

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

December 19, 2013 Meeting

10:10 AM – 11:50 AM, State Transportation Building, State Transportation Library, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Ned Codd and Clinton Bench, Chairs, 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 Amendment Three to the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Paths to a Sustainable Region*
- approve Amendment One of the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2014-17 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

There were none.

2. Chair's Report—*Ned Codd, MassDOT*

N. Codd announced that Ed Tarallo, North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn), will be retiring and expressed appreciation for his years of service. During his career in transportation planning, E. Tarallo served as the planning director for the City of Malden, the president of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), a member of the MBTA Advisory Board, and planning director for the City of Woburn. He has represented the North Suburban Planning Council on the MPO since November 2011.

Jay Corey, City Engineer, City of Woburn, will be replacing E. Tarallo on the MPO board for an interim period.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, reported on the Congestion Management Committee meeting, which took place this morning. He noted that projects selected by the committee for funding this year through the MPO's Intersection Improvement Program are awaiting approval of the Congestion Management and Air

Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program Committee. The CMAQ Committee is expected to report in January 2014.

L. Dantas also reported that Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) has acquired a database of traffic travel time data for freeways and arterials that includes traffic speed data. Staff has proposed nine performance measures associated with this data, which will be presented to the MPO in January. These measures will be used in the Needs Analysis of the LRTP.

4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*David Montgomery, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

D. Montgomery reported that the Advisory Council's December meeting featured a presentation by Marie Trottier, Assistant General Manager for Systemwide Accessibility at the MBTA, on accessibility issues. MPO staff members Anne McGahan, Sean Pfalzer, and Michelle Scott also provided updates on the LRTP, TIP, and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) respectively. At the next Advisory Council meeting MPO staff members Scott Peterson and Ed Bromage will be giving a presentation on LRTP planning tools and modeling software.

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

K. Quackenbush reported on some professional activities that members of the MPO staff are currently engaged in. Four staff members are participating on panels of the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) of the Transportation Research Board (TRB). The TRB brings together practitioners to work with TRB staff and to direct consultants on projects that are focused on issues of national interest. TRB covers the direct cost of staff's participation on these panels. By participating on these panels staff improves their understanding of the subject matter and the work that staff does for the MPO becomes strengthened.

Anne McGahan is participating on a panel called, "Input Guidelines for Motor Vehicles Emissions Simulator Model," which is developing guidelines for datasets that will be used in the MOVES model. Ying Bao is on a panel called, "Methods for Analyzing Environmental Justice Issues Related to Tolling." Seth Asante is on a panel called, "Roundabout Crash Prediction Method for the Highway Safety Manual." K. Quackenbush is on a panel called, "Estimating Bicycling and Walking for Planning and Project Development."

In addition to the TRB panels, Ed Bromage recently participated in the "Workshop on Analysis of Network and Non-Network Impacts upon Traveler Choice," which has been

organized by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and relates to improving travel model practice in this country.

6. Long-Range Transportation Plan Amendment Three, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*—Anne McGahan, MPO Staff

The draft of Amendment Three to the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Paths to a Sustainable Region*, was released for public review between November 12 and December 11. The amendment was proposed in order to program two new federal grant-funded projects – *Connect Historic Boston* and the *South Station Expansion and Layover Facility*. Projects such as these that cost in excess of \$10 million and are funded with federal funds must be programmed in the LRTP.

During the public review period, the MPO received one comment from the Sierra Club, which expressed opposition to programming the grant for the *South Station Expansion and Layover Facility* project. The Sierra Club opposes the project due to concerns that it will result in an increase in air pollution that will affect residents who are already suffering the worst air pollution in the metropolitan area. The Sierra Club is also concerned that an expanded station will prevent a start-up recycling business from being established near Widett Circle, and that valuable real estate will be removed from the tax base.

A motion to approve Amendment Three to the LRTP, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*, was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (John Romano), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent). The motion carried.

7. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment One—Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff

Draft Amendment One of the FFYs 2014-17 TIP was released for public review between November 12 and December 11. The amendment was proposed in order to reprogram several federal earmarks, program three discretionary grants (for the *Connect Historic Boston*, *South Station Expansion and Layover Facility*, and *Quincy Center Multimodal Enhancement and Preservation* projects), adjust costs for highway maintenance and bridge projects, and to remove one bridge project (which will be funded with non-federal aid).

During the public review period, the MPO received eleven comments. As noted under the previous agenda item, the Sierra Club expressed opposition to programming the grant for the *South Station Expansion and Layover Facility* project. There were also nine comments from Newton residents who requested that the project for the *Reconstruction of Highland Avenue and Needham Street* in Newton and Needham make use of an

adjacent rail bed for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The chief elected officials of the municipalities of Malden, Revere, and Saugus also requested that the MPO direct funds for the *Route 1 Transportation Improvement* project, which would widen Route 1 between Routes 60 and 99. The officials stated that there is a bottleneck at the location that adds to traffic delays, reduces air quality, and is an impediment to economic development on Route 1 and surrounding areas. (The comment letters were provided to members.)

Also during the public review period, staff incorporated updates to project costs into the TIP. The *Burlington, Chelmsford – Pavement Preservation on Route 3* project increased in cost to \$9.5 million. The cost of the *Weymouth, Braintree, Quincy – Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 3* project slightly decreased to \$11 million. The *Sharon, Walpole – Interstate Maintenance and Related Work on Interstate 95* decreased in cost to \$7.7 million; it is scheduled to be advertised in February.

A motion to approve Amendment One of the FFYs 2014-17 TIP as presented was made by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent), and seconded by the City of Boston (Jim Gillooly).

Discussion

David Koses, At-Large City of Newton, discussed the comments from the Newton residents. He noted that the commenters are interested in having bicycle access as part of the *Reconstruction of Highland Avenue and Needham Street* project. This request relates to the *Route 128 Add-a-Lane* project, he explained, because bridges over Route 128 are being removed. The commenters are requesting that a bridge be added back in to connect over Route 128. D. Koses asked MassDOT's representatives about construction work that would have to be done now in order for a bicycle bridge to be constructed in the future.

Marie Rose, MassDOT, noted that bridge removal is indeed part of the *Route 128 Add-a-Lane* project, and that the installation of a new bicycle bridge is not a part of the project. Because Route 128 is being widened, abutments for a bicycle bridge would have to be constructed now.

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), noted that the MPO will likely hear more about the *Reconstruction of Highland Avenue and Needham Street* project during the development of the next TIP. He reported that the City of Newton is interested in converting the adjacent rail corridor to a bicycle path, while the Town of Needham is interested in using it as a transit corridor. MAPC conducted a concept study for transit usage and identified many challenges.

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood), asked if consideration is being given to making the bridge abutments wide enough to accommodate both a rail line and a bicycle/pedestrian path. E. Bourassa replied no. M. Rose added that the abutments to the railroad bridge over Route 128 are being removed to accommodate the widening of the highway. The current work does not preclude the construction of a rail trail bridge in the future, however. She offered to get more information from the project manager.

As Needham's representative on the Advisory Council, D. Montgomery noted that there are diverse opinions among residents of Needham and Newton regarding this matter and that people have a desire to preserve options for the future. He suggested that the MPO hold one of its meetings next year in Needham.

Members then voted on the motion. The motion carried.

Following the discussion of the TIP, J. Romano raised a member's item. Details are provided under the Members Items heading.

8. FFY 2013 Community Transportation Technical Assistance Program—Seth Asante, MPO Staff, and Sarah Kurpiel Lee, MAPC

K. Quackenbush introduced the presentation on the FFY 2013 Community Transportation Technical Assistance program. The program, a joint effort between CTPS and MAPC, has been operating for four years. Through this program, the two organizations provide quick response technical analysis and advice to communities that have requested assistance regarding local transportation issues. The program is designed to take advantage of the considerable knowledge that both organizations have in such areas as bicycle and pedestrian planning, traffic analysis, and parking. Recommendations from the program are generally low cost solutions to improving infrastructure or advice that helps inform the planning process.

CTPS and MAPC invite municipalities to submit applications by making announcements in the MPO's newsletter, *TransReport*, and during outreach for the UPWP. In FFY 2013 the locations selected for study were in the municipalities of Everett, Milford, Reading, Revere, and Wilmington.

S. Asante gave a PowerPoint presentation on the studies for Everett, Milford, Reading, and Revere. S. Kurpiel Lee followed with a presentation on the study for Wilmington.

Everett

The City of Everett requested that CTPS review conceptual plans for traffic safety and traffic operations improvements at Glendale Square (Ferry Street and Elm Street).

There are mixed land uses in the study area, including a high school, shopping centers, and restaurants. There have been a significant number and bicycle and pedestrian crashes on Ferry Street especially at intersections of Broadway and Elm Street. The study recommendations include installing countdown timers at the intersections, sharrows on Ferry Street, and “No Turn on Red” signs at the approach to Elm Street. The City of Everett is considering these recommendations.

Revere

The study for Revere examined safety and operations at Park Avenue and Dale Street. The City of Revere has received complaints from people concerned about pedestrian safety at the intersection because traffic does not slow upon entering the intersection. The City of Revere asked CTPS to provide recommendations for the alignment of a traffic island that would provide for pedestrian safety while not impeding the movement of MBTA buses that use Dale Street as a detour route on snow days. In addition to making recommendations about the island, CTPS recommended installing signage to alert drivers of crossing pedestrians and imposing parking restrictions on corners to improve visibility.

Milford

For the Town of Milford, CTPS examined safety and operations improvements at Route 140 and South Main Street. There are problems at the intersection because of the geometry of the traffic islands, which is confusing to drivers, and sidewalks that are not connected. CTPS made short- and long-term recommendations. In the short-term, CTPS recommended installing signs at appropriate locations to reduce driver confusion and connecting sidewalks to improve safety for pedestrians. In the long-term, CTPS recommended that the entire intersection be reconstructed.

Reading

For the Town of Reading, CTPS examined the idea of imposing a “road diet” on a section of Main Street (Route 28), from South Street to Washington Street, to improve safety and better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians. FHWA guidelines specify that for a road diet to be successful, the roadway should have an average daily traffic (ADT) count of less than 20,000 vehicles. All but a small portion of the study area near Interstate 95 have an ADT that makes the roadway appropriate for a road diet. CTPS recommended a road diet for the study area, except for the section near the highway. The proposed road diet would take away two vehicle lanes from this four-lane roadway and provide a median and bicycle lanes.

Wilmington

The Town of Wilmington requested MAPC's assistance with planning for Cross Street. Cross Street is used by drivers as a cut-through between Routes 38 and 129. It has no sidewalks or curbing, and most vehicles travel northbound on the road. The town has purchased a parcel of land along the road which it plans to convert into a park. MAPC has provided advice on bicycle and pedestrian access and parking alternatives for the proposed park.

The study examined traffic level of service and crash data. There are a high number of crashes on the southern intersection where there is a sight distance problem. MAPC's short-term recommendations are to convert Cross Street to a one-way northbound configuration with parking near the proposed park and a bicycle lane. MAPC is working with the town and its consultants on a long-term solution, which may involve returning to a two-way configuration.

Discussion

Joe Onorato, MassDOT Highway District 4, reported that MassDOT is designing a resurfacing project for Route 28, which is expected to be advertised in November 2014. If there is buy-in from Reading, the proposed road diet could be included in that project. A public process would have to be conducted before the road diet could be implemented, however.

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), inquired about the budget for the Community Transportation Technical Assistance program, the number of applications received, and the application process for FFY 2014. He also inquired about how well staff is doing on reaching out to communities.

K. Quackenbush reported that the budget for FFY 2013 was \$40,000 for CTPS and \$20,000 for MAPC. E. Bourassa noted that the budget is about the same for FFY 2014.

Efi Pagitsas, MPO staff, reported that approximately eight to ten applications were received for the FFY 2013 cycle, though a couple of municipalities withdrew their applications because they found another way to meet their needs. She explained that CTPS and MAPC staff meet each year to evaluate the merits of each application. The agencies conduct outreach in coordination with the UPWP process. This year's solicitation will end in late January. E. Pagitsas reported that outreach to communities has been successful. Staff has already received several applications for FFY 2014.

James Errickson, At-Large City of Everett, expressed the City of Everett's appreciation for the Glendale Square study.

9. FFY 2014 Site Selection for Three Studies—*Seth Asante, MPO Staff*

K. Quackenbush introduced a presentation about the process for selecting study locations for three programs that will be conducted in FFY 2014:

- *Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment*
- *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways*
- *Safety and Operations Analyses at Selected Intersections*

The MPO staff conducts these programs each year. In past years, staff has informed members about the site selection process for each of these studies individually. For the sake of efficiency, this year staff is describing the site selection process for all three projects collectively.

S. Asante then gave a PowerPoint presentation on the selection process for FFY 2014 studies. He reported that for the *Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment* study staff drew from a list of arterials identified in the LRTP that have problems due to congestion or that are in need of modernization. For the *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways* study, locations were identified based on comments received during outreach for the UPWP and comments from municipalities and subregional groups. For the *Safety and Operations Analyses at Selected Intersections* study, locations were identified from the list of top 200 high-crash locations and from comments received from municipalities.

The selection process involved assembling data on each of the candidate roadway segments and intersections, including data on congestion and safety (for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians). Then staff reviewed input received from municipalities, subregional groups, and MassDOT. Lastly, staff applied a set of selection criteria to evaluate each location.

Selection criteria that apply to all three studies focus on the following: safety conditions; multimodal or transit significance; regional or subregional significance; implementation potential; and regional equity. Another criterion, for congestion, is applied to candidate locations for the *Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment* study. Additional criteria for subregional priority and livability are applied to the *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways* study.

Four locations were rated highly in the selection process for the *Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment* study. Staff is recommending studying two segments of Route 140 in Franklin. The segments are on either side of downtown Franklin; the downtown would be excluded from this study because a TIP project will be addressing that segment of Route 140. This location was selected because it is in the South West

Advisory Planning Committee (SWAP) subregion (and no *Priority Corridors* work has been conducted in that subregion to date), and because the Town of Franklin, the SWAP subregion, MassDOT Highway District 3, and the 495/MetroWest Corridor Partnership all support a study of the location.

Six locations were rated highly for the *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways* study. Staff is recommending a study of Washington Street in Newton. This location was selected because the City of Newton is interested in redesigning the roadway to better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians. There have been a high number of bicycle and pedestrian crashes there. The location was also prioritized because the *Subregional Priority Roadways* program has not yet addressed a location in the Inner Core subregion.

Nine locations were rated highly for the *Safety and Operations Analyses at Selected Intersections* project. Staff is recommending a study of four high-crash locations with safety issues:

- Washington Street (Route 53) and Broad Street in Weymouth
- Medway Road (Route 109) at Kmart Shopping Plaza in Milford
- High Street (Route 109) at Nahantan Street in Westwood
- High Street (Route 109) and Pond Street in Westwood

Discussion

D. Koses stated that the City of Newton is enthusiastic about the selection of Washington Street in Newton. He noted that the roadway is dominated by vehicles and difficult to cross. The city is interested in the opportunity to reduce vehicle lanes from four to three.

E. Bourassa suggested that Route 1A in Lynn would be a good candidate for next year's *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways* program. He discussed the redevelopment of the Lynn waterfront, which will include the Blossom Street ferry terminal, and how the highway currently presents a barrier to pedestrian access to the waterfront. C. Bench concurred with the suggestion and noted that this section of Route 1A is overbuilt for the intended land uses. Members and staff then discussed the issue of engaging the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) early on in the study. C. Bench noted that MassDOT's legislative affairs office could be helpful in engaging DCR.

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, inquired about the factors that staff considers when determining the implementation potential of particular projects. S. Asante explained that staff will not recommend a location that has been studied

previously. Staff considers whether there is support from the community for a project; if a community is not interested in implementing study recommendations, staff will not recommend that location. Staff also considers regional equity in the selection process, so that projects are distributed across the MPO region.

C. Bench asked how staff determines whether a community is interested in a study. S. Asante replied that staff will contact municipal planners and MassDOT District Offices to assess their interest. Staff also reviews comments that have been received by the MPO.

C. Bench asked if staff makes these calls for every candidate project, or only those that rise to the top during the evaluation process. S. Asante replied that staff focuses on those locations that stand out.

10.State Implementation Plan Update—*Sreelatha Allam, MassDOT*

S. Allam gave an update on the projects in the State Implementation Plan (SIP).

The peer review is ongoing for the *Fairmount Line Improvement* project. Results are expected by the end of this year.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has approved MassDOT's petition to remove the requirement to design the *Red Line – Blue Line Connector* project from the SIP.

Regarding the *Green Line Extension* project, the project team has submitted a FFY 2015 New Starts update and project finance plan to the Federal Transit Administration. The team received bids for the procurement of Green Line vehicles in September. The MassDOT board is expected to make a decision regarding this procurement in March/April 2014.

Discussion

R. Mares inquired about the availability of materials that the MBTA submitted to DEP on interim mitigation measures for the *Green Line Extension* project. C. Bench replied that MassDOT would provide those materials to him.

11.Members Items

J. Romano reported that the Callahan Tunnel will be closing for construction starting on December 27. Information about alternate routes for traffic is available on MassDOT's website. Joe Cosgrove, MBTA, noted that because of the construction on the tunnel, the MBTA has delayed the closure of Government Center Station until March. C. Bench added that riders of the Silver Line could expect longer travel times (20 minutes or more) during peak periods on the Silver Line while construction on the tunnel is

underway. The MassDOT officials asked members to share this news with their constituents.

On behalf of Secretary Davey, MassDOT, and the MPO, C. Bench expressed appreciation for E. Tarallo's years of service. E. Tarallo also expressed his pleasure at having worked with members of the MPO.

It was noted that some members may have conflicting schedules on January 9 when the MPO is scheduled to meet and some MAPC subregional groups will be meeting. Members agreed to keep this in mind when planning the MPO's agenda.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) (E. Tarallo) and seconded by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham) (Dennis Giombetti). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members

Representatives and Alternates

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
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Clinton Bench
	Ned Codd
	Marie Rose
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
	Sreelatha Allam
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Joe Cosgrove
Massachusetts Port Authority	Lourenço Dantas
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
	Eric Halvorsen
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)	Tina Cassidy
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Ed Tarallo
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	David Montgomery
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)	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees Affiliation

Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT District 3
Erin Kinahan	MassDOT District 6
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Joe Onorato	MassDOT District 4
George O'Toole	Celtic Recycling

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
Seth Asante
Maureen Kelly
Robin Mannion
Anne McGahan
Elizabeth Moore
Efi Pagitsas
Scott Peterson
Sean Pfalzer
Pam Wolfe
