

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Summary of the August 10, 2011 Meeting

This meeting was held in Conference Rooms 2 and 3 of the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA.

1. Introductions – *Laura Wiener, Chair*

Laura Wiener, Chair (Arlington) called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Attendees introduced themselves (see the attached attendance list).

2. Chair's Report – *Laura Wiener, Chair*

The MPO's draft Long-Range Transportation Plan and federal fiscal years 2012-15 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are out for public review and comment through September 13. The Advisory Council's TIP and Plan Committees will meet to discuss the documents on August 24 at 9:00 AM and 10:15 AM, respectively.

L. Wiener invited Wig Zamore of Somerville to make a public comment. W. Zamore expressed concerns about the delay of the Green Line Extension to at least 2018. The MPO's federal partners may not approve the TIP if it does not demonstrate timely implementation of the State Implementation Plan commitments, such as the Extension.

3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes June 8, 2011 – *Laura Wiener, Chair*

A motion to approve the minutes of June 8, 2011 was made by Schuyler Larrabee (Boston Society of Architects) and seconded by Steve Olanoff (Westwood). The minutes were unanimously approved.

4. New MPO Election Process – *Eric Bourassa, Transportation Manager, Metropolitan Area Planning Council*

E. Bourassa provided an update on changes to the MPO's structure that are included in its new Memorandum of Understanding. The MPO decided to add eight seats to its board effective November 1, 2011. Seven of the new seats will be filled by municipalities and one by the Advisory Council. The municipal members will include 12 elected municipalities (one from each of the eight MAPC subregions, two towns at large, and two cities at large), and two seats for the City of Boston. An election to fill eight of the elected municipal seats will be held on October 26.

MPO terms are three years. However, adjusting to the new membership will call for several of the newly elected municipalities serving four year terms. The cities or towns elected for the North Suburban and TRIC subregions, and the city and town receiving the most votes in the at-large election, will serve four years. This will allow each future

election to feature four races. All 101 cities and towns of the MPO vote for all elected members.

A candidate for a municipal seat must receive five nominations made by any chief elected official from the Boston region. A chief elected official may nominate his or her municipality. Each chief elected official may only sign nomination papers for one municipality per subregion and one for each of the at-large seats. Papers must be filed by September 23, 2011 at 5:00 PM.

Questions

In response to members' questions, E. Bourassa made the following additional comments.

- The current (old) membership structure includes six elected municipalities with no more than one from each subregion, with the exception of the Inner Core, which can have two seats. The City of Boston has one permanent seat. The elected municipalities consist of three cities and three towns.

Comments

- The timing of the election allows only about one month to obtain the required ballot signatures. This could be difficult. Likes the idea to only require the approval of the Chair of the Board of Selectmen, rather than the full board, for a municipality to nominate or vote in the MPO elections. (S. Olanoff)
- A goal of the MPO is to represent the environmental justice communities in the region. The restructuring will reduce the weight of these communities. This could be legally problematic for the MPO. (Ellin Reisner, Somerville resident)

5. Plans for the Port of Boston – *Andrew Hargens, Senior Planner, Massport*

A. Hargens of Massport's Economic Planning and Development Department presented on several initiatives to improve the Port of Boston. Massport has about 500 acres of waterfront property, exclusive of the airport, on the Boston Harbor. The Port has an economic impact of \$2.4 billion per year and generates 34,000 jobs. Among the major cargos (more than 14 million tons per year) handled at the Port are petroleum products, road salt, scrap metal, seafood, footwear and clothing, furniture, and beer and wine.

Massport's strategic vision for the Port calls for increasing water-borne commerce; attracting new direct call service from Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Indian sub-continent through the Suez Canal; developing facilities and access infrastructure to support growth in container, cruise, and bulk cargo business lines; develop other maritime properties to support core businesses and provide financial return to make capital investments in port facilities; and operate in a fiscally, environmentally, and socially sustainable manner.

Conley Container Terminal is one of the key assets in the Port. It handles about 30 percent of the containerized cargo entering New England on a 100-acre property in South Boston on the Reserve Channel. About 200,000 containers (twenty-foot equivalents) are

handled annually through four weekly services and a barge service to Halifax, Canada. Recently COSCO announced a weekly service from Asia through the Suez Canal that along with the Halifax barge service could increase container operations by 50 percent.

More than \$100 million has been invested in capital improvements to the facility over the last 20 years including berth dredging, the purchase of a 30-acre expansion site, and two additional cranes from Oakland. The improvements will help Massport achieve its goal of increasing its share of container imports and exports in New England.

Conley Terminal, like many port facilities, has a classic last-mile challenge. The Central Artery/Tunnel project brought many new truck routes and highway access ramps to the area, but trucks serving Conley Terminal must use a neighborhood street in South Boston. The surrounding neighborhood is very dense. About 15,000 residents live within ½ mile of the Terminal. There is a strong desire in South Boston to remove trucks from First Street and create a buffer between the Terminal operations and the neighborhood.

The proposed project to address truck access is a ¾ mile haul road that will connect the Terminal to Summer Street. The project was included in Massport's Capital Program three months ago and is completely funded. Among the goals of the project are to reduce truck idling, expand container storage, and provide a 4.5 acre buffer of open space between the Terminal and South Boston. The roadway is complex because of the space necessary to process containers entering and exiting the Terminal. The queuing of trucks needs to happen within the Terminal footprint. There is plenty of berth capacity, but Massport would like to dredge the Conley access channel to 48 or 49 feet. Last month the Massport board approved \$1 million for a clean truck program to retrofit or replace 60 older trucks serving the Terminal.

A. Hargens also discussed some other Massport initiatives and properties. Massport is looking to improve access to properties in Chelsea and Charlestown. A Chelsea Haul Road will connect from the Chelsea Street Bridge to the airport along a former rail right of way. Massport is also studying a haul road for Charlestown, but does not want to preclude rail service. Automobiles and salt are among the imports handled at Charlestown. There is a new wind blade test facility located there.

The Massport Marine Terminal in South Boston is a 40-acre site with many seafood processing facilities. The bulk cargo component of the site near the North Jetty berth is seen as a potential site for salt or aggregate importation. It can accommodate ships deeper than 40 feet that cannot pass the Ted Williams Tunnel. The Boston Fish Pier is the oldest seafood processing facility in the United States. Truck circulation improvements there were completed in 2010, and 18 berths were recently electrified, which will eliminate the need for vessels to use on-board generators while berthed.

Massport also owns the Black Falcon Cruise Terminal. \$12 million was spent recently to increase its capacity. About 350,000 passengers used the Terminal in 2010. Boston has the potential to increase itineraries, unlike many other East Coast ports.

The agency also continues to support commercial development where appropriate. The revenue from these projects can help support Massport's maritime business lines. Several projects are planned or completed in South Boston, such as the Liberty Wharf. Massport is also supportive of water transportation. They are in the process of planning a new hub terminal at the World Trade Center in South Boston.

Questions

In response to members' questions, A. Hargens made the following additional comments.

- Massport would like to see a bulk cargo operation at North Jetty. A request for proposals was issued in 2003, but it has taken a while for the right project team to develop the site. The increasing demand for salt and aggregate is attracting interest in the 6 acres tied to the deep water berth.
- The new cranes from Oakland are electric.
- The capacity at Conley Terminal is 400,000 containers (twenty-foot equivalents). Depending on the consolidation of support functions, capacity could increase. Only about 50 or 60 of the 100 acres are used for container stacks today.

6. Staff Update on Long-Range and Short-Range Transportation Plan for the Boston Region – Anne McGahan and Pam Wolfe, MPO Staff

A. McGahan provided an update on the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP was voted out for a 30-day public review and comment on August 4. The comment period will begin on August 15 and end on September 13 at 5:00 PM. Following the close of the comment period the MPO will review the comments, possibly make changes, and then adopt the Plan on September 22.

Some project costs have increased since the MPO selected projects in June to include in the LRTP. These including the Route 1 Add-a-Lane, the I-93/I-95 Interchange in Woburn, and the Bridge Street project in Salem. Also, Trapelo Road was added to the LRTP in the 2012-15 time band. The MassDOT announced a delay in the Green Line Extension project. The delay is related to the design process, which the MPO has no control over. The air quality analysis was finished before the delay was announced. Substitute projects will need to be identified that have at least the same air quality benefits as the delayed Green Line Extension.

Comments

- The Friends of the Community Path thank the Plan Committee for recognizing the importance of the Community Path Connector. The Friends are disappointed with the Green Line Extension delay. Federal regulations do not allow for prioritization of optional projects over State Implementation Plan required projects. The delay will increase the project cost by \$200 million. The mitigation projects for the delay will also be expensive. (Jonah Petri, Somerville resident)

P. Wolfe provided an update on the draft federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2012-15 TIP, which is out for public review and comment concurrently with the LRTP. On August 4, the MassDOT provided some refined estimates on cash flows and project costs. This enabled

the Oak Street/Route 9 project in Natick and Route 129 (Broadway) project in Lynn to be included in the draft TIP. Additionally, MassDOT recommended diverting Clean Air and Mobility Program funds in 2014 and 2015 due to the severe fiscal constraint of the TIP.

L. Wiener announced that the Advisory Council would have TIP and Plan Committee meetings on August 24 to develop comments on the two documents. She also announced that Hayes Morrison resigned as TIP manager and that Sean Pfalzer and Pam Wolfe would be managing the TIP until a new manager is hired.

7. Election Update and Presentation of Candidates – *Malek Al-Khatib, Nominating Committee Chair*

M. Al-Khatib announced that Steve Olanoff of Westwood was nominated for the office of Chair and Monica Tibbits of the 128 Business Council was nominated for the office of Vice Chair. The Nominating Committee met on August 1 and agreed to recommend the two nominees. The election will be held on September 14. Nominations are allowed from the floor, but the Committee strongly recommends that any additional candidates be nominated before the meeting so that the Advisory Council has time to consider all of the candidates.

8. Announcements

There were no announcements.

9. Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.

ATTACHMENT 1: Attendance List for August 10, 2011

Cities and Towns

Mike Gowing, Acton
Laura Wiener, Arlington
Bob McGaw, Belmont
Tom Kadzis, Boston
John Gillon, Quincy
Frank DeMasi, Wellesley
Steve Olanoff, Westwood

Agencies

Tad Read, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Richard Canale, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC)
Karen Pearson, MassDOT
Steven Rawding, MassDOT Aeronautics
Leon Papadopoulos, MassRides
Chan Rogers, Southwest Advisory Planning Committee (SWAP)

Citizen Groups

Thomas Daly, American Council of Engineering Companies
Malek Al-Khatib, Boston Society of Civil Engineers
Schuyler Larrabee, Boston Society of Architects
David Ernst, MassBike
Jon Seward, MoveMass
Tom O'Rourke, Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce
Monica Tibbits, Route 128 Business Council

Guests and Visitors

Meaghan Hamill, Senator McGee's Office
Andrew Hargens, Massport
Ed Lowney, Malden resident
Jonah Petri, Somerville resident
Ellin Reisner, Somerville resident
Wig Zamore, Somerville resident

MPO Staff

Walter Bennett
Mike Callahan
Anne McGahan
Sean Pfalzer
Pam Wolfe