic in the corridor, and to incorporate new design concepts that will inform the longer-term reconstruction projects.

The term Pilot is used to reflect the minimal or no construction aspects of this project. Rather, paint and signal changes, signs, education, and enforcement will all fit into the mix. The

project will have no specific time frame; it is intended to continue while it is being tested and evaluated.

Some of the features of the project include an all-day shared bus/bike only lane for eastbound (toward Harvard) and signal priority; bus queue jump lanes at Walnut and School Streets in Watertown; and bike lanes in Cambridge westbound (toward Watertown/Belmont).

The DCR project will tighten the geometry of the Mt. Auburn Street/Fresh Pond Parkway intersection. Intersection throughput for Mt. Auburn Street will increase as the intersection clearance times will be reduced with better traffic channelization techniques. This increase in throughput is what allows for the reallocation of a lane to bus travel without significant negative impacts on general vehicular traffic.

Expected time savings based on model runs predict minutes of travel time savings for the eastbound buses and general vehicle time savings due to improved vehicle throughput at the intersections. Rather than moving at a high rate of speed, improving the flow of buses through the area, by taking them out of congested travel lanes, means improving the reliability of the service. Added safety features of the slightly narrower lanes and single through lanes will improve safety for everyone. Pedestrian crash survival statistics show that nine out of 10 pedestrians will survive a 20 MPH crash. The rate degrades to five out of 10 surviving a 30 MPH pedestrian crash down to about only one out of 10 pedestrians surviving a 40 MPH crash with a vehicle. T. Teich emphasized that the aim is not to create a high speed corridor, rather improve the overall flow on the corridor and prioritize buses.

The part of the public process that has stimulated success in this study has been listening to people's concerns as non-transit takers and being clear about the benefits for everyone including cyclists, pedestrians, and other vehicle drivers. The outreach process is ongoing with an expected rollout of the plan in the fall of this year.

Discussion

In response to a question from Paul Nelson on traffic enforcement on the bus lane, T. Teich stated that some of the grant for this project allows for added overtime funding (paid detail) for traffic enforcement by the police.

T. Teich stated that shuttles are allowed in the bus lanes in response to a question from Marilyn Wellons. M. Wellons also asked if noise pollution issues will be raised as a result of this study. T. Teich indicated that the electric trackless trolleys operate on the corridor.

T. Teich stated that video monitoring of the traffic impacts of the study are not planned in response to a question from J. McQueen.

P. Nelson asked about the dimensions and functionality of the shared bus-bike lane. T. Teich stated that the facility will conform to the guidelines adopted by the National Association of

City Transportation Officials (NACTO). Cyclists will have a priority in the lane if they are in front of the bus. MBTA will train the bus drivers in appropriate operating procedures in this new lane. T. Teich also indicated that standard pavement marking and striping plans will be used to implement the lane.

8. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

F. Osman announced that the ribbon cutting for the Bruce Freeman Rail-Trail will take place on Friday, May 11, 2018, in Acton at Nara Park. This lengthens the trail by 12 miles.

J. McQueen noted that on May 16, 2018, the Rappaport Institute at the Kennedy School will host a meeting on climate adaptation and transportation infrastructure.

Matt Moran noted that the MBTA and the City of Boston are working on bus improvements in South Boston including bus bump-outs for improved accessibility and potential bus lanes on parts of Broadway and L Street. A public meeting will be held on May 16, 2018, at 6:30 PM at the Tynan School in South Boston.

In support of Lenard Diggins' comments on public participation by the Advisory Council, T. Teich encouraged members to contact the MPO staff person for the Advisory Council for possible last-minute sharing with other Advisory Council members regarding timelines on comment periods for potential transportation related projects. As a group, the Advisory Council comments on MPO considerations.

Lourenço Dantas announced upcoming public outreach activities including an Open House for commenting on the TIP. Office Hours will be the second Monday of every month. The UPWP will be released on Monday with outreach activities scheduled. The TIP is scheduled to be endorsed at the May 24, 2018, MPO meeting.

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
Acton	Franny Osman
Brookline	Todd Kirrane
Cambridge	Tegin Teich
Millis	Ed Chisholm
Needham	David Montgomery; Rhain Hoyland

Citizen Advocacy Groups	Attendees
Association for Public Transportation	Barry M Steinberg
Boston Society of Architects	Schuyler Larrabee
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	Paul Moyer
CrosstownConnect	Scott Zadakis
MassBike	Chris Porter
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
Medical Academic and Scientific Comm Assoc	Paul Nelson
Riverside Neighborhood Association	Marilyn Wellons
WalkBoston	John McQueen

Agencies	Attendees
MassRides	Diane Hanson

Agencies (Non-Voting)	Attendees
Boston Planning and Development Agency	Matt Moran
Three Rivers Interlocal Council	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Dee Whittlesey	Boston Resident
Ed Lowney	Malden Resident

**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning
Staff**

David Fargen

Betsy Harvey

Matt Archer

Katie Pincus
