

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

May 15, 2014 Meeting

9:05 AM to 9:50 AM, 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 revised draft CTPS FFY 2015 UPWP budget (redlined to remove a non-3C funded project)
- A revised draft MAPC FFY 2015 UPWP budget
- A revised Boston Region MPO Staff Recommendation for FFY 2015 UPWP New Discrete Projects
- A packet of draft UPWP descriptions for proposed new CTPS UPWP projects
- A handout detailing a UPWP project proposal from the Conservation Law Foundation

Decisions

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee agreed to the following:

- Adopt the revised MPO staff recommendation for the budget and new projects for the FFY 2015 UPWP—modified to remove the proposed Community Pedestrian Network Studies project (\$40,000) and include the Fairmount Line Station Access Analysis (\$40,000)—as the revised UPWP Committee Recommendation to the MPO for the FFY 2015 UPWP.

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Sree Allam, Chair, Unified Planning Work Program Committee (Massachusetts Department of Transportation) called the meeting to order at approximately 9:05 PM. UPWP Committee members, other MPO members, MPO staff, and other attendees introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 8.) Michelle Scott (MPO Staff) reviewed the meeting materials.

2. FFY 2015 UPWP Development: Current and Upcoming Steps

M. Scott explained that MPO staff requests that the UPWP Committee vote to revise their recommendation on a budget and set of proposed new projects for the FFY 2015 UPWP at today's meeting, as finalized information FFY 2015 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) metropolitan planning funding (also called 3C funding) is now available. Overall, the amount of metropolitan planning funding is less than what was available for FFY 2014. She said that the Committee's recommendation will be presented to the MPO later that morning, and that MPO staff will request that the MPO vote to release a draft FFY 2015 UPWP for public review. The UPWP Committee will convene in June to discuss public comments received on the draft UPWP, and the MPO is scheduled to vote on the final FFY 2015 UPWP on June 26, 2014.

3. Updated on Budget and Proposed New Projects for the FFY 2015 UPWP

Fairmount Line Station Access Analysis Proposal

M. Scott introduced a new project proposal for the UPWP, titled Fairmount Line Station Access Analysis (Universe of Projects number B-4), which was provided by the Conservation Law Foundation. This project would focus on connections and impediments to bicycle and pedestrian access within a quarter mile of each of the eight Fairmount Line commuter rail stations outside of Boston's central business district. The analyses conducted as part of this project would be similar to the Safe Access to Transit analyses that the MPO carried out as part of the FFY 2012 UPWP.

Rafael Mares (Conservation Law Foundation) thanked M. Scott for helping refine his initial project proposal to produce the version before the UPWP Committee. He explained that the Fairmount Line is at a critical stage—three new stations have open and a fourth is planned to open soon—and that because there are limited opportunities for future transit expansion in this part of the region, the Fairmount Line this project needs to be successful. He explained that several steps have been taken to encourage

ridership already, but one aspect that has not already received enough focus is what impediments to bicycle and pedestrian access may exist around the stations. He noted that the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) has done some work in this area for several Fairmount Line Stations already, but there is not sufficient funding to serve all eight stations.

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, asked how many stations have already been addressed. Lara Mérida, City of Boston, explained that in the past two-and-a-half years, the BRA has completed a corridor-wide study with an advisory group, which had developed a vision for the full 9.2 mile Fairmount corridor. The BRA is now taking the goals of that vision into individual station areas, and is looking at areas within a ½ mile of each station to better connect the stations to surrounding neighborhood residential and retail areas, including bicycle and pedestrian connections and public realm improvements. To date, the BRA has completed analysis of the Uphams Corner station area and is working on implementation. The BRA is also undertaking studies for areas around the Blue Hill/Cummings Highway station and the Four Corners station. The BRA has money to study three stations, and has received some philanthropic support, but has struggled to find funding to study additional stations, though they would ultimately like to see all eight analyzed. Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC), noted that MPO staff had studied the Morton Street station as part of the FFY 2012 Safe Access to Transit studies.

R. Mares asked whether the budget for the proposed project (listed at \$75,000) could be reduced given the other BRA and MPO analysis that has been or will be done. Scott Peterson, MPO staff explained that the \$75,000 budget reflected analysis for seven stations and for reviewing the past analysis done for the Morton Street station to ensure a consistent level of detail for all eight stations. E. Bourassa asked about the amount of public process has been part of the BRA's past and current studies and how much public process the BRA might envision as part of this work. L. Mérida said that to date, the BRA has had 45 public meetings and has coordinated with advisory groups as part of the corridor-wide and station-level studies. Public processes so far have taken 12 to 18 months from start to finish. E. Bourassa asked whether this proposed UPWP analyses would fit within the existing public process framework, and whether it could be considered a consulting component of the BRA's broader planning for the Fairmount Line. L. Mérida said that both statements were correct.

R. Mares emphasized the importance of promoting the Fairmount Line's success, and noted that since 2005, ridership for the four previously existing stations on the Fairmount line had fallen in conjunction with the economic downtown. It has since

increased but has not yet returned to 2005 levels. L. Mérida added that it would be remiss not to support MBTA investments and supportive fare structuring for the Fairmount Line (which is comparable to fares for rapid transit service) by improving connections between the stations and surrounding neighborhoods.

E. Bourassa asked whether this project would be funded with dollars for new studies, which is already very constrained, and if it would be possible to otherwise accommodate some of this planning work through existing MPO or MAPC bicycle/pedestrian support or technical assistance programs. K. Quackenbush responded that if the MPO wished to maintain the current structure of the Community Transportation Technical Assistance program, which provides small-scale, quick technical assistance at the community level, it could be possible to study a few stations. An alternative could be to study the four stations that have not already been studied by the MPO or the BRA instead of B-3, Community Pedestrian Network Studies (\$40,000), and leave the Community Transportation Technical Assistance program as-is. Laura Weiner, At-Large Towns (Town of Arlington) asked whether there is a pipeline for the Community Transportation Technical Assistance Program. E. Bourassa indicated that there is, although requests for assistance have been fewer than in recent years. K. Quackenbush added that keeping the existing level of recommended active transportation studies, plus conducting these additional Fairmount Line Station Access analyses through the Community Transportation Technical Assistance program, could put a strain on MPO staff resources for bicycle and pedestrian planning. He expressed a preference for deferring consideration of this study until FFY 2016, but acknowledged that there may be some time sensitivity related to this proposal, particularly considering the planning work that the BRA is already doing. If the UPWP Committee would like to pursue the study this year, he said that his preference would be to do it instead of the Community Pedestrian Network Studies.

David Koses, At-Large Cities (City of Newton), asked whether staff had a preference to remove the proposed Community Pedestrian Network Studies project (B-3) instead of the Bicycle Network Gaps: Feasibility Evaluations project (B-2). K. Quackenbush explained that the Bicycle Network Gaps: Feasibility Evaluations project builds upon the recently completed MPO Bicycle Network Evaluation, and thus the project would be able to take advantage of that momentum. D. Koses noted that the Fairmount Line Station Access Analysis would provide specific locations for study, whereas the specific bicycle network gaps for study might require more determination. K. Quackenbush noted that both the Community Pedestrian Network Studies and Bicycle Network Gaps: Feasibility Evaluations projects are similar in that they would address identified gaps in

active transportation networks, though he acknowledged the distinction D. Koses identified.

Revised CTPS Budget

M. Scott explained that FFY 2015 FHWA PL funding has been reduced by approximately \$129,000 compared to FFY 2014, but that the amount of FTA Section 5303 funding is greater than what was available in FFY 2015. The combination of the two funding sources creates a reduction of approximately \$73,000 compared to FFY 2014. M. Scott noted that the bulk of this reduction has been addressed by changes in the recommendation for new discrete projects. For 3C-funded ongoing and continuing projects, only the funding for direct costs (ID 90000) is lower, due to refinements from earlier estimates. She added that the rest of this reduction has been addressed by changes to funding for the proposed new discrete projects.

M. Scott also explained that the CTPS budget was redlined to reflect the removal of a non 3C-project, FRA NEC FUTURE: Modeling Support, for which the Federal Railroad Administration and several consulting firms would have been clients. R. Mannion explained that when MPO staff ultimately received the contract for this project, MPO staff determined that there were stipulations in the contract that would be too onerous given CTPS's structure and the funding and anticipated outcomes of the project. K. Quackenbush added that it is not unprecedented for the MPO to approve a non-3C work scope and then have it not proceed.

Revised MPO Staff Recommendation for New Projects

M. Scott explained that in this revised recommendation, MPO staff reduced the funding amounts for the Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways (A-1) and Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment (A-3) projects by \$10,000 each. The funding amounts for the Household-Survey-Based Travel Profiles and Trends: Special Policy Topics (G-1) and Safety Analysis at Intersections near MAGIC Schools (C-1) have been reduced by \$5,000 and \$2,380, respectively. The Community and Human-Service Transportation Support project (D-1) has been removed from the recommendation.

K. Quackenbush added that the budget for the Transportation Equity/Environmental Justice Support program (ID 11132), which is part of MPO's ongoing and continuing activities, was made higher than in FFY 2014. He said that through this program, it is possible that MPO staff could begin to address some of the topics that would have been addressed through the Community and Human-Service Transportation Support project (D-1).

Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) asked how these funding reductions might affect the outcomes of the different projects. K. Quackenbush explained that he confirmed with MPO project managers that it would be possible to maintain the integrity of the four proposed projects at these reduced funding levels. He added that the budgets for the corridor study projects have varied over the past several years, and that, to an extent, these projects can be scaled to available funding.

Revised MAPC Budget

E. Bourassa explained that MAPC staff made budget adjustments in response to final FFY 2015 metropolitan planning funding amount, which is approximately \$20,000 less than what was available in FFY 2014. MAPC reduced the funding for work on the Right Size Parking Tool and Opportunities for and Impediments to Creating Transit-Oriented Development—both included in MAPC’s Corridor/Subarea Planning Studies project group—and several projects in the Alternative-Mode Planning and Coordination group to accommodate this decrease in funding.

4. Action Item: Decision on Revised UPWP Committee Recommendation for FFY 2015 UPWP Budget and New Projects

K. Quackenbush recommended that if the UPWP Community wanted to pursue the Fairmount Line Station Access Analysis project (B-4) in FFY 2015, the project be funded at \$40,000 (accommodating three or four station-area analyses) and included in the place of the Community Pedestrian Network Studies (B-3) project. E. Bourassa asked what MPO staff’s preference might be regarding replacing the Community Pedestrian Network Studies project, noting that no potential locations for this project have been identified. K. Quackenbush thanked E. Bourassa for the question, but said that staff would likely be enthusiastic for either project. E. Bourassa noted that the Fairmount Line Station Access Analysis would be an exciting opportunity for collaboration between the MPO and the BRA.

E. Bourassa made a motion to revise the staff recommendation to replace the Community Pedestrian Network Studies (B-3) project with the Fairmount Line Station Access Analysis project (B-4), which was seconded by Tom O’Rourke, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood NVCC). The motion carried.

E. Bourassa made a motion to adopt the revised staff recommendation as the UPWP Committee’s recommendation to the MPO on the budget and new projects for the FFY 2015 UPWP. This motion was seconded by T. O’Rourke. The motion carried.

5. Member Items

E. Bourassa asked about the status of the discussion on whether the MPO will be changing its process for reviewing work scopes. K. Quackenbush explained that the MPO Chair said that after gathering input, he did not hear a strong consensus for changing the existing process and would not be pursuing the issue further at the present time. K. Quackenbush added that the MPO staff is always open to receiving feedback from MPO members, and that he has heard that staff needs to redouble its efforts to ensure that presentations are concise and relate clearly to MPO policies and decision making.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham) noted that one of the issues that was discussed relates to MPO agenda setting and the ordering of items on MPO agendas, the goal of which should be to ensure that meetings are well-planned and concise. K. Quackenbush noted that other MPOs around the country address many issues, particularly technical topics, through committees and that the full MPO body meets less frequently and is more policy-oriented. The Boston Region MPO uses a different model (less reliance on committees and more frequent meetings), and staff's job is to support a balance between the two approaches.

6. Next Meeting

The UPWP Committee will reconvene in June to discuss comments received on the draft FFY 2015 UPWP and to develop a recommendation for the MPO on the final UPWP.

7. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by T. Bent and seconded by E. Bourassa. The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Laura Wiener
City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)	Lara Mérida
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Sree Allam
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees Affiliation

Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director
Elizabeth Moore
Scott Peterson
Michelle Scott
Pam Wolfe
