

Memorandum for the Record
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting

January 19, 2012 Meeting

10:00 AM – 11:40 AM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 & 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

David Mohler, Chair, representing Richard Davey, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization agreed to the following:

- approve the work program for *Priority Corridors for Long-Range Transportation Plan Needs Assessment*
- approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MPO and two regional transit authorities – MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and Cape Ann Transportation Authority – as amended at this meeting
- release draft Amendment One to the FFYs 2012—15 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), as amended at this meeting, for a 30-day public review period
- approve the minutes of the meeting of January 5

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

There were none.

2. Chair's Report – David Mohler, MassDOT

The Federal Highway and Transit Administrations (FHWA and FTA) have approved the MPO's FFY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). A copy of the approval letter was distributed.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

**4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report – Steve Olanoff, Chair,
*Regional Transportation Advisory Council***

The Advisory Council met on January 11. Richard Davey, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer of MassDOT, addressed the Council.

The Council will meet next on February 8. Chris Caplice, Executive Director of the Center for Transportation and Logistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will give a presentation on scenario planning.

5. Executive Director's Report – *Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

Locations have been set for the MPO's quarterly meetings to be held outside of Boston. The first is scheduled for March 1 at the Beverly Public Library. The MPO will meet on June 7 at Cary Hall in Lexington, and on September 20 at the Newton Free Library.

A list of UPWP work programs that have been approved by the MPO in FFY 2012 was distributed. The list shows project name, client, cost, approval date, and estimated time of completion. Staff will continuously update this list.

The individual hired as Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Manager has left CTPS to return to his previous position. CTPS is advertising the position again. In the meantime, Sean Pfalzer will continue as Interim TIP Manager. MPO members expressed appreciation for his highly professional work in this role.

6. Work Program for Priority Corridors for Long-Range Transportation Plan Needs Assessment – *Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

The work program for *Priority Corridors for Long-Range Transportation Plan Needs Assessment* was presented on January 5.

A motion to approve work program for *Priority Corridors for Long-Range Transportation Plan Needs Assessment* was made by Jim Gillooly, City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department), and seconded by Brian Kane, MBTA Advisory Board. The motion carried.

7. MPO/RTAs Memorandum of Understanding – *Pam Wolfe, Certification Activities Manager, MPO Staff*

Revisions to the draft MOU between the MPO and two regional transit authorities – MetroWest RTA and Cape Ann Transportation Authority – were distributed. The changes reflect members' comments at the January 5 meeting.

Laura Wiener, At-Large Town (Town of Arlington), suggested a change to the revised text to exclude the words "if possible" from page 2.

A motion to approve the MOU as amended was made by John Romano, MassDOT Highway Division, and seconded by J. Gillooly. The motion carried.

8. Draft Transportation Improvement Program Amendment – *Sean Pfalzer, Interim TIP Manager, MPO Staff*

The draft Amendment One to the FFYs 2012—15 TIP and a memorandum was distributed. S. Pfalzer summarized the changes to the TIP document.

Highway Element, FFY 2012

The following changes were made to the highway element in FFY 2012:

- the *Belmont – Trapelo Road* and *Natick – Route 9/Oak Street* projects will be funded in part with state Enhancement funds
- the addition of earmarks for the *Salem Ferry Pier Improvements* and the *Improvements to the Pemberton Pier Commuter Terminal*
- a cost increase to the *Foxborough – I-95 Over Green Street* project
- a cost increase to the *Framingham – Central Street over the Sudbury River* project due to additional work required on a bridge that will serve as a detour route
- the removal of the *Lexington – Route 2A over I-95* project from the FFY 2012 element; the project will not be ready for construction until FFY 2013
- a cost increase to the *Quincy – Fore River Bridge* project associated with the development of the project's 25% design plans
- changes to the payments for the *Central Artery/Tunnel* project due to refinancing

Members asked questions and made comments:

Marie Rose, MassDOT Highway Division, asked if the *Salem Ferry Pier Improvements* and the *Improvements to the Pemberton Pier Commuter Terminal* are to be advertised by MassDOT. D. Mohler replied no.

Christine Stickney, South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree), raised the issue of potential cuts to the ferry service under the MBTA's fare increase proposal. D. Mohler noted that the Salem ferry is not funded by the MBTA, rather by the City of Salem.

S. Olanoff asked for an explanation for the cost increase to the *Framingham – Central Street over the Sudbury River* project. David Anderson, MassDOT Highway Division, explained that the cost is due to construction needs on the Wickford Road bridge, which needs to be upgraded to carry detour traffic while the Central Street bridge is under construction. The Wickford Road bridge is structurally deficient. Improvements to the bridge will align with MassDOT's goal of reducing the number of bridges classified as structurally deficient.

D. Anderson also explained the cost increase to the *Lexington – Route 2A over I-95* project. MassDOT conducted a value engineering study, which determined that money could be saved by constructing a narrower bridge than originally planned. The project is currently being redesigned and MassDOT intends to make the project ready for construction in FFY 2013.

Transit Element, FFY 2012

The transit element has been reorganized in the TIP document to correlate with the funding categories in the MBTA's Capital Investment Program (CIP). These changes stem from a request from FTA.

The following additional changes were made to the transit element in FFY 2012:

- a cost change to the line item for *System Upgrades*
- the addition of FFY 2009 through 2011 carryover funds
- the addition of a carryover earmarks for the following projects:

- *Boston – Commonwealth Avenue/Kenmore Square Roadway and Pedestrian Improvements*
- *Salem/Beverly Intermodal Center*
- *MBTA Ferry System (three earmarks)*
- the addition of a \$10 million federal TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) III grant award toward the *Merrimack River Bridge* project

Members asked questions and made comments:

In response to a question from D. Mohler regarding the line item for *Revenue Vehicles*, S. Pfalzer explained that the new categories include carryover funds from FFYs 2009 through 2011.

S. Olanoff asked why the line item for *Revenue Vehicles* has changed from funding overhauls to 123 CNG buses to 193 ECD buses. Victor Rivas, MBTA, stated that the MBTA will be paying for the 123 CNG bus overhauls with revenue bond money, and that the project for overhauling the 193 ECD buses was moved forward to FFY 2012.

Also regarding *Revenue Vehicles*, Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), asked about the age of the Kawasaki Coaches to be overhauled. Joe Cosgrove, MBTA, reported that the coaches date to the 1980s.

David Koses, At-Large City (City of Newton), inquired about the purpose of the earmarks for the *MBTA Ferry System*. J. Cosgrove replied that the earmarks are for general ferry system improvements and vessel upgrades.

L. Wiener asked about why millions of dollars would be programmed for ferry projects when the MBTA may be cutting ferry service. J. Cosgrove responded that none of the programmed dollars would be spent before the MBTA makes a decision in April regarding service cuts.

S. Olanoff asked whether the earmarks for the ferry system would be lost if the MBTA eliminates ferry service. D. Mohler responded that the earmarks would likely be returned to Congress. Regarding the future of the MBTA ferry service, B. Kane added that there has been discussion about ending the subsidy for the service, but not eliminating the service entirely.

Transit Element, FFY 2013 – 15

S. Pfalzer noted that more details will be forthcoming on projects within the various transit line items in the outer years of the TIP. These line items include Power, Station, and Bridge and Tunnels Programs.

Priority bridge projects, that would be funded through the MBTA Bridges and Tunnels Program, include the Merrimack River, Dean Road, Shawsheen River, Neponset River, and Gloucester bridges.

A motion to release draft Amendment One to the FFYs 2012—15 TIP for a 30-day public review period was made by J. Gillooly, and seconded by J. Romano.

D. Mohler announced that the Massachusetts Port Authority has applied for \$75 million in Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) funding; these funds would provide a “bridge loan” for the *Consolidated Rental Car Facility (CONRAC)* project. Michael Chong, FHWA, advised the MPO to include those funds in the TIP.

The makers of the motion accepted an amendment to their motion to include the programming of the \$75 million TIFIA loan in the draft Amendment.

A motion to release draft Amendment One to the FFYs 2012—15 TIP, as amended, for a 30-day public review period was made by J. Romano, and seconded by Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council. The motion carried.

9. Meeting Minutes – *Maureen Kelly, MPO Specialist, MPO Staff*

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 5 was made by S. Olanoff, and seconded by B. Kane. The motion carried. The following members abstained: Massachusetts Port Authority, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), and Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville).

10. MPO Committees – *David Mohler, Chair*

The Chair distributed a list of members of the MPO’s three standing committees: the Administration and Finance Committee, Congestion Management Process Committee, and UPWP Committee. Eight voting members are assigned to each committee. Any member may attend committee meetings, but will not be able to vote there if not an appointed member. Ad hoc committees will be formed as needed.

11. MBTA Proposed Fare Increases and Service Reductions – *Charles Planck, MBTA*
C. Planck gave a PowerPoint presentation which provided an overview of the MBTA’s fare increase and service reduction proposals.

The MBTA is facing a \$161 million operating deficit in FY 2013. The MBTA has proposed two solutions to address the deficit. The solutions involve raising fares and reducing service, which are means to raise revenue that are in the control of the MBTA. The third means available to the MBTA is to implement internal operating and administrative efficiencies, which have been underway since Forward Funding was implemented in 2000 and which have been intensified since the implementation of transportation reform measures in 2009.

The MBTA last increased fares in 2007. In 2009, proposed service cuts and fare increases were averted when the legislature directed \$160 million in revenue from the state sales tax to the MBTA. The MBTA has been implementing operating efficiencies since 2009, which has left the authority 200 people below budgeted headcount. The MBTA is also

raising non-fare revenue through advertising and real estate sales, but the revenues raised are not sufficient to solve the deficit.

The first proposal, Scenario One, would raise fares by 43% and reduce service. The second, Scenario Two, would raise fares by 35% but have more significant service cuts. These proposals would result in significant changes to the MBTA's paratransit service, THE RIDE, as two pricing structures would be put into place. Federal law requires paratransit service to operate within 1.5 miles of fixed-route transit service. Currently, the MBTA exceeds that requirement by serving whole towns in its service area (even if a customer is beyond the 1.5 mile required limit). Under the proposed scenarios the MBTA would redefine the base territory for paratransit service to within 1.5 miles of the transit system as reduced by service cuts. THE RIDE would continue to serve customers beyond the base territory, but premium fares would apply to those customers.

When developing the scenarios, the MBTA considered alternatives such as raising fares by as much as 60%, which would allow the MBTA to retaining all service. It was determined that this alternative would result in a large loss of ridership, and would be not be a workable solution. Therefore, the proposed scenarios have a mix of fare hikes and service reductions.

Both scenarios would eliminate commuter rail service after 10PM and on weekends. Also, there would be no weekend service on the E Branch of the Green Line and the Mattapan High Speed Line. And subsidies for ferry service would be eliminated.

Bus and rail services with the lowest ridership were identified for possible service reductions. In Scenario One, 26% of bus route miles would be eliminated, but 98% of bus passengers would remain unaffected. In Scenario Two, 78% of bus route miles would be eliminated; 76% of bus passengers would remain unaffected.

For customers of THE RIDE, 92% would be considered to be in the base territory in Scenario One, while 8% would be subject to premium rate fares. In Scenario Two, 72% would be in the base territory, while 28% would be in the premium fare area.

Another proposed change would require passengers using Charlie Cards to load a minimum of \$10 on their card. This is expected to improve boarding times.

The MBTA has begun the public outreach process. In March, the MBTA will bring its final recommendation to the MBTA Board of Directors. The Board will vote in April. Any fare increase or service reductions would go into effect on July1.

C. Planck emphasized that the solution does not have to be Scenario One or Two. Other ideas will be considered and the MBTA will aim to choose the best solution for the most people. He encouraged people to visit the MBTA's website for more information. A booklet describing each scenario is available to the public in multiple languages.

Following the presentation, members asked questions and made comments:

J. Gillooly posed a question about the profitability of various bus routes. C. Planck noted that the MBTA's bus service is subsidized and that revenues from bus fares amount to only 49% of operating expenses. The subsidies for individual bus routes in the MBTA system are enumerated on pages 9 and 10 of the CTPS report, *Potential MBTA Fare Increase and Service Reductions in 2012: Impact Analysis*.

Richard Reed, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford), asked about how the MBTA measures the base territory for THE RIDE and asked if a map of that territory would be available. C. Planck replied that the territory is determined based on distance "as the crow flies" from fixed-route transit service, however, consideration is also given to station spacing. He stated that a map is available.

D. Koses remarked upon the large number of people who attended the MBTA's public meeting in Newton. There were comments expressing concerns about the loss of local bus service, fare hikes, and the impact on people with disabilities. Attendees acknowledged that the MBTA did not cause the deficit problem, and raised the topic of the gas tax and the need to contact state legislators. D. Koses questioned whether enough time has been allowed for public involvement. D. Mohler noted that the MBTA has scheduled about 20 meetings and is adding more. The MBTA is required to file a balanced budget with the legislature this spring.

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, raised the possibility of applying higher fares to certain bus routes to keep them in operation. C. Planck noted that theoretically the MBTA could charge different fares, but that it would make the MBTA's fare policy more complicated. D. Mohler cautioned that fares would have to be raised so high on some routes that there would be a risk of losing ridership.

In response to a question from S. Olanoff, B. Kane noted that maps of THE RIDE service area under the two scenarios are posted on the MBTA Advisory Board's website.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), asked if the MBTA still plans to increase the number of commuter rail trains to Worcester. C. Planck responded that yes, that service would be protected under both proposed scenarios.

D. Crowley raised concerns about the impact that eliminating weekend commuter rail service would have on rural areas.

E. Bourassa inquired as to what the MBTA's deficits would be in future years, after one of the proposed scenarios is implemented. C. Planck stated that the deficit would be about \$40 million in FY 2014. D. Mohler added that the deficits would be even larger in FY 2015 and FY 2016.

Wig Zamore, Somerville resident and a member of the MBTA Rider Oversight Committee, commended the work the MBTA and CTPS staff did on the analysis of the

proposed scenarios, especially the environmental analysis. He stated that cutting commuter rail service would have some minor air quality benefits in terms of reducing nitrogen oxide. He requested a spreadsheet showing the environmental impact of the two scenarios by traffic analysis zone (TAZ).

Robert McGaw, Belmont resident, suggested that the MBTA consider abandoning its effort to implement positive train control (PTC) and use the funds it would have spent on PTC to reduce the deficit. C. Planck explained that capital dollars are being used for PTC, while the deficit issue relates to operating funds.

Ed Tarallo, North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn), asked how the MBTA calculated cost per transit ride. D. Mohler replied that the figures represent an average of fares paid.

D. Koses raised a question about the implications of requiring passengers using Charlie Cards to load a minimum of \$10 on their card. C. Planck spoke to the benefits of this strategy noting that it would reduce the number of transactions at fare boxes, increase the number of transactions at ticket machines in the central city, and reduce the number of administrative transactions the MBTA must process. D. Mohler added that an effort is being made to add new fare vending machines in locations where they are needed.

S. Olanoff asked whether the MBTA is continuing to put retail sales terminals in convenience stores and shops. C. Planck reported that the program is continuing and that the MBTA is improving their coverage.

In response to a question about fare evasion, C. Planck reported that the MBTA is addressing the problem by policing and politeness campaigns, and by pursuing legislation that would increase the fine for fare evasion. Addressing fare evasion remains a challenge particularly in parts of the system that are not fully-gated.

12. State Implementation Plan Update – David Mohler, Chair

MassDOT's monthly status report on the State Implementation Plan (SIP) projects was made available to members. D. Mohler provided an update of the changes that have taken place since the last report in December.

Fairmount Line Improvement Project

The Talbot Avenue and Woodrow Avenue Bridges have been replaced. The construction of the Blue Hill Avenue Station has been delayed due to concerns from abutters.

Construction of 1,000 New Parking Spaces

The parking garage at Wonderland Station is 89% complete. MassDOT expects to open the garage by early May.

Red Line-Blue Line Connector (Design)

MassDOT is requesting that the Department of Environmental Protection remove the requirement to design the *Red Line-Blue Line Connector* from SIP.

Green Line Extension

The federal environmental review (NEPA) process is complete, and MassDOT is awaiting FTA's review. The New Starts application for the project has been submitted to FTA. Public meetings will be held regarding station design, the design of the Community Path, and the maintenance facility.

13. Members Items

D. Mohler encouraged people to read the brochure describing the potential MBTA fare increases and service cuts.

J. Cosgrove reported that the MBTA will be holding a hearing on the fare proposal in Roxbury this evening.

14. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by J. Romano, and seconded by B. Kane. The motion carried.

**Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting Attendance
Thursday, January 19, 2012, 10:00 AM**

Members

At-Large City (City of Everett)
At-Large City (City of Newton)
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)
City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)
Federal Highway Administration
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
MassDOT Highway Division

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
Massachusetts Port Authority
MBTA Advisory Board
Metropolitan Area Planning Council

MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination
(Town of Bedford)
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)

Regional Transportation Advisory Council
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)

Representatives and Alternates

Marzie Galazka
David Koses
Laura Wiener
Hank Manz
Lara Mérida
Jim Gillooly
Michael Chong
Hayes Morrison
David Mohler
David Anderson
John Romano
Marie Rose
Joe Cosgrove
Lourenço Dantas
Brian Kane
Eric Bourassa
Eric Halvorsen
Dennis Giombetti
Richard Reed

Denise Deschamps
Mayor Scott Galvin
Ed Tarallo
Steve Olanoff
Christine Stickney
Dennis Crowley
Tom O'Rourke

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Daniel Amstutz

Walter Bennett

Michael Callahan

David Fargen

Maureen Kelly

Robin Mannion

Sean Pfalzer

Mary Ellen Sullivan

Alicia Wilson

Pam Wolfe

Other Attendees

Lynn Ahlgren

Frank DeMasi

Jim Gallagher

David Kucharsky

Rafael Mares

Robert McGaw

Hiroka Mita

Joe Onorato

Charles Planck

Victor Rivas

Wig Zamore

MetroWest Regional Transit Authority

Regional Transportation Advisory Council

Town of Lexington

Conservation Law Foundation

Belmont resident

Harvard University

MassDOT Highway

MBTA

MBTA

Somerville resident