

# REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



## Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

### April 10, 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 7)

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

The MPO discussed the report from its UPWP Committee on the list of proposed new projects for the FFY 2014 Unified Planning Work Program and had a presentation on the Staff Recommendation for the FFYs 2014-17 Transportation Improvement Plan. These are the main topics for this meeting. The Massachusetts House and Senate leadership are now putting together transportation funding legislation that is approximately \$500 million less than the funding level requested by Governor Patrick. The MPO supported the Governor's Plan, called *The Way Forward*, and wrote a letter to the House and Senate leadership respectfully, but strongly requesting that the Legislature, in light of the huge current needs for investment in the transportation infrastructure, provide more funding. Secretary Davey has expressed support of the Governor's \$1 billion plan at numerous events. S. Olanoff recommended that all members contact their legislators to support the plan offered by the administration for funding transportation for the upcoming fiscal year.

#### 3. Approval of Meeting Minutes of January 9 and March 13, 2013 –

*Steve Olanoff, Chair*

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes to the January 9, 2013, meeting as revised. The minutes of the January 9, 2013 meeting were approved.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes to the March 13, 2013, meeting as revised. The minutes of the March 13, 2013 meeting were approved.

#### **4. FFY 2014 UPWP Committee Recommendation – Michelle Scott, UPWP Manager, MPO Staff**

Michelle Scott identified the general types of federal fiscal year (FFY) 2014 Unified Planning Work Program projects and program planning activities and reviewed the process for developing the UPWP project universe, estimating funding, and selecting and recommending new projects.

The different types of planning activities include ongoing MPO planning, continuing discrete planning activities, or new, discrete planning activities, all to be supported with federal 3C funds. Non-3C funded planning projects requested by transportation agencies, and other major transportation planning work happening in the region are also included in the UPWP. This presentation focuses on the new discrete planning activities that are 3C-funded.

In November 2012, FFY 2014 UPWP development commenced as MPO staff began UPWP outreach. The FFY 2014 Universe of New Projects summarizes new planning projects for consideration for funding in the federal fiscal year beginning October, 2013. Planning project ideas come from public outreach activities, transportation agencies, other planning documents, past UPWP comments and requests, and CTPS ideas.

The MPO UPWP Committee reviewed the Universe of Projects, along with a proposed FFY 2014 budget in February and March to develop a recommendation. The draft proposals and budget have been reviewed by the MPO at its April 4 meeting and are scheduled to be voted on for public review on May 2.

Estimated 3C funds for new projects take into account monies from FHWA PL and FTA Section 5303 sources. After covering funds for ongoing and continuing planning activities, the remaining funds for new projects are determined. The current estimate of money available for new projects in the upcoming federal fiscal year is approximately \$470,000.

Recommended new projects have been selected based on a number of factors: UPWP Committee member priorities; MPO visions and policies; Federal, state and regional guidance; support for a balanced mix of transportation modes; location-specific issues; and ways to enhance the MPO's technical capacity and knowledge base.

Nine new planning projects were recommended by the UPWP Committee:

- Traffic Signal Retiming Program
- Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment

- Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways
- TIP Project Impacts Before-After Evaluation
- Pedestrian Signal Phasing Study
- Environmental Justice – Analysis Methodology Review
- Transportation Investments for Economic Development
- Development of Methodology to Evaluate Potential Limited-Stop Service on Transit Routes (including Key Route Corridors)
- Identification of Areas with Mode Shift Opportunities

The UPWP also includes projects to be conducted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.

On May 2, 2013, the MPO is scheduled to vote on a draft UPWP for public review.

### **Questions and Answers**

***Advisory Council members made several recommendations and comments:***

- The Transportation Investments for Economic Development study should involve the Massachusetts Department of Economic Development. (J. McQueen) *M. Scott will relay this suggestion to the project manager.*
- The Identification of Areas with Mode Shift Opportunities project should take into account public health considerations. (J. McQueen) *M. Scott will relay this suggestion to the project manager.*
- Project descriptions should indicate how the results of the studies will be implemented and used. (R. McGaw) *M. Scott and Pam Wolfe replied that the MPO is very interested in having the results implemented. Likelihood of implementation is a factor in site selection for some studies. Even in studies that develop knowledge, information is shared and can be useful not only to the MPO, but to other agencies, organizations and individuals.*
- Another criterion for project selection should be population and employment density. (J. McQueen) *S. Olanoff indicated that this is already done in the TIP, but may be difficult for UPWP projects because they are conceptual ideas.*

**Members asked several questions:**

- Where are the locations of the pedestrian signalization projects? (J. McQueen) *M. Scott said that these details have not yet been identified. Study sites are typically developed as the project manager begins to refine the project in a work scope.*
- Would the Development of Methodology to Evaluate Potential Limited-Stop Service on Transit Routes project be a way to implement the Urban Ring? (M. Wellons) *P. Wolfe stated that this project is not about implementing the Urban Ring.*
- Are comments considered prior to the May 2 MPO meeting? (D. Montgomery) *S. Olanoff stated that all current comments can be directed to M. Scott. The Advisory Council will compose a letter during the public comment period for submission to the MPO. Advisory Council members are encouraged to take part in the composition of the comment letter.*

**5. FFY 2013-16 Draft Amendment Four and FFYs 2014-17  
Transportation Improvement Program Staff Recommendation –  
Sean Pfalzer, TIP Manager, MPO Staff**

***FFY 2013-16 Draft Amendment Four***

Draft Amendment Four of the FFYs 2013-16 Transportation Improvement Program is out for public review and the MPO is scheduled to take action on this on April 18. The changes involve the purchase of ten locomotives for the commuter rail system. The second item is for additional funding for the reconstruction of Trapelo Road in Belmont. With this funding, this project would be re-advertised for construction bids.

***FFYs 2014-17 Transportation Improvement Program Staff Recommendation***

The Staff Recommendation for the TIP includes capital projects and programs that are programmed for funding through the MPO over the next four years. The Staff Recommendation is for the regional highway target funding available for discretionary spending by the MPO.

The process of compiling the Universe of Projects started in November 2012, when staff began meeting with MAPC subregions and also held TIP-Building workshops and Be Informed, Be Involved information sessions. Through these activities, staff provided information on how municipalities and members of the public can participate in the TIP process and asked municipalities to submit their priority projects for consideration for programming.

Project evaluations were conducted in February, in which 52 projects of the Universe were evaluated. In March, the MPO received information on the funds available for MPO highway discretionary programming for the federal fiscal years 2014-17. These funds are referred to as “target funds.” Staff prepared the First-Tier List of Projects in March considering the project evaluations and project readiness.

Staff considers several factors when preparing the Staff Recommendation. First, staff recognizes the MPO policy of maintaining previous programming commitments. Their costs and schedules are updated. Next, in light of available funding after listing the previously-programmed projects, staff looks at projects from the First-Tier List of Projects. Other considerations include geographic equity, Long-Range Transportation Plan implementation, and cost.

Funds for the four-year planning cycle totaled \$297 million in this TIP. There were seven projects with cost increases totaling \$21.5 million. The Reconstruction of Route 18 in Weymouth, costing \$40 million and spanning three years, is moved due to changes in the project schedule.

A discussion of the impact of cost and schedule changes and how these might be improved upon resulted from observations made by Jeff Rosenblum. S. Pfalzer and P. Wolfe explained that the changes are the natural result from the increased information available as a project’s design advances.

S. Pfalzer led a discussion of the considerations that go into project scheduling and cost changes. He indicated that the MPO has the authority to accept or not accept projects that experience significant changes. He noted that the TIP is dynamic, but the document reflects a snapshot in time. It will change as projects change.

R. McGaw suggested that there might be considerable cost savings if police detail requirements were eliminated from construction contracts.

The Staff Recommendation includes four First Tier projects that scored well based on the evaluation criteria:

- Reconstruction of Audubon Circle in Boston
- Reconstruction of Montvale Ave. from I-93 to Central Street in Woburn
- Reconstruction of Main St., Route 30, in Southborough
- Assabet River Rail Trail in Acton/Maynard

S. Pfalzer described the details of the four projects.

Commitments made by the MPO for implementing the Long-Range Transportation Plan include the Green Line Extension Project and the I-95/Route 128 Add-a-Lane project. Although this does not fully address the projects recommended in this time band of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, it does mark a beginning in funding these improvements.

Historically, TIP programming by project type allocates over 85 percent of available funding to both Arterial and Intersection or Major Highway projects. The remaining funding categories include spending for Transit Projects (flexed from highway funding sources), Bike and Pedestrian, and Clean Air and Mobility projects. In 2014-17, \$74.1 million will be spent annually.

S. Olanoff commended S. Pfalzer for the presentation of the TIP projects in one spreadsheet. The MPO website has all the materials used for the considerations presented at the meeting. People can track any changes that occur in the TIP throughout the planning process by referencing the MPO website.

S. Pfalzer indicated that the recommended projects for the TIP will be made available for the MPO meeting on April 18 and are scheduled to be voted on for distribution for public comment on May 2. S. Olanoff suggested that members keep current on the projects by reviewing the documents that are posted prior to the MPO meetings.

#### **6. Committee Reports:**

S. Olanoff asked for members to volunteer to help in drafting the Advisory Council's TIP and UPWP comment letters.

#### **7. New Business:**

There was none.

#### **8. Member Announcements:**

There were none.

#### **9. Adjourn:**

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded at 4:40 PM. The motion carried.

**Attendance**

EOHHS HST Office

Joint Legislative Transportation Committee

MassRIDES

Belmont

Cambridge

Lexington\*

Needham

Westwood

AACT

American Council of Engineering Companies

Massachusetts Bus Association

MoveMassachusetts

National Corridors Initiative

Riverside Neighborhood Association

WalkBoston

**CTPS Staff**

Pam Wolfe

David Fargen

Sean Pfalzer

Michelle Scott

(\* Non-voting members)

**Representative**

Theodora Fisher

Steven Smalley

(Sen McGee)

Leon Papadopoulos

Robert McGaw

Jeff Rosenblum

Richard Canale

David Montgomery

Steve Olanoff

Mary Ann Murray

Tom Daley

Chris Anzuoni

Jon Seward

John Businger

Marilyn Wellons

John McQueen

**Representative**

MPO Staff

MPO Staff

MPO Staff

MPO Staff