

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

June 5, 2014 Meeting

10:10 AM – 11:35 AM, Salem City Hall Annex, 120 Washington Street, Third Floor,
Salem

Clinton Bench, Chair, representing Richard Davey, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization agreed to the following:

- extend the public review period for the draft federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2015-18 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) by 15 days
- release draft Amendment Three to the FFYs 2014-17 TIP for a 15-day public review period
- approve the work program for the *2015 National Transit Database Data Collection and Analysis*
- approve the minutes of the MPO meetings of April 17 and May 1, 2014

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

Rinus Oosthoek, Salem Chamber of Commerce, welcomed the MPO members to Salem. On behalf of the businesses that are members of the Chamber of Commerce he asked the MPO to reconsider the decision to postpone the *Salem – Reconstruction of Canal Street* project to FFY 2015. The Chamber supports the project being implemented as soon as possible. He remarked on the importance of the project given that Salem businesses lost about 20-30% of business last year.

David Knowlton, Engineer for the City of Salem, informed the MPO that Mayor Kimberley Driscoll would like to address the MPO regarding the Canal Street project. She was delayed in coming to this meeting, however.

2. Chair's Report—*Clinton Bench, MassDOT*

C. Bench announced that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has awarded several ferry boat discretionary awards to the MBTA. These awards will be used to replace equipment on the high speed catamaran ferry, "Lightning," which provides ferry service between Boston, Hull, and Hingham; to construct an inner harbor water taxi docking

facility at Lovejoy Wharf in Boston; and to upgrade the Pemberton Pier Ferry terminal in Hull.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports

Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, announced that the MPO's Administration and Finance Committee will convene on the morning of June 19.

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

D. Montgomery noted that the Advisory Council is preparing a comment letter on the FFYs 2015-18 TIP to deliver to the MPO.

The Advisory Council will meet next on June 11 at 3:00 PM. MassDOT Secretary Richard Davey is expected to be the guest speaker.

The Advisory Council's Freight Committee will meet also on June 11, at 1:00 PM, to discuss input to the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan.

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

K. Quackenbush announced that Joe Cosgrove will be leaving his position at the MBTA to take a position at the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission. Ron Morgan, MBTA, will take his place as the MBTA's representative on the MPO.

6. Welcome from Host Municipality

Mayor Driscoll was unable to attend the meeting.

7. FFYs 2015-18 Transportation Improvement Program—*Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff*

C. Bench opened this agenda item by noting that the MPO is developing the draft FFYs 2015 – 18 TIP, which will list the capital projects to be implemented in the coming four years. This TIP will go into effect in October 2014. In May, the MPO released the draft TIP for a 30-day public review period. Since that time, MassDOT has provided the MPO staff with information regarding projects to be funded through the Statewide Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Transportation Enhancements (TE) Programs, as well as updates to Statewide Bridge projects. Members were provided with these project lists. S. Pfalzer then reported on the updates to the TIP since it was released for public review.

Statewide Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality and Transportation Enhancements Programs

The Statewide CMAQ and TE Programs list has been updated to include cost adjustments to several projects. The following projects have decreased in cost:

- *Acton and Maynard – Assabet River Rail Trail* (this project will be partly funded with TE Program funds)
- *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2B and 2C*
- *Brookline – Pedestrian Bridge Rehabilitation (Carlton Street Footbridge)*
- *Wayland – Signal and Intersection Improvements at Route 27 and Route 30*
- *Stoneham – Signal and Intersection Improvements at Route 28 and North Street*

The *Holliston – Signal Installation at Route 16 and 126 and Oak Street* project has been removed from the TIP because of readiness concerns. Little progress has been made on the design of the project in recent years. The *Holliston – Multi-use Trail Construction on a Section of the Upper Charles Rail Trail* project also has been removed from the TIP because of readiness concerns. The Town of Holliston has not yet acquired the right-of-way that is required for the project from CSX.

One new project has been added, the *Wakefield and Lynnfield – Rail Trail Extension*, with a cost estimate of \$7 million.

Statewide Bridge List

The updates to the Statewide Bridge list include cost adjustments to several projects.

The *Gloucester – Bridge Preservation, Route 128 over Annisquam River* project and the *Dedham – Bridge Replacement, Providence Highway over Mother Brook* were both advertised in FFY 2014 at a lower cost estimate than previously anticipated. The cost of the Gloucester project has been reduced by \$3.3 million and the Dedham project has been reduced by \$3.8 million.

Cash flows have been adjusted for the *Boston – Bridge Replacement, Massachusetts Avenue over Commonwealth Avenue* project and the *Boston – Bridge Rehabilitation, North Washington Street over the Charles River* project.

Two projects have increased in cost. The *Quincy – Bridge Replacement, Robertson Street over Interstate 93 and Route 3* project increased by \$430,855. The *Waltham – Woerd Avenue over the Charles River* project increased by \$1 million.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommended that the MPO extend the public review period for the TIP by 15 days to give the public additional time to review these proposed changes. The new public review period would extend to July 7, 2014. The MPO could then vote on the TIP on July 10, 2014.

Motion and Discussion

A motion to revise the FFY 2015-18 TIP as presented, release the revised document for public review, and extend the existing public review period by 15-days was made by the MBTA (R. Morgan), and seconded by the MassDOT Highway Division (John Romano).

Members discussed the motion.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), asked if the Town of Holliston was notified of the proposed changes to the TIP and whether the town had concerns about this action. S. Pfalzer replied that the town has been notified and that MPO staff and municipal officials have discussed the *Holliston – Multi-use Trail Construction on a Section of the Upper Charles Rail Trail* project. He noted that the town is working to acquire right-of-way for the project and is expected to make the acquisition in the fall. The town is applying for a statewide grant to fund a portion of the right-of-way costs. The town does not support removing the project from the TIP, the town understands MassDOT Highway Division's concerns about the readiness of the project.

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), asked if the Town of Holliston planned to use TIP funding to purchase the right-of-way. S. Pfalzer replied that the town is considering various options. One option involves keeping this segment of the trail as an unimproved surface, as exists on other portions of the trail.

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), inquired about the Town of Holliston's position regarding the *Holliston – Signal Installation at Route 16 and 126 and Oak Street* project and why staff is proposing to remove the project from the TIP. S. Pfalzer reported that there has been no progress on the project's design since the 25% design plans were prepared in the late 1990s. There is a concern that the project would not be ready for advertisement. Marie Rose, MassDOT Highway Division, added that while there was local and legislative interest in the project in 1999, no progress further progress was made on the design since that time, so it is unclear whether the town is still interested in the project.

D. Giombetti asked that either the MPO staff or MassDOT Highway Division staff inform the Town of Holliston about the project's status and the next steps for advancing the project. C. Bench offered to have MassDOT District 3 communicate with the town officials.

Members then voted on the motion to revise the FFY 2015-18 TIP as presented, release the revised document for public review, and extend the existing public review period by 15-days. The motion carried.

8. Draft Amendment Three to the FFYs 2014-17 Transportation Improvement Program—Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff

S. Pfalzer provided an overview of the proposed Amendment Three to the FFYs 2014-17 TIP, which is the program that is currently in effect. There have been changes to both the highway and transit programs of the TIP. The changes to the highway program reflect project cost increases and affect the MPO's target funding. The changes to the transit program affect funding for the MBTA, MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA), and the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA), and include the programming of Section 5310 community transit awards and Mobility Assistance Program funding.

Highway Program

Proposed changes to the target funding for the Highway Program include cost changes to the following projects:

- *Beverly – Reconstruction and Signal Improvements on Rantoul Street (Route 1A): \$4.1 million cost increase*
- *Hanover – Reconstruction of Washington Street (Route 53): \$823,045 cost increase*
- *Reading – Reconstruction of West Street: \$158,367 cost decrease*
- *Needham and Wellesley – Add-a-Lane Contract V: increase of \$1.7 million in cash flows*

Other proposed changes include moving the *Salem – Reconstruction on Canal Street* project from the FFY 2014 element to the FFY 2015 element, and changing the funding source for the *Arlington – Bikeway Connection at Intersection of Route 3 and Route 60, Massachusetts Avenue, Pleasant Street, and Mystic Street* project from CMAQ to Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). The Arlington project location has been the focus of a roadway safety audit. Staff is awaiting information about the portion of the project that will be eligible for HSIP funding, based on the road safety audit.

Transit Program

Proposed changes to the transit program include the following:

- programming of projects funded by the Section 5310 transit grants and the Mobility Assistance Program
- removal of a \$30 million MBTA project for the procurement of Red Line and Orange Line vehicles; this project will be funded with state monies
- addition of a \$30 million MBTA project for Green Line signal upgrades

- addition of a CATA program to rehabilitate and renovate its administration and maintenance facility
- programming of state funds for MWRTA's intermodal transit terminal
- addition of funding for the replacement of vehicles in the MWRTA fleet and for CNG upgrades to buses
- programming of funds for the 128 Business Council's operating costs of the Alewife shuttle service and for the purchase of new mini-buses
- funding for new vehicles for ten Councils on Aging
- funding for SCM Community Transportation, Inc. to expand access to medical dial-a-ride and nutritional shopping services

Staff offered to provide more detailed information about the transit grant awards for those who are interested.

Motion and Discussion

In response to a question from C. Bench about the funding for the 128 Business Council, S. Pfalzer explained that the funding was previously programmed in the TIP. The proposed changes concern the matching funds. The 128 Business Council was awarded toll credits, and the federal/local match was changed from a 80%/20% split to a 50%/50% split because the funds will be used for operations.

C. Bench also inquired about funding for the 128 West Transportation Council, Inc., and he asked staff to check to see if this organization was a subsidiary of the 128 Business Council. S. Pfalzer stated that the funding is for the Alewife shuttle service.

C. Bench noted that the transit grant awards are being presented to the MPO now because they have recently been awarded by MassDOT's Rail and Transit Division and because of a change in the FTA's grant awards system. The MPO is being asked to expedite the programming of these awards so that they are programmed by the end of June. This would require the MPO to have a shortened public review period for this amendment.

P. Regan asked whether the removal of the line item for the procurement of Red Line and Orange Line vehicles would have an impact on that procurement. C. Bench and R. Morgan replied that the MBTA's procurement schedule would remain the same.

Tom Kadzis, City of Boston, noted that funding for the Red Line and Orange Line cars has been included in the TIP for several years. He asked if any money has been obligated yet. C. Bench replied that he is not aware that any money has been obligated, but that the MBTA is expected to release a request for proposal for the construction of the vehicles within the next year or so.

D. Crowley asked if the *Beverly – Reconstruction and Signal Improvements on Rantoul Street (Route 1A)* project has been advertised and he inquired about the reason for the significant increase in the cost of the project. C. Bench replied that the project has not been advertised. Marie Rose, MassDOT Highway Division, explained that costs increased between the submissions of the 25% design plans and the 75% design plans and the cost of certain items were underestimated. The project will be advertised in September 2014.

A motion to release draft Amendment Three to the FFYs 2014-17 TIP for a 15-day public review period was made by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent), and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan).

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council, inquired about the reason for the increase in the cost of the *Hanover – Reconstruction of Washington Street (Route 53)* project. M. Rose explained that costs increased between the submissions of the 75% design plans and the 100% design plans because of inflation and because costs were underestimated.

Members then voted on the motion to release draft Amendment Three to the FFYs 2014-17 TIP for a 15-day public review period. The motion carried.

9. Work Program: National Transit Database—Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff

K. Quackenbush presented the work program for the *2015 National Transit Database Data Collection and Analysis*. CTPS has been conducting this work for many years to assist the MBTA with its submission to FTA's National Transit Database (NTD). Transit agencies must submit data to the NTD in order to be eligible to receive federal funding.

The data gathered through this work program pertains to passenger boardings and passenger miles travelled. Automated collected data, such as automated fare collection (AFC) data, has been used increasingly for this work. This work program differs from those of previous years in that staff will use automatic passenger counter (APC) data to compile passenger boardings and miles travelled data for motor buses and bus rapid transit, assuming that the MBTA receives approval from FTA to use this method.

Traditionally, staff has collected data by conducted ridechecks, which is a highly accurate method of data collection. The use of automated data instead of ridecheckers will reduce the costs of conducting this work. However, this year, staff will continue to conduct sample ridechecks on certain buses to check the accuracy of the APC data. If

there are differences between the two data collection methods, staff will apply adjustment factors to the APC data.

This work program would be funded by the MBTA. In addition to supporting the MBTA, this work will benefit the MPO by providing data that can be used for a variety of planning purposes.

Motion and Discussion

A motion to approve the work program for the *2015 National Transit Database Data Collection and Analysis* was made by the MBTA (R. Morgan) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa).

P. Regan asked if staff would be checking the APC equipment on buses. K. Quackenbush replied that staff would be checking the equipment in order to be able to compare to the data that is collected manually to that collected by the APC system. Staff will continue to rely on AFC data as well.

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, raised the issue of fare evasion and expressed concern that undercounting of passengers on bus routes by the APC system could put those routes at risk for service cuts. He noted that this work program could help address that issue. C. Bench then noted that the APC system captures riders that do not pay fares. He also clarified that the purpose of this work program is to collect data on total passenger boardings and miles traveled by mode. The MBTA is using APC data, however, to conduct service planning.

Members then voted on the motion to approve the work program for the *2015 National Transit Database Data Collection and Analysis*. The motion carried.

10. MPO Meeting Minutes—Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of April 17 was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) (Tina Cassidy). The motion carried.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 1 was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the City of Boston (T. Kadzis). The motion carried.

11. FFY 2013 Safety and Operations at Selected Intersections—Mark Abbott, MPO Staff

K. Quackenbush introduced the *Safety and Operations Analyses at Selected Intersections, FFY 2013* study. The MPO staff conducts safety and operations studies as an ongoing program. By the end of FFY 2014, staff will have studied 43 intersections

in 37 communities in the region. The benefits of these studies include enhancing safety, improving traffic operations, and reducing travel times.

M. Abbott then gave a presentation on the studies conducted in FFY 2013, which focused on the following locations:

- Franklin Street (Route 37) at West Street and Granite Street in Braintree
- North/South Franklin Street (Route 37) at Union Street/Plymouth Street (Route 139) in Holbrook
- Western Avenue (Route 107) at Washington Street (Route 129) in Lynn
- Lexington Street at Beaver Street in Waltham

The objective of the study was to examine the four selected intersections to identify issues relating to the operation of motor vehicles (including trucks), bicycles, pedestrians, and transit vehicles; to recommend short- and long-term solutions to the problems; and to coordinate with MassDOT and municipalities on the implementation of the recommendations. The study was consistent with the MPO's visions and policies.

The selection of the study locations was a two-step process. First, consideration was given to crash data, travel-time data, and community interest in implementing study recommendations. Twenty-one locations were identified for further study. Those locations were ranked based on scoring criteria that recognized bicycle and pedestrian crashes, congestion, transit significance, regional significance, and interest from MassDOT or municipalities for implementing improvements. The four intersections noted above were selected for further study.

Common issues and concerns identified in the study included the following: crashes; outdated signal equipment; inefficient signal design; lack of pavement markings and signage; lack of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations; and sub-standard geometric design. Recommendations for improvements to the study locations included the following: upgrades to signal equipment and signal timing for pedestrian accommodation; intersection striping and signing; replacement of signal equipment; incorporation of new signal design standards.

The implementation of the recommendations would be expected to produce safety benefits as well as operational benefits, such as a reduction in traffic delays which in turn improves air quality. Short-term recommendations from the study could be implemented by municipalities or the MassDOT District Offices. Long-term recommendations of the study can be used to start the process toward creating projects.

Discussion

L. Dantas asked whether the municipalities involved in the study are aware of the problems at the intersections or whether these studies make them aware of the problems. M. Abbott replied that staff begins each study by meeting with municipal officials and planners. Staff finds that sometimes the problems are known to them, but other times problems may be less obvious (for example, when there is a lack of bicycle accommodations).

L. Dantas inquired about the new pedestrian signal standards and flashing yellow left-turn signals. M. Abbott explained that the new accessibility standards for pedestrian signals include a countdown signal and he described the signal heads that contain a light for a flashing yellow left-turn signal. The left-turn signal is included in Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which defines standards for traffic control devices.

Richard Canale, At-Large Town of Lexington, asked if the roundabout screening tool, which was developed by the MPO staff, has been used enough so that staff would be able to characterize locations where roundabouts would be effective or not effective. M. Abbott noted that staff created the tool for MassDOT. He was not aware how frequently the tool is used by MassDOT staff.

D. Crowley inquired about the cost of the study. K. Quackenbush reported that it cost \$67,000.

D. Crowley asked whether there are any data to show how many recommendations from past studies have been implemented. He also asked whether during the location selection process, staff evaluates whether municipalities will act on the recommendations. K. Quackenbush confirmed that staff does consider whether municipalities are willing to follow through. This is a major criterion in the selection process. Sometimes a municipality will implement recommendations and other times the MPO study will serve as a conceptual plan that is the first step in a process toward designing a project.

M. Abbott added that staff engages the municipalities early in the study process. Staff has found that municipalities have shown strong interest in implementing short-term recommendations. The long-term recommendations generally are more difficult for municipalities to implement. Some recommendations can be implemented by MassDOT District Offices as part of maintenance projects.

12. Members Items

C. Bench noted that it is MassDOT's intention to advertise the *Salem – Reconstruction of Canal Street* project this fall so that construction can begin in the spring of 2015. While the City of Salem and businesses on Canal Street would like the project to begin this summer that will not be possible because of challenging right-of-way issues. He noted that MassDOT remains committed to the project.

J. Romano announced that MassDOT Highway Division will begin substructure work on Interstate 90 for a median barrier replacement project after July 4th. This work will require a lane closure. Also after July 4th, MassDOT Highway Division will start a maintenance project on the Bowker Overpass.

M. Rose suggested that MassDOT Highway Division staff could give the MPO a presentation on roundabouts.

13. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the North Suburban Planning Council (T. Cassidy) and seconded by the MBTA (R. Morgan). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
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)	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Michael Chong
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Clinton Bench
	Marie Rose
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Ron Morgan
Massachusetts Port Authority	Lourenço Dantas
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
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)	Aaron Clausen
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	David Montgomery
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Dennis Crowley
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Lynn Ahlgren	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Sree Allam	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT Highway District 3
Jane Colman	North Shore Career Center
Jeffrey C. Doherty	Snakebite Realty LLC
Norm Ketola	North Shore Career Center
David Knowlton	City of Salem
Mark Leavitt	Salem Car Wash

Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council
Joe Onorato	MassDOT Highway District 4
Rinus Oosthoek	Salem Chamber of Commerce
Robert Preczewski	Salem Police Traffic
Mark Whitmore	North Shore Career Center

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
Mark Abbott
Maureen Kelly
Anne McGahan
Scott Peterson
Sean Pfalzer
Pam Wolfe
