

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

April 2, 2015 Meeting

10:05 AM – 1:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

David Mohler, Chair, representing Stephanie Pollack, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization agreed to the following:

- instruct staff to prepare a staff recommendation for the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that includes projects programmed in the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2015-18 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in the first LRTP time band (FFYs 2016-20)
- approve the work program for the *Bicycle Network Gaps: Feasibility Evaluations* study
- approve the study locations selected for three studies – *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Sub regional Priority Roadways: FFY 2015, Low-Cost Improvements to Freeway Bottleneck Locations, and Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment*
- approve the minutes of the meeting of March 5

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

There were none.

2. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT*

There was none.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Mike Gowing, Chair, Advisory Council*

There was none.

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

K. Quackenbush informed members that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provided the MPO staff with a draft report from the MPO's federal recertification review. Staff is reviewing the document. The final version will be made available to members. The federal review team did not recommend any corrective actions, but did make recommendations.

He also informed members that the MPO staff held an Open House on March 25. The event focused on the LRTP. The program had an interactive format where members of the public could select topics of interest to them and talk with the staff members responsible either one-on-one or in small groups.

Also, in response to members' comments, staff has reorganized the MPO's website. The new format makes the links to the MPO's certification documents more prominent.

6. Transportation Improvement Program: First Tier List of Projects—*Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff*

Members were presented with two documents: a summary of the evaluation of projects being considered for the FFYs 2016-19 TIP, and a First Tier List of Highway Projects. S. Pfalzer provided an overview of the materials.

Since members were last presented with the project evaluations in early March, staff made updates to five of the evaluation scores based on new information received from project proponents. The projects are as follows:

- *Bedford, Billerica, and Burlington – Middlesex Turnpike Improvements (Phase 3)*
- *Ashland – Reconstruction on Route 126*
- *Lynn – Reconstruction on Route 129*
- *Milford – Resurfacing and Intersection Improvements on Route 16*
- *Norwood – Intersection Improvements at Route 1 and University Avenue/Everett Street*

The First Tier List of Highway Projects includes those projects that were highly rated in the evaluation process and that can be made ready for advertisement in the four-year time frame of the TIP. This list includes 14 projects representing approximately \$130 million worth of investments. Staff will draw from this list when developing a staff recommendation for the FFYs 2016-19 TIP, but consideration will also be given to project costs, available funding, and geographic equity.

As next steps, staff will coordinate with MassDOT regarding project cost estimates and readiness, and then develop a staff recommendation. Staff expects to present the staff recommendation to members on April 16.

Discussion

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), asked why the highly rated *Somerville – McGrath Boulevard Project* is not included in the First Tier List. S. Pfalzer replied that the project would not be ready for advertisement in the timeframe of this TIP. D. Mohler confirmed that the project is going through the MEPA process now (which will take 18 months to two years) and will then go through the design process (which could take longer than 18 months), so the project would not be ready for construction until after 2019.

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, observed that the *Woburn – New Boston Street Bridge Replacement* project, which is programmed in the FFYs 2016-20 time band of the LRTP, received the highest evaluation score for its potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, yet it is not included in the First Tier List. S. Pfalzer explained that the project's total evaluation score was not high enough to place it on the First Tier List, however, when developing the staff recommendation, staff will be considering other factors, such as whether a project is a commitment in the LRTP.

Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, noted that the *New Boston Street Bridge Replacement* project also scored highest for economic benefit. Tina Cassidy, North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn), also spoke in favor of the project noting its importance for the community and for economic development.

Tom Kadzis, City of Boston, raised a question about what portion of the *Natick – Bridge Replacement, Route 27 over Route 9, and Interchange Improvements* project involves the bridge replacement and what portion involves the interchange improvements. He noted that the MPO target funds are typically not used for bridge replacement projects. S. Pfalzer confirmed that the project description includes both portions.

Richard Canale, At-Large Town of Lexington, asked for information about project cost adjustments. He also noted that the *Lexington – Reconstruction on Massachusetts Avenue* project may have a cost estimate close to \$6 million. S. Pfalzer and D. Mohler replied that MassDOT staff will work with MPO staff to update project costs.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), asked how much money is available for new projects in the FFYs 2016-19 TIP (beyond the projects already programmed in the current FFYs 2015-18 TIP). S. Pfalzer reported the

figures as follows: \$13.7 million in FFY 2017; \$17.6 million in FFY 2018; and \$92.6 million in FFY 2019. These figures may change after staff updates information on project schedules and cost estimates.

D. Mohler asked if the adjustments to the project evaluation scores for the projects in Ashland, Milford, and Lynn resulted in a revised score that moved the projects onto the First Tier List (a score above 70). S. Pfalzer provided the updated scores for each project. The projects in Ashland and Lynn had scores of 70 or above before the update. The project in Milford was moved into the First Tier List as a result of the update.

D. Mohler asked why the *Milford – Resurfacing and Intersection Improvements on Route 16* project gained six points when staff updated the project evaluation scores. S. Pfalzer explained that the project scored additional points under the System Preservation, Modernization, and Efficiency category because the project will replace signals and improve traffic signal operations. It also scored points under Livability and Economic Benefit because it will reduce cut-through traffic, and under Safety and Security because the project will address a primary safety need.

7. Long-Range Transportation Plan—Anne McGahan and Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff

K. Quackenbush introduced this agenda item by stating that staff is seeking guidance from the members today concerning developing the staff recommendation for the new LRTP, *Charting Progress to 2040*. S. Pfalzer and A. McGahan then gave a presentation about the finances for the LRTP and the Universe of Projects and Programs. The ensuing discussion focused on recommendations for programming the first time band (FFYs 2016-20) of the 25-year LRTP.

Finances

S. Pfalzer began by describing the short-term funding outlook (for the four-year timeframe of the TIP), which appears positive. The elimination of the Major Infrastructure category of the FHWA funding program will leave more federal funds available for the remaining FHWA program areas: the Regional Targets (MPO discretionary funding), Bridge Program, and Statewide Items. Also, the state's Grant Anticipation Notes (GANs) repayments are lower in the near term (these payments will increase later).

The funding available for the FFYs 2016-19 TIP is as follows:

- FFY 2016 -- \$75 million

- FFY 2017 -- \$88.7 million (an increase of \$13.7 million over the amount in the FFYs 2015-18 TIP)
- FFY 2018 -- \$92.6 million (an increase of \$17.6 million over the amount in the FFYs 2015-18 TIP)
- FFY 2019 -- \$92.6 million

Targets for spending on specific programs in the FFYs 2016-19 TIP are as follows:

- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program -- \$13.4 million each year (unchanged from the FFYs 2015-18 TIP)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program -- \$4.29 million each year (unchanged from the FFYs 2015-18 TIP)
- Transportation Alternatives Program -- \$5 million in FFYs 2016; \$3.3 million in FFY 2017 and 2018; and \$2.5 million in FFY 2019 (an increase from the FFYs 2015-18 TIP)

The long-term funding outlook is more pessimistic. Over time, the growth factor for project costs is expected to outpace the growth factor for available funding. Project cost is assumed to inflate by 4% a year, while available funding is assumed to grow only by 1.5% a year beginning in 2021.

Charts were shown depicting the following: projected project cost growth compared to funding growth; funding available through the FHWA program, including to the Boston Region MPO, over the timeline of the LRTP; and revenues compared to current LRTP funding commitments.

The Boston Region MPO is expected to have the following funding for the life of the new LRTP, *Charting Progress to 2040*:

- FFYs 2016-20 time band: \$442 million
- FFYs 2021-25 time band: \$465 million
- FFYs 2026-30 time band: \$581 million
- FFYs 2031-35 time band: \$658 million
- FFYs 2036-40 time band: \$709 million

Compared to the current LRTP, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*, the available funding for the *Charting Progress to 2040* is significantly reduced, by 21% in the FFYs 2016-20 time band, 43% in the FFYs 2021-25 and 2026-30 time bands, and 44% in the FFYs 2031-35 time band.

In *Paths to a Sustainable Region*, 48% of the funding in the FFYs 2016-35 timeframe was allocated to Major Infrastructure projects. Based on the new funding assumptions, revised cost estimates, and current programming, within the same timeframe, 87% of funding will be allocated for Major Infrastructure projects in *Charting Progress to 2040*.

Charts were also shown of projected funding for the federal transit programs of the MBTA, MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA), and Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA). Compared to *Paths to a Sustainable Region*, in *Charting Progress to 2040* the MBTA's funding will be reduced by 1% in the FFYs 2016-20 time band, 8% in the FFYs 2021-25 time band, 15% in the FFYs 2026-30 time band, and 21% in the FFYs 2031-35 time band. Funding for the MWRTA and CATA will increase steadily over the timeline of the LRTP.

Discussion

Members discussed the reasons for the reduction in LRTP funding, which is largely due to changed assumptions for revenue projections. While the assumptions in *Paths to a Sustainable Region* accounted for a 3% increase each year in available federal revenue, the assumptions in *Charting Progress to 2040* are only 1.5% a year. D. Mohler explained that the new figure was derived from an analysis that examined the actual growth of the federal highway funding program over a ten year period. The average growth in revenue was found to be 1.5%. The new assumptions will apply to the period from FFY 2021 to 2040; the assumptions for the first time band of FFY 2016-20 are being held constant to conform to the TIP targets.

Michael Chong, FHWA, further explained that, in the absence of a highway bill that provides revenue assumptions, FHWA is advising that the revenue growth assumptions be based on recent funding allocations. He confirmed that FHWA guidance calls for a 1.5% a year assumption for revenue growth and a 4% a year assumption for project cost inflation.

D. Giombetti expressed concern that this conservative financial approach would have a dramatic negative impact on the outer time bands of the LRTP. He noted that there is no certainty about the amount of revenue that will be available in those later years, and that assuming such a low revenue growth rate would result in projects falling out of the LRTP. He suggested that consideration be given to using higher revenue assumptions in the outer years.

To address this concern, M. Chong suggested that the MPO consider including a section of the LRTP for unfunded needs or illustrative projects. The MPO would then be able to consider funding those projects in future years if the revenue situation improves.

D. Giombetti noted, however, that by pulling projects out of the LRTP based on a highly suspect assumption, project proponents would be left with the difficulty of having to get their projects programmed back on the LRTP. He expressed his interest in seeing the MPO encourage FHWA to allow for more optimistic funding assumptions in the outer years of the LRTP.

Tom O'Rourke, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce), inquired about the restructuring of the federal funding programs and the implication it would have on major infrastructure projects. D. Mohler stated that the restructuring may have the effect of reducing the number of major infrastructure projects that get funded. Until now, MassDOT has selected the major infrastructure projects to fund. Going forward, the MPOs will have more choice regarding which federal-aid major infrastructure projects to fund. (MassDOT will continue to have the ability to select major infrastructure projects to fund with non-federal aid.)

E. Bourassa inquired about the assumptions for transit funding and why the revenue projections are not reduced as dramatically as those in the highway element. S. Pflazer reported that the revenue growth factor is the same as for the highway element, a 1.5% increase per year. The greater reduction on the highway side is due to debt service payments.

E. Bourassa asked if the costs of transit state-of-good-repair projects have been inflated. D. Mohler and Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, discussed the \$6.7 billion backlog of these projects and noted that the costs are in current dollars.

Wig Zamore, Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership / Mystic View Task Force, suggested that staff analyze past spending in this region and in the state going back as far as the 1970s, and document major investments in the transit system. He noted that this information could be the foundation for more insightful discussions about how funding should be allocated in the future.

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood), asked if staff reviews the actual inflation rate at the end of each year and then adjusts the future project cost estimates based on the actual inflation rate. D. Mohler explained that the inflation factor is applied to projects that are farther out in the LRTP timeline; the 4% inflation factor is not applied to near term projects. The inflation rate is a planning figure that gets adjusted every four years when the LRTP is updated.

E. Bourassa suggested that for long-range planning it would be better to use an inflation rate that is higher than actual inflation, given that real project costs have tended to be higher than their original cost estimates in recent years.

D. Giombetti reiterated his concern about the impact that assumed growth factors would have on projects in the outer time bands of the LRTP. He expressed that a dramatic negative affect would be produced based on planning assumptions that are far from certain.

A. McGahan provided some background information about a similar situation in 2009 when the MPO amended the previous LRTP, *JOURNEY to 2030*, to address changed financial assumptions. At that time, the financial resources were reduced by half of the amount that had been programmed.

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, asked whether the FHWA has set the same inflation and revenue growth assumptions for all MPOs in the nation. M. Chong replied that FHWA recommends using a rate of 4% for highway project cost inflation, in the absence of an analysis of highway project cost inflation. Regarding revenue assumptions, he noted that there is no federal highway bill to provide assumptions for revenue growth. Many MPOs in the nation are level-funded.

Universe of Projects and Programs

Members were presented with the Universe of Projects and Programs for *Charting Progress to 2040*. The Universe is a spreadsheet showing the pool of projects and programs that the MPO will draw from when selecting projects and programs for the LRTP. Guidance from FHWA requires the MPO to program projects in the LRTP that cost more than \$20 million and/or that add capacity to the system.

This list was compiled using the Universe of Projects from *Paths to a Sustainable Region*, the TIP Universe of Projects, recommendations from CTPS studies, and input from MPO members and the public. The list is sorted based on investment type (i.e. the investment programs that were used in the recent scenario planning exercise).

Discussion

L. Dantas asked if any of the recommendations from the South Boston Transportation Plan were incorporated in the Universe of Projects. A. McGahan stated that there is a line item in the Universe, but that specific recommendations are not listed.

D. Mohler asked staff to make sure that the cost estimates for projects listed in TIP Universe are the same as those in the LRTP Universe.

E. Bourassa asked if projects in MassDOT's Capital Investment Program (CIP), such as the *Allston Interstate 90 Interchange Improvement Project*, are included in the LRTP Universe. Staff will add the project to the list.

Richard Reed, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford), asked staff to correct a line item on the Universe to show that the *Middlesex Turnpike, Phase 3* project is programmed in the FFYs 2016-20 time band.

P. Regan inquired about the source for the list of transit projects and noted that there may be some conceptual projects missing from the list. A. McGahan replied that staff reviewed the existing MBTA Program for Mass Transportation (PMT) and coordinated with MassDOT staff to develop the list. In the absence of a new PMT, staff did not have access to the MBTA's latest plans.

D. Mohler asked members to inform staff if any projects are missing from the list.

Sreelatha Allam, MassDOT, noted that the *Canton Interchange Project* is not on the list. This project will be funded with non-federal aid and is programmed in the TIP starting in FFY 2017.

Members then discussed whether privately funded infrastructure improvements costing over \$20 million (such as casino-funded improvements to Route 99, for example) should be included in the LRTP. M. Chong noted that FHWA would like to see private projects listed if they add capacity to the system anywhere in the region or if they involve a federal action, such as a NEPA requirement.

M. Chong asked if the *Allston Interstate 90 Interchange Improvement Project* will be included. A. McGahan replied that staff will be adding the project to the list.

T. O'Rourke expressed support for adding the *Canton Interchange Project* as well.

Christine Stickney, South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree), asked if the privately funded projects would be added to the Universe by the April 16 meeting, when members will vote on a set of projects for modeling. A. McGahan replied yes.

MPO Recommendation for Programming LRTP First Time band

Staff asked members for guidance on programming the first time band of the LRTP, FFYs 2016-20. Specifically, staff asked whether some or all of the projects programmed in the FFYs 2015-18 TIP should be carried forward on the LRTP.

A. McGahan then gave a presentation with an overview of the projects currently programmed in the FFYs 2015-18 TIP that would be carried over into the new LRTP.

Highway projects programmed in the FFYs 2015-18 TIP that meet the requirements for programming in the LRTP (i.e. that cost more than \$20 million and/or add capacity to the system) are as follows (funding years are in parentheses):

- *Needham and Wellesley – Route 128 Add-a-Lane* (FFYs 2016-18)
- *Clean Air and Mobility Program* (FFY 2016)
- *Weymouth and Abington – Reconstruction of Route 18* (FFYs 2016-18)
- *Bedford, Billerica, and Burlington – Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3* (FFYs 2016-17)
- *Somerville and Medford – Green Line Extension (College Avenue to Route 16)* (FFYs 2016-18)
- *Woburn – Montvale Avenue* (FFY 2017)

The cost estimate for the *Green Line Extension (College Avenue to Route 16)* project in FFYs 2016-18 is \$190 million. Staff will need to get an updated cost estimate for this project if it is programmed on the new LRTP. Part of this project would be funded in FFY 2019 as well.

Staff asked for guidance from the members as to whether staff should assume, when developing a staff recommendation for the LRTP, that funds should be reserved in the first time band (FFYs 2016-20) of the LRTP for the six projects listed above. The alternative would be to give staff the discretion to make recommendations that could exclude any of those projects, which the MPO committed to fund in the TIP.

Discussion

During the discussion about this question, it was noted that if the MPO programs all six of the TIP projects in the LRTP, most of the available funding in the first time band (\$441.6 million) will be committed, which will leave little room for programming smaller projects. If the MPO has a conversation about whether the priorities outlined in the TIP should remain priorities given the new revenue stream, the discussion may occur in the context of the TIP or LRTP, but the two documents must be aligned in the end.

Referring to a project in the Universe of Projects, E. Bourassa noted that the planning for the *Boston – Rutherford Avenue* project has lost some momentum due to the casino issue. He asked if the City of Boston is still planning for the project. Jim Gillooly, City of Boston, confirmed that the city continues to plan for Rutherford Avenue and that the project remains a priority for programming in the first time band of the TIP. To advance, the project must be included in the LRTP because it costs over \$20 million.

T. Bent expressed frustration about the idea that the MPO would not remain committed to projects already programmed on the TIP. He stated that the MPO should remain

consistent in its decision-making. He also noted that it would be unfair to members of the public who advocated for particular projects.

While expressing support for T. Bent's position, D. Mohler noted that the MPO will have nearly \$116 million less than anticipated to program in the first time band of the LRTP, which will necessitate a discussion about recommendations for programming. He suggested, however, that the members instruct staff to prepare a staff recommendation that includes the TIP projects, as the basis for that discussion.

L. Dantas expressed support for adhering to the TIP commitments as well. He also suggested that the MPO consider using four-year increments for the early time band of the LRTP, so that LRTP planning could better align with the TIP planning. D. Mohler added that in the future he would like to see the TIP as a five-year document, to align with the five-year time bands of the LRTP and MassDOT's CIP.

Motion

A motion to instruct staff to prepare a staff recommendation for the LRTP that includes projects programmed in the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2015-18 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in the first LRTP time band (FFYs 2016-20) was made by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham) (D. Giombetti), and seconded by the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) (R. Reed).

During a discussion of the motion, R. Reed spoke about the effort municipalities put into making projects ready for construction and the need for the MPO to be consistent in its decision-making. D. Giombetti also talked about the need to be consistent and to base decisions on facts, not assumptions. R. Canale also expressed agreement.

Members discussed the implications of this vote, and it was noted that there is a potential that some projects (that are not already TIP commitments) may fall out of the first time band of the LRTP. Staff will have the discretion to determine whether those projects are moved to future time bands or, if the projects do not meet the MPO's goals and objectives, if they will be left un-programmed. Staff also will be operating under the MPO's previous guidance to focus on programming lower-cost operations and maintenance projects.

J. Gillooly requested a friendly amendment to direct staff to make recommendations for programming projects that fall out of the first time band into future time bands. D. Mohler stated that staff will be directed to explain why they determined not to fund particular projects.

Members voted on the motion. The motion carried.

Program Priorities and Associated Funding Allocations

A. McGahan introduced the next discussion for the MPO, which involves determining what percentage of funding to apply to each investment program, including what is an acceptable level of Major Infrastructure funding.

She referred members to the LRTP Universe of Projects list, which shows each project categorized based on the investment program in which it could be included (i.e. Major Infrastructure, Complete Streets, Intersection Improvements, and Bicycle Network and Pedestrian Connections). A graph was shown depicting the number of projects in each program category along with estimated costs. Major Infrastructure projects take up most of the funding.

Discussion

David Anderson, MassDOT, asked how staff determined if projects would be categorized as a Complete Streets projects. A. McGahan explained that staff assigned projects to the Complete Streets program based on information in the projects' Functional Design Reports (FDR). In cases where projects were not far enough along in the design process to have an FDR, staff assigned projects to the Intersection Improvements program.

E. Bourassa noted that the funding in the FFYs 2016-20 time band is already largely committed and that more funding is available in the FFYs 2021-25 time band. He suggested that staff prepare two programming alternatives: one would show the implications of programming based on the MPO's policy decision to prioritize operations and management projects (such as Complete Streets and Intersection Improvement projects); another would show a transition to that investment approach.

R. Reed asked how staff developed cost estimates for projects in the Universe that did not already have costs assigned to them, such as conceptual projects. A. McGahan replied that staff used cost assumptions developed during the recent scenario planning exercise. Costs were based on project type (for example, the average Complete Streets project costs \$6 million per mile of improvement).

Harkening back to the LRTP visioning process that the MPO undertook last fall, R. Reed suggested that Safety and System Preservation should be the areas of emphasis, considering those were the two goal areas that the MPO prioritized.

Members discussed the percentage of spending that should be applied to the Major Infrastructure and other program categories. It was noted that reducing the allocations

for major infrastructure projects in the time bands could eliminate larger projects, while programming them fully could result in nearly all funds of a time band being directed to one project.

R. Canale suggested that staff conduct an analysis to determine how currently programmed TIP projects break down in terms of percentages in each program category. This information would help determine the balance of the allocations for the future LRTP time bands. D. Giombetti and J. Gillooly also suggested this approach.

J. Gillooly further suggested that major infrastructure projects could be programmed across two time bands as way to keep the percentage allocated to the Major Infrastructure program lower.

L. Dantas stated that it would be helpful, when considering whether to apply MPO target funds to major infrastructure projects, if the MPO had knowledge about MassDOT's plans for using state funds for major infrastructure projects.

D. Mohler noted that the MPO voted to take an approach that prioritizes operations and management projects.

A. McGahan added that that the program-based investment approach does not require the MPO to program specific projects by name, other than those projects that add capacity to the system or cost over \$20 million. Rather, a certain percentage of funds would be allocated for each investment program and projects would be selected through the TIP process.

R. Reed suggested that the programmatic approach would be more relevant to the time bands beginning with FFY 2021-25, where more un programmed funds are available.

T. Kadzis asked if it could be assumed that every roadway design would be treated as a Complete Streets design because of MassDOT's GreenDOT policy. D. Anderson replied yes, that the Complete Streets philosophy would apply to any project except those on limited-access highways and exceptional cases that receive a waiver.

Members then discussed how Major Infrastructure projects are being defined for the LRTP planning process and the possibility that certain Complete Streets projects could cost as much as a major infrastructure project (particularly considering cost inflation in outer time bands).

The FHWA has set the cost figure of over \$20 million as the threshold for projects that must be included in the LRTP. T. Kadzis noted, however, that the \$20 million figure

seems low for major infrastructure projects, considering that transportation project costs are outpacing inflation. He suggested that the *Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3* project should not be characterized as a major infrastructure project.

Staff considers major infrastructure projects to be in the \$50 million or higher range, but staff is open to guidance on this issue.

R. Mares suggested that staff use a combination of project type and cost to categorize the projects.

R. Reed suggested having two classifications for major infrastructure projects: one for projects costing between \$20 million to \$50 million, and another for projects costing over \$50 million.

Then members discussed the next steps and concluded that staff should prepare two alternative programming recommendations for the next meeting. One would preserve funding commitments that the MPO has made in the current LRTP, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*. Another would prioritize low-cost investments over existing funding commitments.

A. McGahan then asked members whether they consider the Community Transportation and Parking Program to be important. Currently, there are no projects in the Universe that fall into this category.

E. Bourassa noted that the program was included in the scenario planning exercise and suggested that staff include the program in its recommendations. He noted that if the MPO includes funding for that program, it assumes that the MBTA and municipalities will be robust partners in planning those types of projects, and that the MPO will have to develop a better way to distribute funding for those projects.

T. O'Rourke also expressed support for including the program. He remarked on a recent transportation forum that was held in the Three Rivers Interlocal Council sub region where participants expressed that community transportation and parking projects are a top priority for the communities in the subregion.

M. Gowing expressed agreement noting that the program could address "first mile – last mile" transportation needs.

S. Olanoff noted that the MPO used to have a Suburban Mobility Program through which communities could apply for funding. He noted that the Community Transportation and Parking Program could be a means to restore that funding.

LRTP Development Schedule

Members were provided with a schedule of the next steps in the LRTP development. The federal agencies are allowing an extension for the LRTP document development until July 30.

The MPO is currently scheduled to vote on projects and programs to recommend for LRTP programming on April 16. Staff will begin to model the recommended project and program set after that vote. Members will begin reviewing the chapters of the LRTP in late April and into early May. They are then scheduled to vote to release a draft LRTP for public review on May 28, as well as a draft TIP and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The public review period would run from June 1 through July 6. The MPO would vote to endorse all three certification documents on July 23.

8. Work Program: Bicycle Network Gaps: Feasibility Evaluation Study— *Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, CTPS*

A motion to approve the work program for the *Bicycle Network Gaps: Feasibility Evaluations* study was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

9. Location Selection—*Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, CTPS*

K. Quackenbush introduced documents that describe the process used for selecting study locations for three roadway studies. Staff used the same decision process for selecting study locations as has been used in recent years.

A motion to approve the study locations selected for three studies – *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways: FFY 2015, Low-Cost Improvements to Freeway Bottleneck Locations, and Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment* – was made by the At-Large Town of Arlington (L. Wiener), and seconded by the Advisory Council (M. Gowing). The motion carried.

10. Meeting Minutes—*Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff*

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 5 was made by the Advisory Council (M. Gowing), and seconded by the Massachusetts Port Authority (L. Dantas). The motion carried. The following members abstained: North Shore Task Force (A. Clausen); At-Large Town of Arlington (L. Wiener); and the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan). The motion carried.

11. Members Items

There were none.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan), and MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members

Representatives and Alternates

At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
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 Transportation Department)	Jim Gillooly
	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Michael Chong
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	David Anderson
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
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	Aaron Clausen
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Mike Gowing
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)	Christine Stickney
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Sreelatha Allam	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Ed Bates	Town of Ashland
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT Highway District 3
Shawn Finn	IBEW Local 103
Pamela Haznar	MassDOT District 5
Kristina Johnson	Howard Stein-Hudson
Owen Kane	MassDOT
Erin Kinahan	MassDOT District 6
Ken Krause	Medford Green Line Neighborhood Alliance
John Lozada	MassDOT
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood)
Leah Sirmin	Federal Highway Administration
Julia Prange Wallace	MassCommute
Joanne Weinstock	Federal Transit Administration
Kevin Wright	Federal Highway Administration
Wig Zamore	Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership / Mystic View Task Force

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director
Seth Asante
Casey Claude
Katrina Crocker
Maureen Kelly
Anne McGahan
Elizabeth Moore
Scott Peterson
Sean Pfalzer
Natalie Raffol
Pam Wolfe
