

Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region MPO Congestion Management Committee Meeting

December 6, 2012, Meeting

12:20 PM –1:45 PM, Norwood Civic Center, Willett Room (1st Floor), 165 Nahatan Street, Norwood, MA

Lourenço Dantas, Chair, representing the Massachusetts Port Authority

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Congestion Management Committee agreed to the following:

- To approve the minutes of the meeting of September 6, 2012, as corrected
- To discuss and potentially make changes to the CMP Committee's mission statement at a future meeting
- That the chairman of the Boston Region MPO Congestion Management Committee speak to MassDOT staff to seek input on creating a way to commence the MPO's low-cost intersection improvement program

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Chair's Report – *Lourenço Dantas, Massport*
3. Approval of Minutes of the September 6 Congestion Management Committee Meeting

Steve Olanoff requested that Monica Tibbits, who was listed in the minutes in the "other attendees" section, be moved from that section to reflect that she was the Regional Transportation Advisory Council representative at that meeting. The meeting minutes were approved as corrected.

4. Discussion of the Draft Memorandum "TIP Program for Intersection Improvements"

A draft memorandum to the chair of the CMP Committee, Lourenço Dantas, which had been written by committee members and staff, was discussed. This memorandum outlines the steps for starting a new low-cost intersection improvement program that would be funded by \$350,000 allocated for this purpose in the FFY 2014 TIP.

First, MPO staff outlined the contents of the memorandum. The memorandum explains that the CMP monitors transportation facilities in order to identify needs and make recommendations for the implementation of improvements. The intersection improvement program would focus on the implementation of recommendations at signalized intersections. MassDOT districts could implement short-term recommendations for MassDOT-owned roadway locations through “bookjobs” or other implementation avenues. When a project is created and funded through a bookjob, the project’s design may be performed by MassDOT Highway Division district staff. Some examples of short-term improvement projects are traffic signal retiming, signage, and striping. For municipally owned signalized intersections, retiming would be done by a contractor through this funding program, but other short-term recommendations (signing, markings, and other improvements) would be implemented using private, local, or TIP funds.

Similar Programs in Other States

Some examples of intersection improvement programs that have been implemented in other states were mentioned and explained. Brief descriptions of these intersection improvement programs are listed in the “TIP Program for Intersection Improvements” draft memorandum, which was distributed during the meeting. A summary of some of the details about other states’ programs that were discussed during the Congestion Management Committee meeting are listed below.

Wilmington, DE – The MPO prioritizes the projects for their intersection improvement program. It is currently not known what sources of funding are used for this intersection improvement program. All roads in Delaware are owned by the Delaware Department of Transportation, making it simpler to implement the programs.

Ohio – The Ohio Department of Transportation focuses on signal timing. This program consists of two contracts, in the amount of \$750,000 each, through two task order consultants that conduct traffic counts, field work, model creation, and timing optimization. Any municipality is free to apply for this program. The Ohio Department of Transportation designs and constructs the project regardless of who owns the right-of-way.

Orlando, FL – This MPO has a \$4 million program, with \$2 million dedicated exclusively to signal timing. The local municipalities work with the Florida Department of Transportation.

Existing Programs in the Boston Region MPO Area

There were several programs mentioned during the Congestion Management Committee meeting that utilized federal funds for the implementation of past projects in the Boston Region MPO area. These programs are described in the “TIP Program for Intersection Improvements” draft memorandum. A summary of the programs that were discussed at the meeting is below.

The Boston Region MPO’s Clean Air and Mobility Program – This is a federally funded \$2 million program that offers support for projects through Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. The Newton Signal Retiming Project, which is similar to the projects that would be performed under the proposed Intersection Improvement Program, was funded by the MPO’s Clean Air and Mobility Program.

MassDOT’s Stop-Controlled Intersection Program – This is a federally funded program for reducing crash rates at stop-controlled intersections.

MassDOT’s Safe Routes to School Program – This program’s intent is to improve safety for children when they are commuting to school by biking or walking. Consultants hired by MassDOT design and construct these projects.

Proposed Boston Region MPO’s TIP Program for Intersection Improvements

The MPO staff has already performed numerous intersection studies, funded through the UPWP, in which intersection signal retiming needs were identified. Therefore, it is expected that minimal additional planning and project management work would be required for an intersection improvement program that would focus on the retiming of signals.

According to MassDOT staff, the hardest part of implementing such a program would be its management, including coordination between the municipalities, MassDOT, and the consultant who would perform the retiming. After participating in preliminary meetings with various MassDOT divisions, MassDOT staff expressed some concerns about the cost-effectiveness of MassDOT-managed small projects or programs such as signal retiming. However, they are confident that such a program could be implemented if they had management assistance from MPO staff.

One proposal about how to manage this program came from the staff of MassDOT Highway Division’s Traffic Engineering Section. According to this proposal, MassDOT’s Traffic Engineering staff would contract with a consultant to produce mini-reports for intersection locations identified by MPO staff. The mini-reports would include performing traffic counts, evaluating signal operations, retiming in the field, modifying signage and

pavement markings, and assessing traffic signal equipment. Of these, only signal retiming recommendations would be implemented through the intersection improvement program. The rest of the recommendations would be implemented by MassDOT districts (via a bookjob or other means, at their discretion and according to their priorities), if the site is MassDOT-owned. If the site is municipally owned, the recommendations may be implemented by the municipality (according to their design priorities). The consultant would be paid from the program's funds for producing the mini-reports and performing the traffic signal retiming. MPO staff would assist with the management of the program, including being the liaison between the consultant and the communities that participate in the program.

A copy of the email that MPO staff received from MassDOT's Traffic Engineering Section on their proposal about how to manage this program was distributed to the committee at the meeting.

At this point in the meeting, it was recommended that Lourenço Dantas, CMP Committee Chair, discuss this issue with David Mohler, MPO Chair, about how to best manage this program, taking into account the proposals of the MassDOT Highway Division's Traffic Engineering staff.

Next Steps

The committee chair will meet with MassDOT staff to ask the questions that were raised at this committee meeting and to help create the low-cost intersection improvement program.

5. Other Business

Tom Kadzis suggested that there should be some modification of the phrasing of the Boston Region MPO's Congestion Management Committee's mission statement. It was suggested that use of the term "Single-Occupancy Vehicle" in the mission statement implies that this is the main focus of the Congestion Management Process. It was agreed that the mission statement would be reevaluated at a future CMP Committee meeting.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Attendance

| Members | Representatives and Alternates |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| At-Large City (City of Newton) | David Koses |
| At-Large Town (Town of Lexington) | Richard Canale |
| City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority) | Tom Kadzis |
| Massachusetts Port Authority | Lourenço Dantas |
| North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) | Ed Tarallo |
| Regional Transportation Advisory Council | Steve Olanoff |

| Other Attendees | Affiliation |
|------------------------|---|
| Dennis Crowley | South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) |

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Ryan Hicks
Anne McGahan
Efi Pagitsas
Scott Peterson
Pam Wolfe
