



Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

March 13, 2013 Meeting

3:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4, 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 10)

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

There were two MPO meetings since the last Advisory Council meeting. MPO staff provided an update on the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom grant application process. The March 7 MPO meeting was held in Braintree at the Town Hall. Presentation topics included a discussion on performance measures and performance based planning at the MPO. Supporting presentation documents are available at the [MPO website](#).

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2013 – *Steve Olanoff, Chair*

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes to the February 13, 2013, meeting. The minutes of the February 13, 2013 meeting were approved. The minutes of the January 9, 2013, meetings are being revised to incorporate changes recommended by members.

4. Transportation Finance Plan: The Way Forward – *Steve Woelfel, Director of Strategic Planning, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning*

In 2007, the Transportation Finance Commission estimated there was shortfall of \$15-\$19 billion (B) in funding the maintenance of the state transportation system over a 20 year period. When the Patrick administration came to office, federal transportation

Providing transportation policy advice to the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

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funds were at risk, the Mass Turnpike was faced with financing problems, and regional transportation financing was experiencing challenges. In addition, there were many competing and conflicting transportation agencies.

The administration took immediate action to turn around lagging transportation investment through the \$3 B Accelerated Bridge, and the bond bill for matching the federal highway and transit programs. Toll increases and transit service cuts were avoided. There has been significant transportation investment since 2007.

The 2009 transportation reform brought about the reorganization of the State Department of Transportation. Changes have included system efficiencies to improve service delivery and improvements in administrative and internal efficiencies saving \$500 million (M) in the first three years. The mission of the department is to become more fully transparent and to enhance our customer-oriented culture.

Other steps are improved customer service (subway count-down clocks; real-time traffic information, and mobile ticketing) electronic tolling on the Tobin Bridge and system-wide, and an asset management program that improves the assessment of agency-wide asset inventories.

Based on system requirements over the next 10 years, it is estimated that there is a funding shortfall of \$684 M per year. This amount includes:

- \$284 M for operating costs
- \$300 M for MBTA debt
- \$100 M for the RTAs

Program goals of “The Way Forward” plan include funding amounts of:

- \$5.2 B for roadway, bikes, bridges, and pedestrian infrastructure
- \$3.8 B for existing transit infrastructure
- \$275 M for the RMV, and the Aeronautics Division for local airports

Highway investment would include:

- \$1.2 B for bridge funding
- \$1.25 B for multi-modal programs for local and regional projects
- \$930 M for three critical regional projects (I-91 Viaduct in Springfield, and the I-93/I-95 Interchanges in Canton and Woburn)
- \$430 M for bicycle and pedestrian programs
- \$1 B for facilities funded with Chapter 90 funds

On the transit side:

- \$2.4 B to replace Red, Orange, and Green line cars
- \$850 M for bus power and facilities
- \$200 M for modernization and bus rapid transit, pilot projects, and other innovative projects

Other spending would include:

- \$125 M for the statewide airport plan
- \$150 M for the RMV modernization, creating new site located at creative venues

These investments are part of a growth agenda and include projects like the Knowledge Corridor, Assembly Square, and Exit 8 in Fall River. The plan's six large transit projects are: South Coast Rail (\$1.8 B), Green Line Extension (\$675 M), South Station Expansion (\$850 M), rail service between Springfield and Boston (\$362 M), rail service between Boston and Hyannis (\$21 M), and rail service between Pittsfield and New York City (\$114 M).

Major Boston MPO projects that are not being proposed in this plan include:

- Urban Ring (\$2.4 B)
- North-South Rail Link (\$6-8 B)
- Red-Blue Connector (\$748 M)

This plan will consider needs throughout the state. Many places in the state have very limited service.

The money would come from a variety of sources:

- gas tax (21 cents per gallon) will yield \$662 M in 2013
- sales tax will yield \$312 M
- registry and fees will yield \$658 M
- tolls will yield \$334 M
- other revenues will yield approximately \$115 M

Revenue projections are based on historic trends and should yield \$22.6 B over the next 10 years. These statistics do not include transit operating revenues. On the expenses side of the ledger, there are over 4,000 public sector employees. Operating costs include for 2013:

- \$229 M Personnel costs

- \$197 M Details and services, rent
- \$7 M Office and administration
- \$159 M Highway Maintenance

The MassDOT budget includes funding for the MBTA and RTA Operations and grants to other Commonwealth agencies.

- \$160 M MBTA Debt Relief
- \$54 M Transfer of inspection revenues
- \$68 M RTA Assistance
- \$24 M Other Agencies

MassDOT will be facing an operating deficit no matter what the course of action. The current 10-year deficit is projected to be \$3.3 B.

The total cost of operating the system without borrowing for operating costs, is \$13 B / 10 year program requiring \$1.02 B per year. Making up the difference will require more reform; find more cost savings, finding potential revenues including fare increases and tolls regularly over time, and all-electronic tolling. Clearly more revenue is needed.

S. Woelfel stated that the debate is ongoing and urged everyone to be heard on these issues.

Questions and Answers

- Steve Olanoff asked if the reference to asset management related to the highway divisions since the MBTA already has a good understanding of state of good repair. S. Woelfel said the practice of asset management needed to be maintained in both divisions, but indicated that in terms of MAP-21 much of the emphasis is on the highway side, but all four divisions are involved.
- S. Olanoff asked about specific Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects being considered. S. Woelfel indicated that the Chelsea BRT may be considered, but are not currently being advanced. This is not being conducted as a part of the Urban Ring.
- David Montgomery asked if there was a condensed summary of the points made in The Way Forward plan that could be distributed. S. Woelfel will forward one if there is such a summary.
- S. Olanoff noted that a number of highway division projects were completed in a timely manner while the MBTA projects seemed to take more time and were often over-budget. S. Woelfel stated that the office of performance management has emphasized improved implementation procedures through sharing best practices

throughout the Highway Divisions. S. Olanoff recommended that members view MassDOT's online video on reconstructing the Longfellow Bridge.

- Mike Gowing asked about the metrics being considered in the new performance management standards. S. Woelfel suggested that people check the website for the specific metrics being used for the individual programs throughout the department.
- John Businger wondered why the North-South Rail Link was not a part of the South Station Expansion Project. He continued by asking if MassDOT responded to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) during the Northeast Corridor High Speed Rail Project comment period. S. Woelfel indicated that he would get back to the Advisory Council with any comment letter submitted by the Secretary. J. Businger continued by questioning the costs used in discussing the North-South Rail Link. S. Woelfel said that many communities throughout the state are lacking in fundamental transportation services and would be further neglected if only Boston projects were considered.
- Barry Steinberg commented that MassDOT does not appreciate the importance of high speed rail to the Commonwealth's future. He continued by reading a prepared statement on the need to improve Northeast Corridor high speed rail. S. Woelfel referred his response to the previous question which corresponded to the concerns raised here.
- S. Olanoff mentioned there were no plans for an underground component to South Station Expansion. S. Woelfel said that nothing is precluded at this time and that the Environmental Notification Form has not yet been filed. He further stated that funding realities, as pointed out in The Way Forward, emphasized the need to be realistic in the projects that are advanced.
- John McQueen asked about the diesel multiple units (DMUs) and where they are applicable. S. Woelfel indicated targeted locations would be where light-rail may be an alternative or commuter rail corridors.
- Bob McGaw wondered why the state takes so long to complete highway projects and asked if there is a way to better inform the system user on the costs, timeliness and efficiencies of completing projects. S. Woelfel stated that there have been cost cutting measures including the use of civilian flaggers. Regarding moving faster, the "Fast 14" bridge replacement project employed construction management strategies that improved construction completion timelines. Another construction project with improved completion performance is the Royalston Bridge Replacement project. Massachusetts has a reputation nationally of completing projects on a timely basis.
- Chris Anzuoni commented that the bus industry is an important part of the transportation system but it is not included in The Way Forward. S. Woelfel

agreed with the importance of the private carriers and said that they are part of the solution.

- Schuyler Larrabee suggested the ongoing Route 128 construction project should clearly delineate where the new sections of construction begin and end which would help to reassure the public that incremental progress is being made. S. Woelfel took this under advisement.
- John McQueen asked about the increase in Chapter 90 funds and questioned if these funds were meant to implement policy objectives by MassDOT. S. Woelfel said that municipal projects would be encouraged to follow certain goals and objectives of programs underway at MassDOT. These programs include Complete Streets, GreenDOT, and mode shift goals.
- Frank DeMasi commented that a good procurement program must be intact in administering capital improvements as a part of a capital asset management plan. S. Woelfel indicated that MassDOT is moving in this direction.

5. Bylaws Review –*Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Membership Committee Chair*

Committee Chair M. Tibbits-Nutt introduced the bylaw changes and noted that the proposed changes to the Bylaws were distributed two months ago for consideration. After review and discussion, the Advisory Council would vote on the adoption of these changes as was indicated in previous notices and announcements.

M. Tibbits-Nutt opened the floor for questions on the proposed changes.

- Frank DeMasi asked if more description could be added to the description of the Ad Hoc Committees. M. Tibbits-Nutt indicated that this detail is beyond the scope of the current recommendation of the Committee. Further changes could be addressed through the Advisory Council Chair who forms the Ad Hoc Committees.

A motion to adopt the Bylaws as revised was moved and seconded. By unanimous vote, the changes to the Bylaws were adopted. Chairman Olanoff thanked M. Tibbits-Nutt and the Membership Committee for their work on this project.

6. FFY 2014 UPWP & TIP Updates: *Michelle Scott, UPWP Manager, and Sean Pfalzer, TIP Manager, MPO Staff*

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Michelle Scott indicated that the Unified Planning Work Program will compile all planning studies to be conducted by the MPO over the next fiscal year, FFY 2014. Ideas for planning studies to be considered for inclusion in the Universe of Proposed New Projects were solicited from MAPC Subregions, TIP and UPWP Workshops held in Quincy and Everett, the general public, and municipalities in the MPO region, as well as MPO staff. Proposals that were made but were not advanced in last year's document were also considered for inclusion in the Universe of Proposed New Projects. The

UPWP includes both programs that continue from year to year and new discrete studies that will be advanced in the coming year. The link on the [MPO webpage](#) to these UPWP materials is found on the “Upcoming Meetings” tab. Click on the date on the calendars which shows meetings of the Unified Planning Work Program Committee (Feb. 27 and March 28, 2013) to find the supporting documents that were distributed at these meetings.

MPO staff is currently preparing its recommendation of projects for the March 28 meeting of the UPWP Committee of the MPO. On April 4, the MPO will hear the discussion of the UPWP Committee recommendation. Then on May 2, the MPO will release a Draft UPWP for a public comment period possibly ending June 4. During this time, several public outreach meetings will be conducted by the MPO staff. In the month of June, the MPO will consider public comments. The MPO is scheduled to vote on the final document on June 27.

Questions and Answers

- Louis Elisa asked about the efforts being made to reach underserved communities and whether low income and minority populations are being targeted by the MPO public participation program. M. Scott said that The MPO will reach out to the MPO's Transportation Equity and Environmental Justice contacts.
- S. Olanoff indicated that the Advisory Council does not sit on the UPWP Committee but that he does attend the meetings. At this stage of review, they are reviewing a large number of planning concepts. Once the Committee selects the list of prospective new planning projects, the MPO will consider the Committee's recommendation.
- Bob McGaw wanted a more definitive list of what is being done. M. Scott explained the nature of several projects and recommended a review of the document on the website.
- John Daley asked about the impacts of the proposed transportation finance plan on the UPWP. M. Scott said that the 'The Way Forward' finance plan covers capital costs so it does not impact the UPWP.
- S. Olanoff indicated that the UPWP Committee of the Advisory Council is an Ad Hoc Committee and it meets to draft a comment letter on the UPWP. This usually occurs in the month prior to the MPO vote on the final UPWP document.
- In response to a question from M. Gowing, M. Scott described the procedures involved in submitting new project ideas to staff.

Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

Sean Pfalzer described the Universe of Projects and the evaluation process for projects proposed for funding. A Functional Design Report (FDR) is required for conducting an

evaluation. Fifty-one projects were evaluated. Forty-two of the projects were brought forward from previous years and nine were new projects. Some of the new projects in the Universe include:

- Derby Street in Hingham
- Audubon Circle in Boston
- Nine intersections in Boston
- Route 1/ Walnut St. Interchange in Saugus
- Mainline improvements on Route 128 in Peabody and Danvers
- Interchange Ramps on Route 1A and I-495
- Interchange ramps for Route 27 & Route 9 in Natick
- Needham St./Highland St. Project in Newton
- Route 1A /Upland Rd. in Norwood

Evaluation results are available on the [MPO website](#). Over the month of March, staff will review projects while considering the constraints of the funding targets, and in consideration of schedule and cost changes for currently programmed projects.

In compiling the staff recommendation, the First Tier List of projects are the high scorers. Other factors that are taken into consideration are geographic equity, project costs, and whether projects are in the Long Range Transportation Plan. Another consideration is whether a project is considered a priority project by a community and MAPC Subregion.

The remaining timeline for developing the TIP is to have the Staff Priority completed by March 28. These priorities will be discussed at the April 4 MPO meeting. The Draft TIP will be released after the first May MPO meeting and will parallel the development schedule of the UPWP. The document is scheduled to be adopted at the June 27 meeting of the MPO.

Any comments on the evaluations can be submitted online. The evaluations and the staff recommendation will be available at the MPO Website before the April 4 MPO meeting. The documents can be converted into a spreadsheet to be used in sorting or analyzing the information as interests require.

- Jeff Rosenblum commended the MPO staff for stressing that project proponents provide information related to the criteria used in evaluating the projects and also in making the criteria and results of the evaluations available on the MPO website.

7. Committee Reports:

There were none.

8. New Business:

Mike Gowing announced the awarding of a Community Innovation Challenge Grant (CICG) to fund a transportation project for Acton. The grant will support the forming of a TMA among 8 communities to form last-mile transportation in the MAGIC region.

John Businger asked if the Advisory Council could get more information on MassDOT's response to the NEC High Speed Rail public process. A motion to send a letter to MassDOT to ask for the extent of MassDOT's participation in the FRA public participation process was made but was dropped due to lack of quorum. S. Olanoff agreed that he would follow up on this matter.

Marilyn Wellons expressed an interest in finding out the response by MassDOT to the Northeast Corridor High Speed Rail public process. Further, she wondered if the minutes will reflect this discussion. S. Olanoff said that a reference to the discussion will be made in the minutes.

Louis Elisa expressed his desire to see that an answer to the question on the FRA response is made. Several members agreed that they expected a response to the Advisory Council when it makes a request.

M. Tibbits-Nutt suggested that S. Olanoff ask MassDOT if they had responded to the FRA Process. She stated that anything that is not an activity being pursued by either the MPO or the Advisory Council is not relevant to the Council's mission.

S. Olanoff said he would talk with MassDOT in order to find out if the Department did respond to the FRA during the public participation process.

9. Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded at 4:45 PM. The motion carried.

Attendance

MassDOT*
SWAP*
EOHHS HST
Joint Legislative Transportation Committee
MassRides
Seaport Advisory Council
Acton
Belmont
Cambridge
Marlborough
Millis
Needham
Quincy
Wellesley
Westwood
AACT
American Council of Engineering Companies
Association for Public Transportation
Boston Society of Architects
Boston Society of Civil Engineers
Massachusetts Bus Association
MassBike
MassCommute
MoveMassachusetts
National Corridors Initiative
Riverside Neighborhood Association
Route 128 Business Council
WalkBoston

Guests

Department of Developmental Services
Ed Lowney

CTPS Staff

Pam Wolfe
David Fargen
Sean Pflazer
Michelle Scott

(* Non-voting members)

Representative

Steve Woelfel & Calli Cenizal
Representative
Theodora Fisher
Meaghan Hamill (Sen. McGee)
Kristin Slaton
Louis Elisa
Mike Gowing
Bob McGaw
Jeff Rosenblum & Daniel Clark
Walter Bonin
Dom D'Eramo
David Montgomery
Susan Kosim
Frank DeMasi
Steve Olanoff, Chair
Mary Ann Murray
Tom Daley
Barry M Steinberg
Schuyler Larrabee
Topher Smith
Chris Anzuoni
David Ernst
David A Kucharsky
Jon Seward
John Businger
Marilyn Wellons
Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Vice Chair
John McQueen

Ralph Edwards
Resident

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