

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

November 19, 2015 Meeting

10:05 AM – 11:45 AM, 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 (MPO) agreed to the following:

- approve the release of draft Amendment One to the Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2016-20 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for a 30-day public review period
- approve the minutes of the MPO meeting of November 5

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

There were none.

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

At the MPO meeting of November 5, the Chair raised the possibility of presenting the MPO with an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to address funding for the *Green Line Extension* project. That amendment will not be proposed today, but may come at a meeting in the near future.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Tegin Bennett, Advisory Council Chair*

The Advisory Council met on November 18. At that meeting, D. Mohler briefed the Advisory Council on the financial situation surrounding the *Green Line Extension* project.

The Advisory Council Chair and Vice Chair are inviting input from MPO members regarding the Advisory Council's role in the MPO's planning process.

Mark Sanborn, the new Vice Chair of the Advisory Council, was introduced.

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

K. Quackenbush announced that the MPO's next meeting on December 3 is tentatively scheduled to be held in Weymouth; details will be forthcoming. (Note: The location of that meeting may change back to Boston, however, if a discussion of the *Green Line Extension* project is on the agenda.)

D. Mohler alerted members that staff will send out a notice to ask members of the MPO's Congestion Management Committee to confirm whether they would like to remain on the committee. Other members who are interested in joining the committee or who would like to chair the committee may also inform staff.

6. MPO Special Commission Remarks—*State Senator Thomas McGee*

State Senator Thomas McGee introduced the work of the MPO Special Commission. The Commission was established by the legislature in 2014 to comprehensively review the MPO planning process in the Commonwealth and explore ways to make transportation decisions more transparent to the public.

Senator McGee discussed the importance of having an MPO process that the public understands in order to build public support for investing in public transportation, which is important for economic growth in the Commonwealth. He expressed the importance of the MPO members being involved in the Commission's discussions.

The goals of the Commission are to review the current MPO processes to assess efficiency and transparency; review best practices from other states; analyze historic distribution of MPO funding for equity considerations; revisit the regional designations of the Commonwealth's MPOs; get input from stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels; make recommendations for reforms; and potentially propose legislation to implement the reforms. The Commission expects to report its findings and recommendations to the legislature in September 2016.

The Commission met several times already and will be meeting again today at 1:00 PM and holding a public hearing at 2:00 PM.

Discussion

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston, asked if the Commission has researched how MPOs are operating in other states. Senator McGee explained that the Commission will be doing that research as the work of the Commission progresses.

7. Draft Amendment One to the FFYs 2016-20 Transportation Improvement Program—Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff

S. Pfalzer presented Draft Amendment One to the FFYs 2016-20 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The proposed amendment would reprogram \$5.4 million in funding for the *Tri-Community Bikeway (Stoneham, Winchester, Woburn)* project in the FFY 2016 element of the TIP. The implementation of this project was delayed from FFY 2015 because it was not ready for advertisement in that fiscal year. The change in the year of programming of the bikeway project has reduced funding for the *Route 128 Add-a-Lane (Needham and Wellesley)* project in FFY 2016.

Other changes in the proposed amendment include the following:

- a revision to the description of a highway project to reflect a change in the project scope; the *Resurfacing on Route 9 (Wellesley)* project is now a resurfacing project only
- the removal of three line items for projects of the Cape Ann Transportation Authority; staff expects to address funding for these projects in the spring
- an update to the cost of the *North Washington Street Bridge (Boston)* project; funds for this multi-year project will be programmed in future TIP years (i.e. beyond FFY 2020)

Staff proposed to release the draft amendment for a 30-day public review starting on November 23 and ending on December 22, 2015. The MPO would then take action on the amendment in early January.

Discussion

J. Gillooly raised a question about the cost of the *Resurfacing on Route 9 (Wellesley)* project, noting that the project cost remains the same despite a reduction in the project scope. No further information was available about this cost change.

Ken Miller, Federal Highway Administration, reported that the federal agencies are waiting for a letter from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) before approving the FFY 2016 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The federal agencies expect that the STIP will be approved by next week, so the delay should not affect this amendment.

A motion to release the Draft Amendment One to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP for a 30-day public review period was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (John Romano), and seconded by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric Bourassa). The motion carried.

8. MPO Meeting Minutes—Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of November 5 was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the At-Large Town of Lexington (Richard Canale). The motion carried.

9. Proposed Transportation Improvement Program Evaluation Criteria—Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff

S. Pfalzer presented proposed updates to the criteria that the MPO uses to evaluate project vying for funding on the TIP, and members discussed the proposed changes.

As staff prepared the proposed revision to the criteria, they were guided by the new goals and objectives adopted in the MPO's new LRTP, *Charting Progress to 2040*. Staff was also guided by the federal MAP-21 legislation that requires MPOs to implement performance-based planning. Staff also considered public comments. Recent public comments have asked the MPO to consider the following when developing criteria:

- geographic equity (i.e. not favoring urban over suburban projects)
- economic benefits
- quantitative measures
- the experience of people over machines (i.e. less auto-oriented measures)
- omitting shared-use path projects from scoring under the System Preservation category

Staff presented several handouts showing the MPO's vision, goals, objectives, and performance measures; the proposed realignment of the TIP project evaluation criteria; the proposed removal of redundant criteria; and proposed additions and revisions to the criteria.

Staff proposed realigning criteria under six new goal categories: Safety, System Preservation, Capacity Management/Mobility, Clean Air/Clean Communities, Transportation Equity, and Economic Vitality. Several criteria that were included under MPO's old goal categories have been incorporated under the new goal categories. For example, security criteria are now under the System Preservation goal, and modernization and livability criteria are now under the Capacity Management/Mobility goal.

Staff proposed removing several criteria under the new goal structure that are redundant. The focus was on retaining the criteria that provide quantifiable measures. Staff also proposed the addition of new criteria, and revisions to some criteria, to meet MAP-21 requirements. The new additions included a criterion under the Safety category for the Equivalent Property Damage Only (EPDO) value; criteria under the System Preservation category for improving substandard bridges, transit assets, and sidewalks; a criterion under Transportation Equity for serving Title VI and non-discrimination populations; and a criterion under Economic Vitality for leveraging other (non-TIP) investments.

Discussion

D. Mohler asked staff to explain the relationship between the criteria, goals and objectives, and performance measures. Elizabeth Moore, Director of Policy and Planning for CTPS, explained the terminology as such: the goal is the end state, defining what is to be achieved; objectives are statements of how to reach the goal; performance measures are metrics for measuring progress; criteria are restatements of the objectives for scoring projects; and sub-criteria (which were not discussed today) relate back to the performance measures.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), asked staff to highlight which measures are objective and which are subjective (requiring professional judgement) when the discussion materials are presented at future meetings.

K. Miller suggested that staff present the goals, objectives, performance measures, and criteria all on one page for consistency.

Jay Monty, At-Large City of Everett, addressed a criterion that supports projects whose “design is consistent with Complete Streets policies.” He remarked that Complete Streets are becoming the standard design for roadway projects. He suggested that this criterion be included under the System Preservation goal, rather than under the Capacity Management/Mobility goal, because Complete Streets projects would improve substandard roadway conditions. S. Pfalzer remarked on the distinction between scoring projects that would replace an existing bicycle lane or sidewalk and those that would add a new facility.

J. Gillooly expressed concern that consideration for Complete Streets would not be well reflected in the revised criteria and he stated that projects should score points for being Complete Streets projects. He also expressed concern about a reduced emphasis on environmental justice in the Transportation Equity category, noting the importance of

giving an advantage in the project evaluation process to communities that have historically been deprived of transportation improvements. R. Canale also raised questions about the removal of two Transportation Equity criteria. S. Pfalzer explained that revisions are not eliminating criteria, rather they are intended to make clear linkages between the goals and objectives and the criteria. Under the revised structure, a project could score points in the Transportation Equity category if it addresses an issue heard during outreach to environmental-justice communities.

Lourenço Dantas, Manager of the Certification Activities Group at CTPS, provided further clarification regarding the revisions to the Complete Streets criteria. He explained that the benefits achieved through Complete Streets projects would still be valued in the revised system across various other categories. S. Pfalzer added that scoring weight for projects with Complete Streets elements would remain as the criteria are consolidated. K. Quackenbush further discussed how projects with Complete Streets elements would achieve points under multiple categories; for example, a project could score points under Safety for improving bicycle and pedestrian safety, and under Capacity Management/Mobility for reducing auto dependency.

D. Giombetti advocated for retaining the identity of Complete Streets in the criteria to keep the focus on the concept and to make it possible to identify what points a project has received for having a Complete Streets design.

D. Mohler suggested that the MPO could make a policy of only funding roadway projects that have Complete Streets designs, and leaving non-Complete Streets projects for municipalities to fund with their Chapter 90 dollars.

T. Bennett suggested testing the impact of the revised criteria by conducting a sensitivity analysis on previously selected projects to determine, for example, the impact that the revised criteria would have on Complete Streets projects.

E. Bourassa expressed support for the idea of adopting a policy of supporting Complete Streets projects. He also noted the value of being able to score individual elements of Complete Streets projects, given that particular projects may have a range of Complete Streets elements. With criteria broken down, as staff presented, the public and project proponents would be able to see why particular Complete Streets projects may have scored higher than others.

K. Quackenbush noted that staff will be presenting the underlying performance metrics for each of the criteria at a future meeting. He also recognized the importance of conducting a sensitivity analysis. Further, he assured members that decisions made

now regarding the criteria will not be irreversible if, in the future, the MPO wants to revisit them.

D. Mohler remarked that the criterion for “improves quality of life” is being eliminated, not because it is redundant, but because there is no good way to measure that factor.

J. Gillooly discussed the remaining criterion for Transportation Equity, which would award points to a project that “addresses an MPO-identified environmental justice transportation issue.” He proposed that the evaluation system recognize projects that address environmental justice issues identified by municipalities as well. D. Mohler noted that the system should award points to good projects in communities that have historically been underserved regardless of whether the environmental justice issues were identified by the MPO or by a municipality. K. Miller added that the criteria should support good projects in those communities regardless of whether the project is addressing a defined environmental justice problem.

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, complemented staff on the materials that were prepared for this meeting and then he made several suggestions. He expressed a preference to using specific criteria as opposed to abstract criteria. He also opposed the removal of Complete Streets criteria and criteria regarding reducing vehicle miles travelled and vehicle hours travelled. He asked the MPO to find a way to measure quality of life. Lastly, he noted that the intent of the Transportation Equity criteria should be to recognize projects that serve an environmental justice area; he pointed out that a project could be in an environmental justice area, but not benefit the community.

K. Quackenbush noted that some of these concerns would be addressed when the MPO discusses the performance metrics at a future meeting.

Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory, asked if the proposed new criterion for “leveraging other investments (non-TIP funding)” refers to leveraging funding for the TIP project itself or to a project’s ability to generate economic investment. S. Pfalzer indicated that the criterion would capture both the funding that is available for a particular project (such as MassWorks grants that fund infrastructure improvements in the project area), and the ability of the project to leverage other investments and facilitate new development.

J. Gillooly asked for an explanation of the distinction between two Transportation Equity criteria: 1) “serves Title VI and non-discrimination populations,” and 2) “addresses an MPO-identified Title VI and non-discrimination population transportation issue.”

S. Pfalzer explained that the first gives consideration to the populations being served by the project while the second considers the benefits of the project. K. Quackenbush

added that the first is geographically based, i.e. the project is located within an area where the populations of concern reside.

D. Mohler expressed concern about awarding points to projects simply because they are located in an environmental justice community, given that a project may be located in the community but not serve it or be detrimental to it. K. Quackenbush then noted that in the details of the scoring system, staff awards points for projects that “improve transit for an environmental justice population.” A project would score points under the second criterion if it addresses a transportation issue identified through the MPO’s outreach.

D. Mohler raised further questions about the second criterion and asked for an example of what type of project would receive points under that criterion. R. Mares offered the *Red Line-Blue Line Connector* project as an example; the project is not located in an environmental justice community, but it would benefit residents of environmental justice communities by reducing their travel times.

K. Miller offered comments about several criteria. He suggested that the criterion for “improving emergency response” should be located under the Capacity Management/Mobility category rather than under System Preservation. He also raised a question about the difference between two criteria under the Capacity Management/Mobility category: 1) “reduces congestion,” and 2) “Congestion Management Process congestion level.” He then remarked on the criterion for “implementing new technology” and noted that it is the *benefits* of implementing new technology that should be measured. He suggested adding criteria under Capacity Management/Mobility to show a link between “reducing auto dependency” and “improving bicycle safety” and “improving pedestrian safety.” Lastly, he suggested broadening the criterion for “improving transit reliability.”

Tom Kadzis, City of Boston, asked if staff would be presenting the sub-criteria today. S. Pfalzer replied that the sub-criteria will be the focus of the next discussion.

D. Mohler inquired about the federal agencies’ expectations for reporting performance measures under the criterion for “EPDO injury value rate,” a requirement of MAP-21. Specifically, he asked whether FHWA would expect to see a reduction in fatalities and injuries from crashes based on vehicle miles travelled at a regional level, regardless of whether those reduction occur at a high-crash-rate location. Leah Sirmin and K. Miller, FHWA, confirmed that FHWA will judge the MPO’s performance against the regional target that it has set.

David Anderson, MassDOT Highway Division, observed that there is no criterion addressing accessibility that would reward projects that remove barriers to accessibility.

K. Miller concurred that accessibility should be factored in the criteria. He remarked on the ADA training currently underway in municipalities.

10. MassDOT/MBTA Draft Capital Investment Plan for FY 2016—*Bryan Pounds, MassDOT Staff*

MassDOT plans to evaluate and score projects for the draft FY 2016 Capital Investment Plan (CIP) in mid-December and, tentatively, to develop a draft CIP by the end of January.

11. State Implementation Plan Update—*Bryan Pounds, MassDOT Staff*

MassDOT and MassDEP held a public meeting on November 16 (with sessions starting at 1:00 PM and 5:00 PM) on the annual status update on the State Implementation Plan (SIP). An update on the *Green Line Extension* project was provided. Also, there was an announcement about the upcoming joint meetings of the MassDOT Board of Directors and MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board on November 30 and December 9. At the November 30 meeting, the boards will discuss an analysis of the *Green Line Extension* project, and on December 9, they will make recommendations for going forward.

MassDOT is accepting public comments about the SIP until November 20. MassDOT will be responding to comments and sending them to MassDEP for review. MassDOT will provide the next update on the SIP to the MPO on December 17.

12. Members Items

D. Mohler reminded members that the MPO Special Commission will be meeting today at 1:00 PM and holding a public hearing at 2:00 PM.

Laura Wiener, At-Large Town of Arlington, invited MPO members to a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the *Reconstruction of Massachusetts Avenue (Arlington)* project starting at 11:00 AM on November 21 in Arlington. She thanked the MPO for their support for this project.

13. Adjourn

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 | Ken Miller |
| Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) | Tom Bent |
| Massachusetts Department of Transportation | David Mohler |
| | David Anderson |
| Massachusetts Highway Division | John Romano |
| MBTA | Janice Ramsay |
| 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) | Roy Sorenson |
| Regional Transportation Advisory Council | Tegin Bennett |
| | Mark Sanborn |
| Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce) | Tom O'Rourke |
| | Steve Olanoff |

| Other Attendees | Affiliation |
|------------------------|---|
| Ed Carr | MetroWest Regional Transit Authority |
| Rafael Mares | Conservation Law Foundation |
| Owen MacDonald | Town of Weymouth |
| Senator Thomas McGee | State Senator |
| Steve Olanoff | Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood) |
| Bryan Pounds | MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning |
| Constance Raphael | MassDOT District 4 |

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| Mark Sanborn | Regional Transportation Advisory Council |
| Leah Sirmin | Federal Highway Administration |
| Trey Wadsworth | MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning |
| Sheri Warrington | Office of State Senator Thomas McGee |

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director

Lourenço Dantas
David Fargen
Maureen Kelly
Anne McGahan
Elizabeth Moore
Scott Peterson
Sean Pfalzer
Alicia Wilson
