

# Draft Memorandum for the Record

## Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

### March 7, 2013 Meeting

10:00 AM – 11:50 AM, Braintree Town Hall, One John F. Kennedy Memorial Drive,  
Braintree, MA

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

### Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreed to the following:

- release Draft Amendment 4 of the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2013-16 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for a 30-day public comment period
- approve the work program for the *MBTA Bus Schedule Maps*

### Meeting Agenda

#### 1. Public Comments

Kristina Johnson, City of Quincy, reported on several projects in Quincy:

The first phase of the project to redevelop Quincy Center is now underway. The Merchants Row development includes two mixed-use buildings. The project has received a certificate of consistency by city's planning board and the utilities infrastructure is expected to be installed in within 21 months. The city believes that the project supports the visions and goals of the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC's) MetroFuture plan, and that it serves as a demonstration project for the transit oriented development advocated in MetroFuture.

The first phase of the *Adams Green Transportation Improvements* project, which is funded by the MPO, involves infrastructure upgrades to improve traffic recirculation and includes the installation of traffic signal equipment. It will allow for the development of the Adams Green park space, which will connect the MBTA station there with Quincy City Hall and historical locations. The city believes that the new park space will be the crown jewel of the revitalized Quincy Center. The first phase of the Adams Green project is expected to be advertised by the end of March after some right-of-way issues are resolved. The park design is underway concurrent with the transportation work.

The *Intersection and Signal Improvements at Hancock Street and East/West Squantum Streets* project is a safety and operations project that would implement recommendations from a 2006 MPO study that was in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The project, which costs \$3.5 million, is currently programmed in the FFY 2014 element of the TIP. The project's 100% design plans are currently under review by MassDOT and right-of-ways issues have been addressed. The City is requesting that the MPO amend the TIP in order that the project may be advertised earlier, this spring.

## **2. Welcome from Host Municipality—*The Honorable Joseph C. Sullivan, Mayor, Town of Braintree***

Mayor Sullivan welcomed the MPO members to the Town of Braintree. He began by recognizing Christine Stickney, South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree), for her conscientiousness, professionalism, the work she has done for the Town of Braintree and the South Shore, and her instrumental role in such projects as the Braintree/Weymouth Landing. He also recognized the City of Quincy's redevelopment work and noted that the South Shore communities are working together cooperatively.

The Mayor then discussed the importance developing a transportation agenda for the Commonwealth and the MPO's critical role in marshaling support for Governor Deval Patrick's proposed transportation vision. He referenced a number of projects centered around transit improvements on the South Shore – including the Quincy Center redevelopment, the South Park (formerly Tri-Town) development in South Weymouth, the Braintree/Weymouth Landing, and the Greenbush and Old Colony commuter rail lines – that have economic impacts in terms of housing and job creation. He expressed the need to put shovels in the ground to address the Commonwealth's crumbling transportation infrastructure.

While expressing frustration that there has not yet been an opportunity to rally in support of the Governor's transportation finance plan, the Mayor expressed support for House Speaker Robert DeLeo's proposed smaller scale plan that includes revenue for transportation needs. The Mayor called for a serious discussion at the local level and expressed the need to create a sense of urgency for creating a foundation to support a revenue package that will address transportation needs in all areas of the Commonwealth.

He closed by expressing his appreciation of the MPO's work.

## **3. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT***

There was none.

#### **4. Committee Chairs' Reports**

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, announced that a Congestion Management Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 21 at 9:00 AM. The Committee will be discussing the implementation of the Intersection Improvement Program in the TIP.

#### **5. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Steve Olanoff, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council***

The Advisory Council will meet next on March 13 in the State Transportation Building. The agenda includes a presentation on *The Way Forward*, MassDOT's new approach to investment in the transportation. Also on the agenda is a discussion of changes to the Advisory Council's bylaws and election procedures, and updates on the development of the TIP and UPWP.

#### **6. Executive Director's Report—*Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff***

There was none.

#### **7. Draft TIP Amendment 4—*Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff***

S. Pfalzer presented members with Draft Amendment 4 of the FFYs 2013-16 TIP. The amendment, which proposes two changes for the FFY 2013 element, would program \$2.23 million of Statewide Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program funds for the *Belmont/Watertown – Reconstruction on Trapelo Road and Belmont Street* project. It would also program \$53 million in Statewide CMAQ funds for the MBTA to buy ten new locomotives. The 20% match for the latter would be provided by the MBTA.

D. Mohler provided an explanation for the availability of the Statewide CMAQ funds. MassDOT used \$33 million of special equity bonus funds to pay down Grant Anticipation Notes (GANS) for the *Central Artery/Tunnel* project which freed other funds that MassDOT chose to apply to projects in the Boston Region. Additionally, money is available from certain projects that did not require all the funds originally programmed for them. Those funds must be spent during the fiscal year in which they were originally obligated.

The proposed action before members today would flex \$43.1 million of highway funds to the MBTA for the locomotives under a contract managed by the Utah Transit Authority. The option on the locomotives under that contract must be exercised by April 1.

A motion to release Draft Amendment 4 of the FFYs 2013-16 TIP for a 30-day public comment period was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric

Bourassa), and seconded by the MBTA (Ron Morgan). The motion carried following a discussion.

During the discussion of the motion, S. Olanoff inquired as to how the new locomotives are more advanced than the ones currently in operation. D. Mohler replied that the new locomotives meet the standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. They will be cleaner and more reliable.

Richard Reed, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford), asked for more explanation about the circumstances that made the additional funding available. D. Mohler explained that the GANS payments for the *Central Artery/Tunnel* project were originally programmed in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) (and the Boston MPO's TIP), however, MassDOT made the payments using \$32 million worth of special bonus equity money, which the state had at its discretion to spend. This decision made \$32 million of obligation authority in the STIP available for reprogramming. Those funds are limited to certain types of projects including, CMAQ-eligible projects, off-system bridges, and transportation enhancements. The MBTA locomotive procurement project is an eligible project. Additionally, \$11 million was available for reprogramming from unspent funds that were originally obligated for projects this year.

E. Bourassa raised a question about the procurement process. D. Mohler noted that it is a standard practice among transit agencies to arrange a procurement and negotiate an option for other agencies to join in. The MBTA was originally given the option to procure 20 locomotives as part of the Utah Transit Authority's procurement. Some of those locomotives have already been acquired by the MBTA.

## **8. Work Program for MBTA Bus Schedule Maps—Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff**

K. Quackenbush introduced the work program for the *MBTA Bus Schedule Maps*. Through this work program, the MPO's cartographer would create new bus route schedule cards for the MBTA. The MPO staff created these materials for the MBTA about a decade ago; however, the software that was used is no longer supported, and in addition, MBTA staff was never able to make quick, comprehensive changes to all or several schedule cards at once due to limitations in the software. The new schedule cards will be created using contemporary software packages called InDesign and Adobe Illustrator, and MBTA staff will be able to make changes to the cards much more easily than in the past.

The work will entail creating a brand-new route map for each schedule card, putting the route map together with the route's schedule and other information, and creating the actual schedule card. This will be done for all routes in the system. The files will then be turned over to MBTA staff, and they will be trained in the use of the software. The project will be funded by the MBTA.

D. Mohler noted that the work program indicates that the project will be funded by a "Future MBTA Contract," and asked when the funds will be available. K. Quackenbush replied that MPO staff expects the funding to be provided by the MBTA's Service Planning Department soon.

A motion to approve the work program for *MBTA Bus Schedule Maps* was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the At-Large Town of Lexington (Richard Canale). The motion carried.

## **9. TIP Evaluation Results—Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff**

S. Pfalzer gave an update on the evaluations that staff conducted for projects under consideration for programming in the FFYs 2014-17 TIP. Staff rated 51 projects overall. Of those projects, 42 had their scores updated and nine were new projects. The evaluation scoring information was provided to members in two spreadsheets. One spreadsheet shows scores given under the evaluation criteria for six policy categories. The other provides a summary that includes information about each project's status in the TIP and Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Staff only evaluated projects that had functional design reports (FDRs)

There were some changes to the criteria as recently approved by the MPO. For example, the criteria under the Livability category was expanded to recognize projects that serve targeted development sites, and the criteria under the Environmental Justice category was changed to expand the geographic threshold for projects to qualify in this category. Other changes include the addition of more quantitative measures for air quality benefits and greenhouse gas reductions.

Over the next two weeks staff will be asking for feedback from project proponents regarding the evaluations. In the meantime, staff is awaiting its funding targets for the TIP. Staff will be developing a First Tier List of projects that is scheduled to be posted by March 28 for discussion at the April 4 MPO meeting.

Members discussed the evaluations.

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), expressed concern that the expanded eligibility under the Environmental Justice

category weights the evaluations in favor of projects in the urban core. He suggested that staff review the decision to expand the eligibility threshold.

S. Olanoff and D. Mohler noted that many projects on the spreadsheet were marked as unevaluated, whereas they had been evaluated in prior years. They asked whether staff would be evaluating projects without FDRs. S. Pfalzer replied that staff's current practice is to require an FDR.

S. Olanoff raised a concern about projects that had been included in the LRTP based on prior evaluations. S. Pfalzer noted that the LRTP has a different set of evaluation criteria than the TIP since many of the projects in the LRTP are at the conceptual or pre-25% design stage. The criteria for the LRTP are broader and more regional in scope while the criteria for the TIP are more detailed. Staff has included the unevaluated projects on the TIP spreadsheet for informational purposes and to show the complete Universe of Projects under consideration.

L. Dantas inquired about the source for projects on the TIP list that are at the conceptual stage. S. Pfalzer replied that those projects have been identified by their proponents as candidates for TIP funding and are included in the TIP Interactive Database.

L. Dantas raised the idea of including conceptual projects identified through UPWP studies. S. Pfalzer noted that after a UPWP study is complete the relevant municipality has the responsibility to promote the project. L. Dantas then suggested that staff indicate whether particular projects in the TIP Universe of Projects are an outcome of a UPWP study.

R. Reed inquired about the stage at which an FDR is prepared for a project. S. Pfalzer replied that the FDR is a part of the proponent's 25% design submission to MassDOT, though some FDRs are prepared before the 25% design stage.

D. Mohler noted that some projects have been assigned a PROJIS identification number by MassDOT, but do not have an FDR, and inquired as to why that would be the case. Marie Rose, MassDOT Highway Division, noted that projects assigned four digit identification numbers have not yet been addressed by MassDOT's Project Review Committee. S. Pfalzer added that some FDRs are more than ten years old and are not useful for the evaluations because the data (on crashes or vehicle volumes, for example) included in them are outdated.

In light of this situation, D. Mohler suggested that the MPO consider culling the Universe of Projects. L. Dantas expressed agreement noting that the MPO is spending time reviewing projects that proponents may not be working to advance.

Providing a municipal point of view, Ed Tarallo, North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn), suggested that staff provide project proponents (TIP contacts at the municipalities) an opportunity to review the data on their projects and to convey information about their priorities. He did not object to having unevaluated projects listed on the Universe of projects.

D. Mohler expressed concern about keeping projects on the list that are not actively being advanced by a proponent and advocated for allowing staff to remove projects from the list that have been inactive for a certain period of time. S. Olanoff expressed agreement and noted that having projects on the list that are unlikely to be funded may also be giving proponents false hope.

M. Rose asked whether staff is prioritizing bridge projects. S. Pfalzer replied that staff is only evaluating bridge projects being advanced by municipalities to receive MPO target funds.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), suggested that the MPO establish guidelines that would allow for a periodic refreshing of the TIP Universe of Projects list. The guideline might specify that projects be removed from the list after a certain number of years unless a proponent advocates maintaining the listing. D. Mohler expressed agreement.

#### **10. Performance Measures—Anne McGahan, MPO Staff**

A. McGahan gave a PowerPoint presentation on the MPO staff's work to develop performance measures and a performance-based planning process for the MPO. Members were also provided with a memorandum on this topic titled, *The Development of Performance Measures and Performance-Based Planning*, which serves as the foundation for establishing performance measures for the MPO.

The development of performance measures is required under the new federal surface transportation legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (MAP-21). As the MPO develops its performance measures it will be coordinating with MassDOT and the MBTA.

The following are definitions of terms used in the discussion of performance measures:

*Performance management* is defined as a strategic approach that uses transportation system information to make investment and policy decisions to achieve specific performance goals.

*Performance-based planning and programming* are practices that apply performance management principles to transportation system policy and investment decisions in order to achieve performance goals. It is a system-level, data-driven process for identifying strategies and investments.

*Performance measures* are metrics used in the ongoing monitoring of and reporting on transportation characteristics, particularly to assess progress toward a pre-established goal. (For example, a performance measure could be the number of vehicle crashes.)

*Performance targets* are specific goals to meet performance measures by a certain time. (For example, a performance target could be measured by the reduction of vehicle crashes by a particular date.)

The legislation that drove the initial development of performance measures is the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), which was the impetus for the development of the MPO's Congestion Management Process (CMP). MAP-21 now calls for MPOs to establish performance measures in coordination with state agencies.

The MPO has already conducted work that can be used in the development of performance measures. Through its CMP, the MPO has been monitoring the transportation system and gathering information on system performance since the 1990s. Performance measures have been developed for the following types of facilities as part of the CMP: freeways, arterials, intersections, transit, park and ride lots, HOV lanes, and bicycle and pedestrian transportation. Thresholds have been developed for these measures but specific performance targets have not been set. In addition, the MPO's visions and policies have been developed and are being proposed as categories for associated performance measures.

The list of potential performance measures was developed by staff which is based on: data in the LRTP, CMP, and LRTP Needs Assessment; TIP evaluation criteria; performance measures used by other MPOs and agencies; and ideas from staff. Staff has reviewed MassDOT's work on performance measures to find metrics and measures that apply to MPO functions. This work included a review of MassDOT's Strategic Plan, the GreenDOT Implementation Plan, the MBTA's Service Delivery Policy, and the MBTA ScoreCard. (The applicable metrics and measures are described in the appendix of the memorandum.)



Staff is proposing that the next steps for the MPO will be to develop one performance measure for each MPO vision topic area and to develop two tiers of targets for monitoring through the LRTP and the TIP. The MPO can expand the number of performance measures in the future.

In the meantime, the MBTA is developing a Transit Asset Management System that will involve establishing annual performance targets. The agency is also in the process of determining whether additional performance measures should be incorporated into its Service Delivery Policy.

The MPO's work on performance measures is being conducted under the LRTP work program. All work will be done with an eye to Title VI. The performance measures that the MPO selects will be able to be used during the project selection process for the LRTP, TIP, and UPWP.

In keeping with the schedule for the next LRPT (which must be adopted in the summer of 2015), staff proposes to develop performance measures for each MPO vision topic throughout this calendar year. Also in that timeframe, the MPO and MAPC staff will be developing the socio-economic forecasts that will be used in the next LRTP. Early in 2014, staff plans to conduct scenario planning to examine different land use and transportation scenarios, and apply performance measures if applicable. That information will help the MPO choose a preferred land use scenario and set of projects and programs for the LRTP.

Members discussed this topic.

L. Dantas inquired as to whether any performance measures established by other agencies are in conflict with the MPO's visions and policies. A. McGahan said they are not in conflict but suggested that the MPO should review its visions and policies to determine if they should be updated or revised in light of the work being done by MassDOT.

Laura Wiener, At-Large Town of Arlington, asked if the work on performance measures is based on federal guidance from MAP-21, and she asked for the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) opinion of the work accomplished so far. A. McGahan noted that staff has begun the process of developing performance measures in advance of receiving federal guidance. Michael Chong, FHWA, added that federal rulemaking on this topic is expected in the late summer or early fall of this year. He stated that the performance measures established by the state and MPOs must be consistent. He also noted that FHWA is pleased with what the MPO has done so far.

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston, raised a question about the consequences of not meeting performance goals in the event of circumstances beyond the MPO's control, such as reduced funding. A. McGahan suggested that in the beginning the MPO set manageable goals that mark progress in a positive direction rather than set stringent goals.

R. Reed advised that the MPO be realistic when setting goals given the funding levels available to the MPO. He also suggested that the MPO build in to the process techniques for measuring outcomes, particularly in terms of citizen and customer satisfaction with investments. A. McGahan stated that staff will be coordinating with MassDOT and the MBTA to report on those measures.

S. Olanoff noted that there should be ways to measure where transportation needs are not met.

R. Canale raised the idea of forming an MPO committee to address the topic of performance measures. The Chair indicated that this idea would be taken under consideration.

Members then heard comments from the public.

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, recommended a newly released report from the State Smart Transportation Initiative titled, *Delivering on the Promise*, which provides an approach to developing performance measures.

John Walkey, T4 America, noted that the U.S. Department of Transportation has had online feedback tools to gather comments on developing performance measures. He asked if the MPO or MassDOT staff had provided feedback. The MPO has not.

## **11. Members Items**

John Romano, MassDOT Highway Division, announced that the MBTA will be holding four public information meetings regarding the upcoming two-year closure of Government Center Station. The meetings are scheduled for the evenings of March 19 in East Boston, March 27 in Revere, April 2 in Winthrop, and April 4 in Lynn.

## **12. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) (R. Reed) and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

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## Attendance

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### Members

### Representatives and Alternates

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At-Large City (City of Everett)	James Errickson
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Laura Wiener
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	Richard Canale
City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)	Lara Mérida
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jim Gillooly
	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Michael Chong
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Hayes Morrison
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	Marie Rose
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Ron Morgan
Massachusetts Port Authority	Lourenço Dantas
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)	Richard Reed
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Denise Deschamps
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Ed Tarallo
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Steve Olanoff
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)	Christine Stickney
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Dennis Crowley
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)	Tom O'Rourke

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**Other Attendees Affiliation**

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Callida Cenizal	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Kristin Grazioso	Office of State Senator John Keenan
Eric Halvorsen	Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Kristina Johnson	City of Quincy
Barry Keppard	Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Sandra Kunz	Braintree MAPC Representative
Michael Lang	East Braintree Civic Association
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Joe Onorato	MassDOT Highway Division
Tom Reynolds	Town of Marshfield Department of Public Works
John Walkey	T4 America / Massachusetts
Lynn Weissman	Friends of the Community Path

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**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director  
David Fargen  
Maureen Kelly  
Anne McGahan  
Elizabeth Moore  
Scott Peterson  
Sean Pfalzer  
Pam Wolfe

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