

Public Comments on Draft Amendment 4 to the FFYs 2007-2010 TIP (8/6/09)

Date	Affiliation/Name	Comment	MPO Action
7/27/2009	Robert T. Markel, Town Manager, Town of Ipswich	Seeks the obligation of FHWA funds for the Ipswich North Green Improvement Transportation Enhancement Project. Funding for the design of the project is included in the FFY 2009 element of the 2007-2010 TIP and construction funds are included in the 2011 element of the Draft 2010-2013 TIP. FHWA responded to Ipswich's funding obligation request by stating that they are looking for EOT to make a determination as to the sufficiency of the Town's consultant selection process. If the FHWA obligation is not received by the end of September, the Town will have to forfeit the awarded funds. Please assist in expediting approval of the Town's selection process. Also attached responses to three questions and comments raised by FHWA.	
8/4/2009	Paul F. Matthews, Executive Director & Adam C. Ploetz, Manager of Sustainable Development Programs (495/Metrowest Partnership)	Applaud they Boston MPO for allocating funds to the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) through the Section 5307 State Match program for regional transit agencies. These funds will allow the MWRTA to continue operation and to plan for future system expansion.	
8/4/2009	Kurt Marden, PE	Expresses concern for the lack of transit expansion projects in the 2007-2010 TIP. Believes that past highway improvements have had little impact on reducing chronic traffic in the Boston MPO's region. Advises the MPO against funding more rail trails and suggests that more studies be done on the feasibility of converting existing rail lines to light rail. Recommends that the MPO reallocate TIP funds to support a long term transportation plan that supports interconnected transit lines along existing rail Right-of-Way (ROW) within the region to reduce dependency on automobiles, congestion, and pollution. Believes that transit projects evaluated in relation to the network will better reflect their utilization, cost effectiveness, and air quality and land use benefits in the TIP evaluations.	



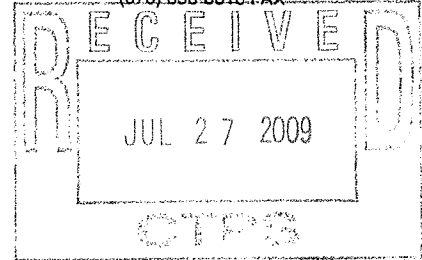
TOWN OF IPSWICH

IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS 01938

TOWN HALL
25 GREEN STREET

TOWN MANAGER

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July 22, 2009

Guy Rezendes, P.E.
Utilities-Railroad Engineer
Mass Highway
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza -- Room 6340
Boston, MA 02116

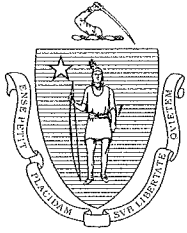
**Re: Obligation of FHWA Funds for the Ipswich North Green Improvement
Transportation Enhancement Project (Project number 604945)**

Dear Mr. Rezendes:

I am writing to ask your assistance in securing the obligation of FHWA funds for the Ipswich North Green Improvement Transportation Enhancement Project.

As you know, funding for the project design is included in the FFY09 element of the 2009-2012 TIP, and funding for the project construction is included in the 2011 element of the draft 2010-2013 TIP, which the TPPC is slated to approve at their meeting tomorrow. Last October the Town formally asked the District IV Office to enter into a reimbursable force agreement with the Town to allow the project design to proceed. In April of this year a funding obligation request was sent to FHWA. In June the Town was asked to respond to comments from FHWA on several issues, including procurement. Our response was sent to you and subsequently forwarded to FHWA staff (see attachment).

Based on the comments from FHWA staff, it appears that they are looking for EOT to make a determination as to the sufficiency of the Town's consultant selection process before they are able to obligate FHWA funds. As detailed in the attached email comments, the Town believes that the process by which its design engineer was submitted was sufficient, and furthermore, given the fact that the design engineer has already advanced the design to near completion, we believe that they are uniquely positioned to bring that design to completion. However, if EOT determines that some additional actions are required by the Town relative to this or any other matter, we need to know that now rather than later, so that we can respond expeditiously.



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, MA 02133-1054

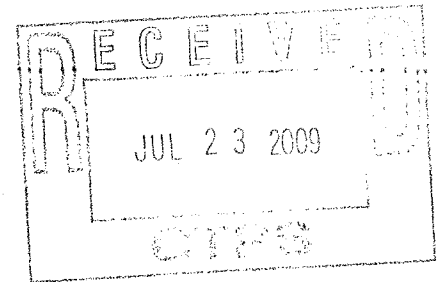
JENNIFER E. BENSON
REPRESENTATIVE
37TH MIDDLESEX DISTRICT

Committees:
Education
Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
Personnel and Administration

ROOM 130, STATE HOUSE
TEL: (617) 722-2130

July 23, 2009

David M. Mohler, Chair
Transportation, Planning & Programming Committee, Boston MPO
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116



Dear Committee Members:

As we could not attend your meeting today, we are writing in strong support of including the Assabet River Rail Trail (ARRT) and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) in the early years of the Regional Transportation Plan, Journey to 2030. These rail trails will repurpose old infrastructure creating safe, green alternatives for commuters and increasing accessibility, allowing more residents to enjoy the outdoors. The ARRT and BFRT protect the environment, promote healthy living, and enhance the quality of life for residents along the trails.

The ARRT is a 12-mile, multi use path that runs through Acton, Maynard, Stow, Hudson and Marlborough, and connects town centers, commercial areas and schools along the way. There is wide spread community support for the ARRT which was first endorsed by the MPO and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council in 1997. The BFRT has been met with similar support, and when completed will connect Chelmsford, Westford, Acton, Carlisle, Concord, Sudbury and Framingham. Construction has been completed on parts of each of these trails, however, more funding is needed to finish the projects and extend the positive benefits these trails can offer.

For the positive environmental and social impacts these trails can offer, we highly recommend that the Committee give the Assabet River Rail Trail and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail high priority in the Regional Transportation Plan.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Benson
State Representative
37th Middlesex

Corey Atkins
State Representative
Fourteenth Middlesex

Kate Hogan
State Representative
Third Middlesex

Letter to Guy Rezendes
Ipswich North Green Improvement Project
July 21, 2009
Page 2

Because this project design is funded in the federal fiscal year 09, it is imperative that the FHWA obligation be received prior to the end of September, or else the Town will forfeit these awarded funds. We are concerned that with just ten weeks left in the fiscal year, we are running out of time. Thus, we urgently request whatever assistance you can give us to expedite the approval of this matter.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this letter. Please contact Glenn Gibbs, the Town's Planning Director and manager of this project, with any questions or information.

Sincerely,



Robert T. Markel, Town Manager

cc: Richard Marquis, FHWA
Ed Silva, FHWA
Michael Chong, FHWA
Tomasz Janikula, FHWA
Frank Suszynski, MassHighway District 4
Hayes Morrison, Boston Region MPO
David Mohler, EOT
Mark Guenard, EOT
Guy Bresnahan, EOT
Glenn Gibbs, Town of Ipswich

Attachment

Gibbs, Glenn

From: Gibbs, Glenn
Sent: Monday, July 06, 2009 2:10 PM
To: 'Rezendes, Guy (MHD)'
Subject: RE: Ipswich - North Green
Attachments: Ipswich604945_Proponent-2-6-08.xls; KMBT25020090706134546.pdf

Guy,

Provided below are responses to the three questions/comments raised by FHWA (responses are in *italics*):

1. The scope of the North Main Street and the Meetinghouse Green Transportation Improvement Project is not clear from the submission. The submission does include the information on the Scope of Services of the design consultant, which includes updating the final design plans titled "Transportation Improvement Project North Main Street and Meetinghouse Green", previously prepared by VHB and dated June 5, 2003, but does not include information on the scope and purpose of the actual project. This additional information would allow for the eligibility determination for the type of federal-aid funding requested for the project.

The purposes of the North Green Transportation Enhancement Project are to enhance improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety and access, preserve the historic and scenic character of the North Green, and to improve the streetscape of North Main Street and Meetinghouse Green (North Green).

To achieve these objectives, the North Green Project will undertake the following improvements:

- *Provide new and reconstructed 'enhanced design' sidewalks (i.e., 12" granite paver strip) throughout the project area*
- *Install granite curb around greens to protect from erosion and vehicular encroachment*
- *Narrow North Main Street to remove excessive pavement and reduce length of pedestrian crossing*
- *Eliminate cut-through road Meetinghouse Green and replace with pedestrian path*
- *Install historic lighting*
- *Add appropriate landscaping to the Meetinghouse Green*
- *Install bicycle facilities and pedestrian-oriented street furniture*
- *Provide interpretative signing describing the historic significance of the area*

For more information about the nature of the project, see the attached proponent provided information form.

2. Please provide information documenting the review and approval of the project as an Enhancement Project by the EOT.

The Statewide Enhancement Steering Committee considered the North Green Project at its September 27, 2006 and November 15, 2006 meetings, and approved the North Green Enhancement Project in January of 2007. I have attached a copy of a letter from then Secretary Bernard Cohen project which confirms this approval.

3. I am assuming that the City of Ipswich has already procured the services of VHB Inc., to design the subject project. If this is the case, the EOT needs to make a determination that the City of Ipswich's consultant procurement procedures conform reasonably closely to the federal consultant procurement regulations. If the review shows that the City of Ipswich's consultant selection procedures reasonably conforms with the MHD's qualification based consultant selection process, it can be then determined that the City of Ipswich's process also reasonably complies with the federal regulations.

The Town of Ipswich is poised to enter into an agreement with VHB Inc. to complete the design of the North Green Improvement Project. VHB has a long history of association with the project. In 1996, the Town of Ipswich, acting through the Ipswich Partnership, which had entered into a sub-recipient agreement with the Town authorizing it to expend CDBG funds on the Town's behalf, hired VHB, Inc. to develop the design of streetscape improvements in downtown Ipswich. Those improvements included the lower half of North Main Street, which is the location of the current North Green project. The selection of VHB was done pursuant to a competitive selection process that followed town/state procedures for determining the most advantageous consultant for the job. The following year, in 1997, the Ipswich Partnership hired VHB Inc. again to develop a preliminary design plan for streetscape improvements to the North Main/North Green area, an extension to the streetscape improvements designed by VHB for the lower half of North Main. In 2001 the Town, using funds authorized by Town Meeting, hired VHB to develop a final design plan for the streetscape improvements, based on VHB's qualifications and previous design involvement with the project. During the enhancement application process, the Town learned that the design process it had undertaken would not satisfy the requirements of the enhancement program. Thus, VHB's 'final design' would need to be subjected to an additional public review process (on top of the eight public hearings already held by the Town on the project) and be subject to the MHD's design approval process. As the firm that has already undertaken the project design, continuing VHB's services to complete this final stage of the design process is logical, cost-effective, efficient and prudent.

I hope that the above responses are satisfactory to address FHWA's questions. Please let me know if they or you require any further information.

I look forward to hearing from you soon, as time as of the essence with this project if we are to complete the design in time to undertake the construction of the project in FY10, the year that it is slated to be funded in the TIP.

Glenn

Glenn C. Gibbs, Director
Department of Planning & Development
Town of Ipswich
25 Green Street
Ipswich, MA 01938
tel 978 356-6607
fax 978 356-6682
glenn@town.ipswich.ma.us

From: Rezendes, Guy (MHD) [mailto:Guy.Rezendes@state.ma.us]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2009 9:51 AM
To: Gibbs, Glenn
Subject: FW: Ipswich - North Green

Hi Glenn:

See email below from FHWA.

They have a few question that need to be answered before they obligate the funds.

Please provide the response to questions 1 and 2.

Regarding question 3, we'll need the information as to how the town selected VHB as the consultant. (RFP, etc.)

Thanks.

GUY REZENDES, P.E.
UTILITIES-RAILROAD ENGINEER
MASSHIGHWAY
10 PARK PLAZA - ROOM 6340
BOSTON, MA 02116
PHONE: (617) 973-7512
FAX: (617) 973-7554

From: Michael.A.Chong@dot.gov [mailto:Michael.A.Chong@dot.gov]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2009 9:27 AM
To: Rezendes, Guy (MHD)
Cc: Bresnahan, Guy (EOT); Guenard, Mark (EOT)
Subject: FW: Ipswich - North Green

Guy,

Please see attached FHWA comments for the Ipswich enhancement project. If there are any comments, please let me know.

Thanks

From: Janikula, Tomasz (FHWA)
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2009 10:59 AM
To: Chong, Michael.A (FHWA)
Cc: McVann, John (FHWA); Grzegorzewski, Joshua (FHWA)
Subject: RE: Ipswich - North Green

Michael,

Below are some comments that I have on the submission that I received on June 2, 2009. I will transmit those comments via formal correspondence shortly.

2. The scope of the North Main Street and the Meetinghouse Green Transportation Improvement Project is not clear from the submission. The submission does include the information on the Scope of Services of the design consultant, which includes updating the final design plans titled "Transportation Improvement Project North Main Street and Meetinghouse Green", previously prepared by VHB and dated June 5, 2003, but does not include information on the scope and purpose of the actual project. This additional information would allow for the eligibility determination for the type of federal-aid funding requested for the project.

3. Please provide information documenting the review and approval of the project as an Enhancement Project by the EOT.
4. I am assuming that the City of Ipswich has already procured the services of VHB Inc., to design the subject project. If this is the case, the EOT needs to make a determination that the City of Ipswich's consultant procurement procedures conform reasonably closely to the federal consultant procurement regulations. If the review shows that the City of Ipswich's consultant selection procedures reasonably conforms with the MHD's qualification based consultant selection process, it can be then determined that the City of Ipswich's process also reasonably complies with the federal regulations.

Tomasz Janikula
FHWA Massachusetts Division
Area Engineer, District 4

From: Gallagher, Stephen (EOT) [mailto:Stephen.Gallagher@state.ma.us]
Sent: Monday, June 22, 2009 12:04 PM
To: Chong, Michael.A (FHWA)
Subject: FW: Ipswich - North Green

Do you need further info for obligation request pending in FMIS under project # 001S(973)? Please let me know if you have any questions.
Thanks

From: Rezendes, Guy (MHD) [mailto:Guy.Rezendes@state.ma.us]
Sent: Monday, June 22, 2009 11:44 AM
To: Guenard, Mark (EOT)
Cc: Bresnahan, Guy (EOT); Hayes Morrison; Gallagher, Stephen (EOT)
Subject: RE: Ipswich - North Green

I have forwarded the funding obligation request for FHWA funds on April 6, 2009.
Recently, May 27th, upon requesting the status of this obligation, Michael Chong of FHWA stated he wanted to see a copy of the agreement.
I sent over a copy that day.
I still have not received the obligation information.
Once I have the obligation, I will initiate the agreement execution process.
But without it, I can't do anything.

GUY REZENDES, P.E.
UTILITIES-RAILROAD ENGINEER
MASSHIGHWAY
10 PARK PLAZA - ROOM 6340
BOSTON, MA 02116
PHONE: (617) 973-7512
FAX: (617) 973-7554

From: Guenard, Mark (EOT)
Sent: Monday, June 22, 2009 10:44 AM
To: Rezendes, Guy (MHD)

Cc: Bresnahan, Guy (EOT); Hayes Morrison
Subject: FW: Ipswich - North Green

Guy,

Do you have the necessary materials to complete this design agreement? The funds have been programmed in the FFY2009 STIP and construction funds are identified in a future year.

Could you please complete this design agreement or provide information to report back to the Boston MPO on Thursday, June 25th.

From: Hayes Morrison [mailto:hayesm@ctps.org]
Sent: Monday, June 22, 2009 10:32 AM
To: 'Guenard, Mark (EOT)'
Subject: Ipswich - North Green

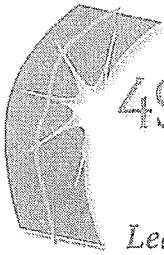
Mark,

Ipswich has an enhancement project in the FFY 2009 element of the TIP. The money in 2009 is for design and to date the money has not been obligated. I have contacted Ipswich about this and they have stated that they are ready to execute a design contract. They have contacted EOT (Guy Rezendes) and have not received an answer. At a TPPC meeting on June 11 Chairman Mohler asked me the status of the design funds and if I could get an answer for the committee. Do you know what the hold up is?

-hayes

Hayes Morrison | Transportation Improvement Program Manager
Direct: 617.973.7129 | Fax: 617.973.8855 | hayesm@bostonmpo.org

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization | Central Transportation Planning Staff
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150 | Boston, MA 02116 | www.bostonmpo.org



495/METROWEST

PARTNERSHIP

Leaders for Regional Prosperity

August 4, 2009

Mr. David J. Mohler
Chairman, Transportation Planning and Programming Committee
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

RE: Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Improvement Program, FFY 2007 - 2010
FFY 2009 Element Amendment #4

Dear Mr. Mohler:

On behalf of the 495/MetroWest Corridor Partnership, we would like to submit some comments regarding the proposed amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for FFY 2007 to FFY 2010.

The 495/MetroWest Partnership is a non-profit advocacy organization serving thirty-two communities, half a million residents, and an employment base of \$16.4 billion, by addressing regional needs through public/private collaboration, and by enhancing economic vitality and quality of life while sustaining natural resources. The Partnership is concerned about regional constraints and limitations, and conducts numerous initiatives on transportation, workforce housing, brownfields, workforce development, and water supply issues.

We applaud the Boston MPO for allocating funds to the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) through the Section 5307 State Match program for regional transit agencies. These funds will allow the MWRTA, a critical component of the region's transportation infrastructure, to continue operation and to plan for future system expansion.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Paul F. Matthews
Executive Director

Adam C. Ploetz, AICP
Manager of Sustainable Development Programs

cc: Secretary of Transportation James Aliosi Jr., Chairman, Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization
cc: Boston MPO Transportation Planning & Programming Committee
cc: 495/MetroWest Legislative Delegation

495/METROWEST PARTNERSHIP
200 FRIBERG PARKWAY, SUITE 1003, WESTBOROUGH, MA 01581
PHONE: 774-760-0495 FAX: 774-760-0017
WWW.495PARTNERSHIP.ORG

To: Boston MPO / CTPS
Re: Comments on 2007-2010 TIP

The Boston MPO 2007-TIP reflects a strong emphasis for highway projects while minimal attention has been given to expansion of transit within the greater Boston MPO region. It appears from the scoring table that many transit / rail projects have been rated low due to utilization or cost effectiveness yet proposals for highway lane widening and "improvements" are included in this TIP. Additionally, the TIP continues to include "Rail Trail" projects without any consideration to the true benefits that restoration of passenger transportation (light rail) along these routes, contributing to a non-road transportation network, would provide to a much broader user base. Perhaps this is the case since no rail restoration studies have been conducted prior to the MPO's trail conversion studies (a search of the MPO website with the keywords "rail" and "restoration" and excluding "arborway" and "colony") yielded only 12 hits in which none were rail restoration studies of abandoned rail lines.

It is clear that the highway "improvements" that have been made over the past two decades have done little to improve the chronic traffic on the MPO region's highways. Indeed, it appears that the funds available are actually being wasted on unnecessary paving projects as is evidenced by the resurfacing of 5 miles of interstate 495 between Littleton and Chelmsford when there were barely even any cracks over the vast majority of this stretch of road, let alone missing asphalt.

The continued spending of scarce state funds simply because they were "programmed" (highway) or allocated with insufficient "best use" studies (rail trails) will do little to improve transportation and, subsequently, Massachusetts' economic competitiveness while pandering to special interests and recreation enthusiasts.

The MPO should review the entire TIP and remove projects, such as rail trails and unnecessary resurfacing projects and reallocate the funds to support a long term transportation plan that supports interconnected transit lines along existing rail ROW within the Boston MPO region with coordinated local parking and shuttle routes to make meaningful reductions in the dependency of commuters on cars and the corresponding millions of hours wasted by commuters in highway congestion and significant reductions in pollution levels in Eastern Massachusetts. If transit projects are evaluated as a network of interconnected lines instead of individual projects, they would score much higher on utilization and therefore cost effectiveness (more destinations = more users), air quality (fewer single occupant auto commuters), and land use (no taking of land for endless highway expansion but using existing ROW to expand commuting options).

Kurt Marden, PE