

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

November 14, 2012 Meeting

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

Meeting Summary

1. Introductions

Steve Olanoff, Chair (Westwood) called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 9)

2. Chair's Report—*Steve Olanoff, Chair*

The MPO meeting of October 18 involved discussion of a report by an MPO Committee formed to address concerns of the MPO about the Advisory Council election process and representation issues that arose during the Advisory Council annual elections. Paul Regan of the MPO was scheduled to discuss these matters later in this meeting.

The Advisory Council's comment letter written to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) on the scoping of an Environmental Impact Study regarding the Northeast Corridor High Speed Rail Project was presented to the MPO. A motion to incorporate the Advisory Council comments into a letter by the MPO did not pass; a motion to forward the Advisory Council comment letter directly to the FRA also did not pass. This topic was item number seven on today's agenda.

The MPO approved a work scope to study the Silver Line to Chelsea at its Nov.1 meeting.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes of October 10, 2012—*Steve Olanoff, Chair*

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. The minutes of the October 10, 2012 meeting were approved unanimously.

4. Planning Ahead for Growth in Massachusetts—*Jessica Casey, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development*

On November 13, 2012, Governor Patrick announced a policy goal to achieve production of ten-thousand multi-family units in each year up to 2020. The Governor also announced the formation of a new policy tool called "Compact Neighborhoods" which will help to support that goal.

Communities in Massachusetts have been consistently and deliberately planning ahead since 2007. The administration has kept planning ahead at the forefront for the Office of Housing and Economic Development (OHED). Strategic elements of planning ahead include identifying areas that have community support and are consistent with regional considerations and align with sustainable development principles. Creating prompt and predictable zoning and permitting regulations, coupled with investment in public infrastructure and marketing practices that make investment attractive are other key elements of the planning strategy.

In December 2011, the Patrick administration announced its Economic Development Plan. The plan, which was developed by businesses, academics and state agencies, identifies actions that can be taken to strengthen the competitiveness of Massachusetts. Broad categories include building talent, encouraging an innovation economy, empowering regions, making it easier to do business and improving cost competitiveness. The innovation economy and empowering regions are the focus of this presentation.

Actions to empower regions include planning ahead for growth through regional planning efforts. These efforts start at the community level which feed into the regional planning agencies to find regionally significant investments. Once a development is identified as one that would spur growth at the regional level, there is coordination with state agencies to focus on the housing and transportation impacts of the development. By next year, there will be over 80 communities with priority development areas and priority preservation areas in the state.

Economic and jobs growth planning is conducted by MassWorks, originally an assortment of six infrastructure programs run at different state agencies. It is now run by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) and focuses on infrastructure improvements. Under the administration of MassWorks, awards are granted based on targeting funds towards planning priorities: Gateway Cities, Transit Oriented Development, Reuse of Sites, Mixed Use, Housing Density, and Regional Projects. These targets help the agency measure and benchmark the successes of the program.

Building an innovation-based economy involves retaining talent. Over the next five years EOHED is attempting to increase the number of internship placements by 20 percent by focusing on facilitating the flow of young students into young companies. In addition, the goal of significantly reducing the housing affordability gap will result from increases in housing production. Reducing this gap will encourage students to stay after they graduate.

Achieving the statewide housing production goal of 10,000 multi-family units per year will involve construction of units that are reasonably dense, located near employment opportunities and transit nodes, and that are reasonable priced for middle and moderate income families and individuals.

New housing is important to keeping families and friends close by, connecting people to jobs, revitalizing downtowns and establishing reuses for historical buildings. Getting the balance right is the goal of the agency so that policies from various departments are aligned from environmental, transportation and regional standpoints.

Examples of planning for housing growth include Downtown Haverhill, which has created over 500 new housing units. EOHEd feels this development will support families and friends staying close by after graduation from area schools.

Another development is Assembly Square in Somerville. This is a 5 million square foot, mixed use, transit oriented development with 2,100 residential units that is consistent with the growth guidelines set forth in the MAPC MetroFuture regional plan.

The Ames Shovel Works industrial building in Easton is being redeveloped as a mixed-use development with 112 residential units and a new gallery, museum and open space. This development reflects an adaptive re-use of historic buildings.

EOHEd has developed customized tool-kits for communities to work toward economic and housing growth in their various neighborhoods.

Following the presentation, J. Casey responded to questions:

- Water and sewer and other infrastructure improvements are eligible for grants under MassWorks. For communities eligible for 40R, there is potential financial support for extra education costs caused by the expanded development. This is the 40S program which currently has 31 participating towns. These programs have been available since 2004. Education and crime rate are not impacted by affordable housing (40B) based on recent research at the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy.
- Transportation related grants can be addressed through MassWorks, but other programs are also available.

5. Land Use and Smart Growth: Regional application of land use for smart growth policy through the 495/MetroWest Compact Study—*Barry Keppard, MAPC*

The study area included 37 cities and towns along the I-495 Corridor including multiple Regional Planning Associations (RPAs). The priority growth and preservation areas as well as transportation corridors were identified in the area.

There were 300 areas in the study communities that were targeted for development, mostly on non-developed land. The selected Local Priority Development Areas (LPDA) contained 35 percent of the existing jobs, equal to 140,500 jobs. The potential job growth along this LPDA if built out to full capacity was 204,000 jobs, which represents a 50% increase over existing employment. However, the region, like much of the nation and the state, has grown slowly or contracted in recent years and a rapid recovery seems unlikely. Even assuming a full recovery by 2020 and modest growth thereafter, MAPC and Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) project only 52,000 jobs in the region from 2010 – 2035, barely a quarter of the estimated capacity.

The LPDA review process looked at water resources, transportation and agriculture resources at the sites. This moved the review to a regional area review in which the number of areas was dropped down to a third of the original amount to 91 areas. The impact of narrowing down the number of LPDA sites had no impact on the overall employment picture. With 91 sites selected, all of the existing jobs (140,500) were retained.

The Distributed Growth Scenario of development distributes the current view of job growth to all the Local Priority Areas (293 areas), with the result that none of the priority areas coming to their full capacity. Many of the predicted outcomes of this scenario are not robust. With so many competing local priorities, the demand for state assistance will far outstrip available resources, and few areas will be developed to their full capacity, diminishing the return on public investment in infrastructure or tax incentives. Meanwhile, the LPDAs might accommodate only 39,000 housing units, far fewer than are needed to meet the projected demand for 60,000 new units needed in the study area to support a growing workforce.

The impacts of the Distributed Growth Scenario were that requests for infrastructure funding will quickly outpace available resources and there will be less money available for maintenance and improvements in existing job centers. Few LPDAs are built to their full capacity, and municipalities and the state will see less return on investment.

Another planning scenario is the Regional Priorities Growth Scenario. This scenario considers regionally significant PDAs. The characteristics of this scenario include an assumption of 85% of corridor employment growth in Regional PDAs; 45,000 new jobs in Regional PDAs; and housing development focused near town centers and transit.

The impacts of the Regional Priorities Growth Scenario are that it supports existing centers by prioritizing growth where jobs already exist; it reduces the need for new infrastructure extensions; and it leverages and protects previous infrastructure investments.

By looking at these two scenarios, we can compare and contrast investment strategies that allow us to leverage and protect the things we have already invested in and decided how they relate to where we invest in future growth.

Following the presentation, B. Keppard responded to questions:

- Statewide, incentives are available through the MassWorks program to encourage cities and towns to identify the priorities that have regional significance. From a regional perspective there has been additional zoning money available to address the zoning issues of the PDAs. This will be an individual incentive program.
- The impact of growth on existing transit is not measured but existing facilities would need to grow with the demand on those services.
- Sewer and water investments in the targeted PDAs would have to address whether infrastructure could be extended from existing service or if it needs to be newly built. Also, opportunity exists to take advantage of real conservation efforts in addressing water and sewer investments.

6. MPO Report—*Paul Regan, Chair, MPO RTAC Committee*

P. Regan, Executive Director of the MBTA Advisory Board was selected by the MPO to be the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee to review the Advisory Council election process. At the September 20 meeting of the Boston Region MPO members heard of complaints about the conduct of the election of officers at the September 12 meeting of the Advisory Council.

Complaints were heard about the election process on the day of the election and about the conduct of some of the Advisory Council members. There were also concerns among MPO members that these issues would impact participation on the Advisory Council. The Ad Hoc Committee was comprised of several members of the MPO, including two active Advisory Council participants.

The Committee and the full MPO recommended that the Advisory Council adjust its election procedures to reflect the following changes:

- The Advisory council will begin its election process each year at its July meeting.
- The Nominating Committee (led by the most recent past Chair) will be convened at that meeting.
- The Nominating Committee will solicit nominations for Chair and Vice Chair from the Advisory Council members.
- At the September Advisory Council meeting:
 - The Nominating Committee will announce the names of all nominees and may recommend a specific slate of officers.
 - Nominations from the floor will be accepted.
 - Nominations will be closed as of the adjournment of the September meeting.
- All candidates will submit a statement of candidacy for circulation to the full Advisory Council membership.
- The election of officers will be held at the October Advisory Council meeting.
- Elected officers will take their seats in November.

The Boston Region MPO also discussed the issue of who can be a voting member of the Advisory Council. The MPO supports the current bylaw that states, "All members of the MPO shall be non-voting members of the Advisory Council". In addition, after extensive discussion at its October 18, 2012, meeting, the MPO took a series of votes for the following:

- That the Boston Region MPO recommend to the Advisory Council that individual MPO members and their alternates should be prohibited from being voting members of the Advisory Council.
- That the Boston Region MPO recommend to the Advisory Council that municipal members of the MPO should be prohibited from being voting members of the Advisory Council.
- That the Boston Region MPO recommend to the Advisory Council that the subregions should be prohibited from being voting members of the Advisory Council.

The Boston Region MPO's position is that no entity on the MPO and no person representing an entity on the MPO (except the Advisory Council Chair) should be a voting member of the Advisory Council. The MPO strongly recommends that the Advisory Council adopt this position (as detailed in the above list of recommendations that the MPO voted for) and incorporate it into its bylaws.

P. Regan asked for feedback from the members. He stated that the Advisory Council exists to give advice to the MPO and is required to run meetings that are open, accessible, and diverse. His review of a tape of the Advisory Council did not indicate to him in his view that there was an abusive or improper exchange among members at the meeting on September 12.

After discussion, S. Olanoff stated that over the next two meetings, voting membership of the committees will consider the recommendations. The Membership Committee will meet to review the bylaws and consider changes, based on the recommendations. After this step, any proposed changes will be presented to the full Council for action in compliance with the process for amending the bylaws spelled out in the current bylaws.

Responses to P. Regan's presentation include:

- R. Canale said that he did not concur with the exclusion of subregions from being voting members of the Advisory Council.
- F. DeMasi responded favorably about moving back the election as recommended by the MPO.
- S. Olanoff suggested that the role of the Nominating Committee would be more to encourage members to take on a leadership role. He expressed agreement that the election scheduling changes as suggested by the MPO would encourage an election by the whole Council, and not just the Nominating Committee, as members could still be nominated from the floor within the nominating guidelines.
- S. Olanoff added that, with the change in voting member designation, it will be necessary for other voting members to step up and serve on the various committees including the Membership and Nominating Committees.
- D. Montgomery felt the tone of the letter from the MPO suggested that the MPO is advising the Advisory Council rather than the Advisory Council advising the MPO.
- M. Tibbits, Chair of the Membership Committee stated that the Advisory Council process of revising the bylaws failed to come up with a decision on who could vote. She agreed with the bylaw recommendations made by the MPO as well as the procedural changes on the election process. She thought that the Council should take these recommendations seriously and that she agreed with them.
- F. DeMasi said he thought that the MPO should respond directly to the Council about the reasons they didn't advance the Advisory Council comment letter to the FRA.
- P. Wolfe reviewed the role of Advisory Council relative to the MPO. She said the Federal partners ask that the MPO have a robust public participation program. The MPO created the Council to serve that purpose; it exists because the MPO

wants it to exist. The letter from the MPO recommending changes to the Council bylaws is a unique situation.

- N. Codd, MassDOT, said that there is value in the Advisory Council's public input. Now that the Council is a voting member on the MPO, the importance of the Advisory Council views is even more significant. This rare act of the MPO providing advice in the other direction is in an administrative advisory role and is because of concerns about overlap and conflict due to the new structure of the MPO with so many new members. The MPO is most interested in keeping the process of public participation compliant with open meeting laws, particularly concerning the issue of double voting on the two bodies.

7. MPO Report—*Steve Olanoff, Chair*

S. Olanoff introduced the discussion of the comment letter sent from the Advisory Council to the MPO. He explained that he could not be sure why the comment letter failed to get support at the MPO. Although the letter had been sent to the MPO members prior to the meeting, some members may have been confused over the intent of the letter, and they may have been reluctant to make the MPO liable for possible future commitments.

F. DeMasi was concerned that the failure to forward the FRA letter reflected a failure to recognize capacity issues that are causing many problems in this region.

S. Olanoff relayed a message on behalf of J. Businger that a letter from the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation supported the High Speed Rail project as indicated in copies available at the documents table.

T. Kadzis stated that the inclusion of the North-South Rail Link was a factor in the MPO's lack of support for forwarding the letter on to FRA.

L. Elisa felt that the MPO might respond to the Council more directly in the future so that Advisory Council members will not feel as if their time is being wasted.

R. Canale added that MPO members are encouraged to attend the Advisory Council at least once per year to get a better idea of what is going on. Conversely, Advisory Council members are encouraged to attend MPO meetings to try to get an understanding of the nature of the work activity.

8. New Business—*Steve Olanoff, Chair*

Members who wish to serve on committees for the upcoming year should see S. Olanoff, Chair, M. Tidbits, Vice Chair, or David Fargen, Advisory Council Manager.

9. Old Business—*Steve Olanoff, Chair*

There was none.

10. Member Announcements—*Steve Olanoff, Chair*

The National Corridors Initiative at the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy, Northeastern University, will make a presentation on December 5 on the topic of “value capture”. (Additional note: This will be part of the topic of discussion at the December 12 Advisory Council meeting.)

11. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion carried.

Attendance

Ned Cod	MassDOT*
Paul Regan	MBTA Advisory Board*
Barry Keppard	MAPC*
Richard Canale	- Inner Core
Franny Osman	- MAGIC
John Read	BRA*
Theodora Fisher & Rachel Fitchenbaum	EOHHS
Jessica Casey	EOHED
Amanda Richard	Joint Legislative Transportation Committee
Kristin Slaton	MassRides
Louis Elisa	Seaport Advisory Council
Mike Gowning	Acton
Laura Wiener	Arlington*
Tom Kadzis	Boston*
William Fried	Canton
David Montgomery	Needham
Frank DeMasi	Wellesley
Steve Olanoff	Westwood
Many Ann Murray	AACT
Barry M Steinberg	Association for Public Transportation
Clay Schofield	Boston Society of Civil Engineers
David Ernst	MassBike
John Businger	National Corridors Initiative
Marylin Wellons	Riverside Neighborhood Association
Monica Tibbits	Route 128 Business Council
(*Non-voting)	

Guests

Ed Lowney	Resident
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MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Pam Wolfe, CTPS
David Fargen, CTPS
Daniel Amstutz, CTPS