Memorandum for the Record
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

July 9, 2015 Meeting

10:05 AM – 11:15 AM, State Transportation Building**,** Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

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

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreed to the following:

- approve the work program for the *Everett Transit Needs Study*
- approve the minutes of the meetings of April 30 and May 7

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

There were none.

2. Chair's Report—*Steve Woelfel, MassDOT*

There was none.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

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

M. Gowing reported that Advisory Council members met on July 8 to take a tour of five project locations on the South Shore. He also noted that the Advisory Council submitted its letter of comment on the MPO's draft certification documents: the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Charting Progress to 2040*; the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2016-20 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and the FFY 2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

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

K. Quackenbush reported that the date for the MPO's meeting in August is uncertain at this time because of the possible need to schedule an amendment to the FFYs 2015-18 TIP (discussed under agenda item #8). Potential meeting dates are August 6, 13, or 20.

He also reported that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has provided the MPO with a figure for the amount of Section 5303 funds that will be available for programming in the FFY 2016 UPWP, which is currently released for public review. The figure is approximately $5,000 to $6,000 less than the original estimate. As a result, funding will be reduced in the budgets of two line items in the UPWP: the *Regional Transit Service Planning Technical Support* and MAPC's *Land Use Development Project Reviews* projects.

6. Everett Transit Needs Study—*Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, CTPS*

K. Quackenbush introduced the work program for the *Everett Transit Needs Study*. Through this work program, CTPS will provide travel modeling services to a MassDOT team that will be conducting comprehensive transportation planning for the City of Everett, where substantial development is expected to occur in the future.

CTPS will begin by calibrating the MPO's regional travel demand model set for the study area to replicate the existing conditions of the transportation system and to estimate transit ridership and roadway volumes.

Scenarios that will be modeled are as follows:

- a base-year scenario
- a scenario that examines short-term bus transit improvements
- a no-build scenario forecast to the year 2040, which will be based on assumptions about the transportation system in the LRTP and will include the planned Wynn Casino
- a build-out scenario forecast to the year 2040 that assumes maximum proposed development
- two transit improvement schemes applied to both the no-build and build-out scenarios

This project will be funded through a MassDOT SPR contract.

Jay Monty, At-Large City of Everett, further discussed the project. He noted that Everett's transit system has not been comprehensively studied since the 1970s. This

study will examine how the existing transit network is functioning and identify improvements that could be made in the short- and long-term, including improvements that the city could implement. Bus transit will be a main focus of the study. Consideration will be given to opportunities to orient bus service with future Silver Line service, and other possibilities, such as a future extension of the Silver Line and Community Path and the implementation of diesel multiple unit (DMU) service.

Discussion

A motion to approve the work program for the *Everett Transit Needs Study* was made by the Advisory Council (M. Gowing), and seconded by the At-Large Town of Lexington (Richard Canale).

During a discussion of this motion, Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), asked whether the study would consider bus rapid transit (BRT) on Broadway and DMU service. J. Monty confirmed the BRT would be considered. Also, DMU service would be considered as a possible long-range option.

E. Bourassa asked if the *Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue (Boston)* project would be included in the modeling of the scenarios forecasting to 2040. K. Quackenbush replied yes.

In response to a question from David Koses, At-Large City of Everett, J. Monty noted that this $50,000 work program is part of a larger $250,000 MassDOT study.

M. Gowing asked if the casino developers are weighing in on the transit infrastructure issues in Everett. J. Monty indicated that they are expected to do so.

Members then voted on the motion to approve the work program for the *Everett Transit Needs Study*. The motion carried.

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

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of April 30 was made by the At-Large Town of Lexington (R. Canale), and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried. The Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) (Richard Reed) abstained.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 7 was made by the At-Large Town of Lexington (R. Canale), and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried. The Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) (R. Reed) abstained.

8. Potential Transportation Improvement Program Amendment Five—*Steve Woelfel, MassDOT, and Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff*

S. Woelfel alerted members to the possibility of an Amendment Five to the FFYs 2015-18 TIP. MassDOT may have the opportunity to reprogram some funds from the *Interstate 91 Viaduct* project in Springfield because the construction bid came in lower expected. The savings from the *Interstate 91 Viaduct* project could potentially be redirected to the *Improvements on Dedham Street/Canton Street (Canton, Norwood, Westwood)* project, which is part of the larger *Canton Interchange Project*. MassDOT will be having conversations with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission about the transfer of funds.

S. Pfalzer added that the cost estimate for the *Dedham Street* project has been revised and is now estimated to be $54 million. Originally the project was to be funded with non-federal aid. Now, MassDOT is in the process of identifying federal funding sources for the project.

Discussion

Marie Rose, MassDOT, asked staff to discuss the potential funding sources for the *Dedham Street* project to clarify that no MPO target funds would be needed for this project. S. Pfalzer reported that the following federal sources are being considered: National Highway Preservation Program, Surface Transportation Program (STP), STP – Enhancements, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program.

Members and staff discussed the description of the *Dedham Street* project. The project includes the construction of a new ramp off Interstate 95 northbound that would connect to Dedham Street in Canton and provide new access to Westwood Station. The project includes work on a bridge and intersection, the widening of Dedham Street, and the addition of sidewalks and bicycle lanes.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), noted that the cost estimate for the *Dedham Street* project may be higher than the amount of savings on the *Interstate 91 Viaduct* project. He inquired about where the additional funding would come from. Staff indicated that the amount available from the *Interstate 91 Viaduct* may be in the range of $50 million, but MassDOT staff will be able to provide more information.

S. Woelfel noted that funding for the complete *Canton Interchange Project* has not yet been identified; however, the *Dedham Street* portion has independent utility.

In response to members' questions, S. Pfalzer and Anne McGahan, MPO staff, provided the programming status of the *Dedham Street* project. It is programmed in the FFY 2015 element of the FFYs 2015-18 TIP and in the current LRTP, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*. It is not programmed in the new draft LRTP, *Charting Progress to 2040*, which is currently available for public review.

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston, informed members that the *Improvements to Commonwealth Avenue, Phase 2A* project is expected to be ready for advertisement in September. The cost estimate for the project will be higher than the current estimate of $16.8 million due to changes made to the project scope at the request of the MBTA and the Boston Water and Sewer Commission. The MBTA has requested that the project incorporate fencing and other features to define the location of new MBTA stations. The Boston Water and Sewer Commission has asked that the project incorporate an infiltration system beneath the street to protect the Charles River from polluted run-off. MassDOT is currently reviewing the estimates for this new work. When the new cost estimate for the project is determined, the City of Boston expects to ask the MPO to increase the amount of funding programmed for the project.

Marie Rose, MassDOT, raised the possibility of asking the MBTA or the Boston Water and Sewer Commission to pay for the work they are requesting. She asked about the cost of the improvements. J. Gillooly replied that the improvements – including the fencing and the infiltration system – are expected to cost $3 million or more.

9. Methodology for Evaluating the Potential for Limited-Stop Service on Transit Routes—*Nick Hart, MPO Staff*

N. Hart presented the results of the *Limited-Stop Study*, which investigated a bus service configuration that is widely used among large-scale transit providers to reduce passenger travel times along high-demand bus corridors. In general, limited-stop bus routes operate by providing service to the most heavily patronized stops along a corridor in combination with a local route that provides service to all stops. A successful limited-stop service maximizes passengers' onboard travel-time savings and minimizes the increase in the time passengers must wait and the time required for traveling to and from bus stops.

The MBTA regularly receives requests from the public and elected officials to run limited-stop services along its most heavily patronized corridors. This project developed a universal methodology for evaluating existing MBTA bus routes for limited-stop potential. Consideration was given to creating limited-stop bus service in a resource-neutral environment; that is to say, no new buses would be added to the routes.

The study analyzed a number of MBTA bus routes for limited-stop potential. The routes selected were those for which the MBTA regularly receives requests for limited-stop service. They include 15 key bus routes and bus routes #34/34E, 70/70A, and 104/109. The metrics used to analyze the routes included the following: passenger trip length, roadway geometry, traffic congestion, service frequency, concentration of passenger demand, and distribution of passenger demand.

As a result of the evaluation, staff determined that none of the routes are appropriate for limited-stop service. The route 70/70A corridor was the only route found to have the potential for limited-stop service, but only if the resource-neutral constraint was lifted. Most MBTA bus routes are not long enough to accumulate passenger trip lengths that allow for significant travel-time savings that outweigh the burdens placed on passengers using to local-stops.

The study also examined the route #1 and CT1 corridor, which is the only limited-stop service that the MBTA currently runs. Staff found that due to congestion this limited-stop service is not achieving the benefits of reducing travel times. The study includes recommendations for improving service on this route. The MBTA will take these recommendations into account when revising its service plan.

Discussion

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, asked whether this study sheds any light on BRT service. N. Hart noted that BRT was not factored into this study. This study focused on service on existing bus routes, whereas BRT service would replace regular bus service and run on dedicated bus lanes.

L. Dantas asked if there are any lessons learned from this study that could be applied to reduce delays or speed up bus service. N. Hart replied yes and referenced the metrics used to evaluate each of the routes, including measures for traffic congestion and roadway geometry. The study report contains a breakdown of the results for each route.

E. Bourassa asked why limited-stop service was found to be ineffective on route #28. N. Hart replied that the route is not long enough to accumulate travel-time savings that would out-weigh the burdens imposed by implementing limited-stop service (such as passengers having to walk farther to access bus stops). E. Bourassa cited a prior study that found that, if BRT were implemented on that corridor, there could be a time savings of about seven to eight minutes between Mattapan Station and Dudley Station. He noted, however, that BRT buses would run in their own corridor and would not be affected by traffic congestion. N. Hart explained that this study did not consider transit priority lanes; rather it examined service based on existing roadway geometries.

Tom Kadzis, City of Boston, asked if the analysis calculated the interplay of bus bunching on service. N. Hart replied that bus bunching was not considered in this study.

10. Core Capacity Constraint Study, Selection of Development Projects: Method and Results—*Bruce Kaplan and Brynn Leopold, MPO Staff*

Last January, the MPO gave staff approval to begin work on the *Core Capacity Constraint Study*. This study will analyze the existing capacity of the transportation system in the urban core and the system's ability to absorb projected future demand as sustained growth in population, housing, and employment puts further strain on the system. Impacts from the 20 largest proposed development projects in the urban core area will be factored into projections of future transportation demand.

Today staff provided an update on the progress of the study. B. Kaplan began by giving an overview of the study and its objectives. The study aims to answer the question, "Can our roadway and transit infrastructure accommodate the future growth expected in the core area?" The urban core area is defined as the following communities: Arlington, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Medford, Revere, and Somerville.

There are three objectives to this study:

- examine current and future levels of congestion in the core area to identify pinch points on the roadway and transit system
- understand the transportation mitigation policies that are in place in the core area that offset impacts of proposed development projects and understand how mitigation funds are allocated to different transportation modes
- determine the impact the 20 largest proposed development projects would have on the transportation system, particularly the transit system

There are six tasks to this study. The following have been completed or are underway:

- document land use, demographic, and transportation trends
- analyze existing transit ridership and traffic count data
- identify large-scale development plans and mitigation processes
- review proposed mitigation strategies and funding mechanisms

The remaining tasks are as follows:

- calibrate base-year travel model to existing conditions
- forecast future-year (2040) travel patterns with and without planned developments

B. Kaplan provided details about the work accomplished to date. He noted that staff met with representatives of the MAPC, MassDOT, MBTA, and municipalities to identify the developments in their jurisdictions and to understand their approaches to mitigation. Staff inventoried the mitigation measures and documented how they are funded. Staff also identified the largest developments anticipated and the transportation analysis zones (TAZs) that are forecast to produce the most new person trips by 2040. (This study will not include TAZs that include development projects that are already the subject of other studies or that have been studied recently. Projected development in those TAZs will be included in the no-build scenario for this study, however.)

B. Leopold then discussed the methodology for selecting the 20 development projects. Staff began by reviewing the proposed developments in MAPC's development database, and then used the development size and demographic data to make projections of trip generation (weekday daily person-trips). The trip generation metric was used to rank the TAZs for expected transportation impact.

She provided projections, forecast to 2040, of population, employment, and development in the urban core area. There are 672 planned development projects; most commercial and residential development is expected to occur in Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville.

A map was shown depicting the TAZs that are expected to generate the most trips. All are located either in Boston, Cambridge, or Somerville. Assembly Square in Somerville is the single largest development in terms of population and commercial space. Most of the planned development will be built near transit lines.

B. Kaplan then discussed the next steps. Staff will calibrate the base-year travel model and run a scenario forecasting to 2040 to compare the transportation system with and without the selected developments. The results will be analyzed to identify locations where there may be capacity problems on the transit and roadway system, and to determine which development projects will have the greatest impact on the system.

Discussion

J. Gillooly asked if the South Boston Waterfront area would be excluded because it is the subject of another study. B. Kaplan confirmed that the TAZ for this area will not be included so that efforts are not duplicated.

E. Bourassa asked if the projected growth for the South Boston Waterfront would be factored into the travel-demand model used for forecasting. B. Kaplan replied yes, noting that the projected growth in that area would be factored into the no-build scenario.

L. Dantas suggested that staff revise the map depicting the TAZs that are expected to generate the most trips to reflect other TAZs containing developments of comparable size.

11. Members Items

L. Wiener, At-Large Town of Arlington, asked for an update on MassDOT's Complete Streets Program. S. Woelfel reported that the program framework is being finalized and vetted internally at MassDOT. Funding for the program is included in MassDOT's FFY 2016 Capital Investment Program. The Complete Streets Program is expected to launch in the fall.

D. Giombetti invited members to attend the opening the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority's new Intermodal Transit Terminal on Blandin Avenue in Framingham at 11:00 AM on July 17.

M. Gowing reported that a ground-breaking ceremony was held for the opening of a section of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Secretary Pollack was in attendance.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham) (D. Giombetti). 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 Redevelopment Authority)	Lara Mérida
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jim Gillooly
	Tom Kadzis
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Brad Rawson
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Steve Woelfel
	Marie Rose
Massachusetts Port Authority	Lourenço Dantas
MBTA	Janice Ramsay
	Micha Gensler
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
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Mike Gowing
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Andrew Bettinelli	Office of State Senator William Brownsberger
Shawn Finn	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers – Local 103
Kristina Johnson	Howard Stein Hudson Associates
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Joseph Manning	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers – Local 103
Jefry Mercedes	MassDOT
Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council
Constance Raphael	MassDOT District 4
Ellen Spring	Office of State Representative Denise Garlick

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director

Maureen Kelly
Anne McGahan
Elizabeth Moore
Scott Peterson
Sean Pfalzer
Michelle Scott