

Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Unified Planning Work Program Committee Meeting

March 20, 2014 Meeting

12:15 PM to 1:45 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Sreelatha Allam, Chair, representing the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Materials

Materials for this meeting included:

- A copy of the meeting agenda
- A set of updated project descriptions from the draft FFY 2015 UPWP Universe of Proposed New Projects
- A UPWP project proposal letter from the Town of Hudson
- An updated FFY 2015 UPWP Universe of Proposed New Projects summary table
- A spreadsheet documenting MPO staff preliminary priorities for new projects for the FFY 2015 UPWP
- A UPWP Committee Members' Priority Project Survey form

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Sree Allam, Chair, Unified Planning Work Program Committee (Massachusetts Department of Transportation) called the meeting to order at approximately 12:15 PM. UPWP Committee members, MPO staff, and other attendees introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 9.) Michelle Scott (MPO Staff) reviewed the meeting materials.

2. Updates to Draft FFY 2015 UPWP Universe of Proposed New Projects

M. Scott presented several updates that have been made to the draft FFY 2015 UPWP Universe of Proposed New Projects and related materials since the February 20, 2014 UPWP Committee meeting.

New Projects

- *Watertown: Development Impacts on Transportation (E-2)*. This proposed project would examine how proposed developments for the Pleasant Street and Arsenal Street corridor in Watertown would affect capacity and service on the roadway and transit networks. CTPS and MAPC staff would work together on quantifying potential development and transportation impacts, and would recommend transportation mitigation ideas.

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) explained that Watertown contacted MassDOT, the MBTA, and MAPC about this issue. Watertown's concerns include whether there could be transit mitigation for some of this growth, such as new service or coordination with Transportation Management Areas (TMAs). David Koses, At-Large Cities (City of Newton) noted that there may be no existing transit service on the Pleasant Street portion corridor, and that the portion of Pleasant Street in neighboring Waltham is experiencing similar growth. E. Bourassa noted that this study would focus specifically on Watertown, although he will be in conversation with the planning director in Watertown. Scott Peterson, MPO staff, added that the study would address all applicable transportation modes.

Laura Wiener, At-Large Towns (Town of Arlington) asked if this study could be made more broadly applicable than just to the Arsenal Street corridor. E. Bourassa noted that the MPO frequently does site-specific studies, and that this is high-density corridor with a lot of growth potential in the Inner Core. He added that this could be a learning opportunity, which could be used to encourage more communities in the region to develop coordinated mitigation plans. D. Koses added that there would be benefits from encouraging multiple developments to coordinate on transportation service and improvements. E. Bourassa explained that this study would be geared towards that type of planning.

- *Hudson / Marlborough Suburban Mobility Study (F-4)*. This proposed project would examine opportunities to develop transit connections within the Town of Hudson and between Hudson and Marlborough. Hudson recently became a member of the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA). MPO staff would look at existing travel patterns, demand for service, and make recommendations.

D. Koses asked whether there is an existing MPO transit service planning project that supports the MWRTA. Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director explained

MPO staff supported the MWRTA by analyzing gaps and possible improvements for transit service at the time when existing services were being consolidated to form the MWRTA. More recently, MPO staff has assisted the MWRTA regarding re-routing services. This proposed project would look at the transit needs in Hudson and between Hudson and Marlborough. Like similar MPO studies, it would likely involve a market analysis and an examination of where new or enhanced service could be provided. MPO staff would then likely identify potential alternatives for improvements and provide estimated costs. Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham) said that this study would benefit not only Hudson and Marlborough, but also other communities by demonstrating that the expansion of the MWRTA is ongoing. D. Koses noted that it would be beneficial to have CTPS involved in Hudson's transit planning process.

Other Updates

MPO and MAPC staff noted the following:

- *Past Corridor Improvements.* The Universe now lists locations that were studied in past iterations of the Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways (A-1); Low-Cost Improvements to Bottleneck Locations (A-2); and Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment (A-3) studies.
- *Updates on Transportation Bond Bill.* The transportation bond bill, which contains a Complete Streets certification program that would support Complete Street improvements in the Commonwealth's municipalities, has passed both houses of the Massachusetts Legislature. The proposed project B-3: Community Pedestrian Network Studies could potentially support program applicants. E Bourassa noted that MassDOT has yet to commit to the \$50 million proposed for the program, and said that any support from the region's cities towns encouraging MassDOT to commit to the funding would be appreciated.
- *Consistency Updates for Evaluation Results.* Updates were made to ensure that LRTP Vision Topic, Project Function, and Focus Area ratings are consistent between the Universe of Proposed New Projects and other summary sheets.
- *Updates to MAPC Studies.* Costs were updated for the Electric Vehicle Research and Procurement for Municipal Fleets (H-1) and Stream Crossing Inventory of Local Roads (H-4) proposed projects. MAPC also provided more information on

the Right-Size Parking Tool (H-3) project. E. Bourassa added that MAPC is pursuing additional discretionary funding for this project.

Michael Chong, Federal Highway Administration, asked for additional information on the Stream Crossing Inventory of Local Roads (H-4) proposed project. E. Bourassa explained that this proposed project would provide environmental expertise to municipalities regarding replacing culverts on federal-aid roads. This project would involve mapping a pilot watershed to identify environmentally-sensitive areas. Future steps may involve more analysis at specific sites, in coordination with municipalities. The proposed project would also address adaption for extreme weather events.

M. Chong also asked about the functions of the Right-Size Parking Tool (H-3). E. Bourassa explained that the outcome of the study would likely be municipal zoning changes regarding parking ratios. D. Giombetti added that suburban communities typically have parking requirements that are a lot higher than may be necessary. He and E. Bourassa explained that this study would provide needed data to support cities and towns in promoting changes to these requirements.

Hayes Morrison, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) explained that Somerville has been doing analysis and parking studies, based on models from Seattle, to promote dialogue about optimal parking capacity. She said that it has been good for the City to explain development impacts and mitigate the perception that every person visiting a location is bringing at least one car. She said that it would be good to see MAPC doing similar research and other communities in the region getting involved.

M. Chong asked whether it would be possible to link mobility and traffic flow considerations into this project, if it were to be funded with UPWP funds. Leah Sirmin, Federal Highway Administration, suggested that the project could consider the impacts of people circulating in search of parking. H. Morrison suggested that this project could be tied to Evaluation of Information-Technology Based Programs for Encouraging Mode Shift (F-1) to provide a mobility component. Dennis Crowley, SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) cited an example in Medway where the Town has been negotiating with the owner of a plaza to make improvements that would support traffic flow in exchange for reduced parking requirements. S. Peterson (MPO Staff) explained that MPO staff had access to research on the amount of time people have spent on finding parking, which they would make available to MAPC.

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood) asked whether this project would support identification of appropriate parking maximums as well as minimums. E. Bourassa explained that the project would help find the right level of parking for developments, and may deal with cases where there is not enough parking being proposed.

David Montgomery, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, noted that this project highlights that parking patterns have changed over time, and asked whether MAPC had considered the utility lifespan of the tool. E. Bourassa explained that the proposed tool acknowledges an existing trend, which is that developments are building too much parking in many cases, and that MAPC would need to see how this project unfolds.

3. MPO Staff Preliminary Priorities: New Discrete Projects for FFY 2015

M. Scott described the structure of the MPO staff preliminary priorities document. These priorities have not been bounded by a fiscal constraint. The preliminary priority list has a mix of project types and performs well in terms of addressing various LRTP vision topics, project function, and UPWP focus areas. While the preliminary priority list doesn't include a stand-alone transit project, several proposed projects in the list would consider transit as part of their scopes.

S. Olanoff asked about some of the reasons that projects were put on the low-priority list. K. Quackenbush explained that MPO staff developed its high and low-priority lists with an eye to project benefits, as opposed to project problems, although individual staff members may vary in their perspectives on project benefits and viability. Staff also sought to create a balanced mix of projects, and some did not make it onto the priority list because there were other, higher-priority projects that addressed that same topic. Also, some proposed projects, such as Watertown: Development Impacts on Transportation (E-2), might be able to be funded through another source.

S. Olanoff asked about the prioritization about the Universal Unlimited Transit Pass / EcoPass Program Feasibility Study (F-3), noting a recent youth protest regarding transit passes. K. Quackenbush explained that for some transit-oriented projects, it could be beneficial for the MPO to pursue them, but it could also be argued that it might make sense for the MBTA to fund them. The Universal Unlimited Transit Pass / EcoPass Program Feasibility Study (F-3) might fall into the latter category. S. Olanoff responded that these passes could be a way to generate revenue as an alternative to fare increases.

S. Olanoff asked why the Hudson / Marlborough Suburban Mobility Study (F-4) was not included on the priority list. K. Quackenbush explained that for a lower amount of funding, MPO staff might be able provide a basic analysis of transit service in that area through an ongoing transit service planning technical assistance program funded through the UPWP.

D. Koses requested a review of the Core Capacity Constraints (E-1) proposed project, and asked whether information that would address some of the study's research questions is already available. K. Quackenbush provided background on the study proposal, and explained that the study team would use best estimates of development in the area from MAPC and other entities to generate information from the regional travel demand model set. This information would be used to determine capacity constraints. He added that this would be a more detailed analysis of capacity constraints in the core area than would be conducted as part of a long-range transportation plan needs assessment. S. Peterson added that this study would look at the new developments and focus on the transit system. K. Quackenbush added that results from this study could help inform discussions about how transportation mitigation from development occurs in the City of Boston, and whether more emphasis is needed on transit mitigation.

S. Olanoff asked if the full estimated project cost (\$100,000) would be needed to conduct this activity, if information is already available. K. Quackenbush explained that new demographic forecasts would be available from MAPC by the time MPO staff might be doing this study. Information is known about capacity constraints now, but results from the travel demand model set would provide more information about the future.

D. Koses asked whether outcomes of this study would affect investments in the long-range transportation plan. K. Quackenbush explained that this is possible. He added that regardless of the specific outcomes, this study would produce information that could be used by the MPO, the MBTA, or others. S. Peterson noted that this research could identify development impacts that legislators could use as a basis for helping the MBTA focus mitigation funds on specific improvements to the transit system.

L. Wiener noted that communities are encouraged to develop around transit, but that transit capacity isn't changing. She explained that this is creating problems near Alewife Station, as an example, and added that she is interested in this study for the ways it could inform transit mitigation. D. Koses added that there are areas of concern in Boston, Newton and Cambridge, and this study is an opportunity to address these areas together.

S. Olanoff noted that Northeastern University is reporting future transit capacity constraints, and asked whether there had been information sharing between the MPO and the University. S. Peterson noted that this study focuses on the impacts of new developments on the transit system in the core area, whereas studies conducted at Northeastern University have been examining total population and employment and their resulting impacts on the transit system. He added that information sharing could be possible. E. Bourassa noted that Northeastern University's studies have not produced results as in-depth or refined as those that could be produced by this study.

D. Crowley asked whether MPO staff could identify the high priority bike gaps that would be studied under Bicycle Network Gaps: Feasibility Evaluations (B-2). K. Quackenbush explained that the MPO's Bike Network Evaluation, which would identify these gaps, is underway. If the MPO were to fund the Bicycle Network Gaps: Feasibility Evaluations project, MPO staff would recommend locations and then seek the MPO's input and approval. This process would be followed in other proposed projects that address specific locations. Efi Pagitsas (MPO Staff) added that Bicycle Network Gaps: Feasibility Evaluations project would study one to three identified gaps, and that geographic equity and MPO feedback are always considered in location selections.

4. UPWP Committee Member Project Priorities Survey

M. Scott described the structure of this survey. Members were asked to complete the survey at the meeting or to turn it in by the morning of Monday, March 24. M. Scott said that she would report on the survey results at the next meeting.

5. Discussion of Proposed New Projects and Staff Priorities

D. Crowley asked whether costs had been refined for the proposed projects. M. Scott explained that more refined estimated costs have been provided for proposed projects on the MPO staff preliminary priorities sheet. K. Quackenbush explained that staff does not yet have an estimate of MPO dollars that could be devoted to new studies, though the amount expected for this year is likely to be at least as high as last year's amount (\$545,000), and likely greater than that.

K. Quackenbush asked S. Allam about the status of allocations for MPO dollars. S. Allam reported that MassDOT is working on the allocations. M. Chong indicated that FHWA will be doing some coordination to support this process.

6. Next Steps for FFY 2015 UPWP Development

M. Scott reported that at the April 3 UPWP Committee Meeting, MPO staff will present a proposed FFY 2015 UPWP budget, which will show amounts for ongoing and

continuing projects, as well as an amount for new discrete studies. MPO staff will present a finalized staff recommendation for new discrete projects for FFY 2015. At the April 3 meeting, UPWP Committee members may decide to adopt the staff's budget and new project recommendations or to develop different recommendations for consideration by the MPO. Members were asked to reserve time on the morning of April 10 in the event they would like to continue their deliberations at an additional meeting.

7. Member Items

There were none.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the UPWP Committee was scheduled for April 3.

9. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by E. Bourassa and seconded by H. Morrison. The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Laura Wiener
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Hayes Morrison
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Sree Allam
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Dennis Crowley
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)	Steve Olanoff

Other MPO Members	Representatives and Alternates
Federal Highway Administration (<i>ex officio</i>)	Michael Chong
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	David Montgomery

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Leah Sirmin	FHWA
Tony Sousa	City of Everett

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director
Efi Pagitsas
Scott Peterson
Michelle Scott
Pam Wolfe
