

Memorandum for the Record
Transportation Planning and Programming Committee of the
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

January 8, 2009 Meeting

10:00 AM – 11:40 AM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

David Mohler, Chair, representing James Aloisi, Executive Office of Transportation & Public Works (EOTPW)

Decisions

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee voted to take the following action:

- approve the work program for *Existing Traffic Operations Analysis at Intersections Along Huntington Avenue*
- approve the *Newton Corner Rotary Study, Phase II*
- approve the meeting minutes of November 20 and December 4 with recommended changes

Meeting Agenda

A special MPO meeting regarding the amendment to *JOURNEY TO 2030*, the Regional Transportation Plan, preceded this meeting. Please see the meeting summary in the addendum to this document.

1. Public Comments

Dennis Harrington, City of Quincy, indicated that he would make comments during the discussion for the amendment to the Regional Transportation Plan (Plan).

2. Chair's Report – David Mohler, EOTPW

EOTPW filed an update to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) with the Department of Environmental Protection this week.

A meeting of the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) is scheduled for January 16 at Holy Cross College in Worcester. The agenda includes a discussion of the anticipated federal economic stimulus bill, the Commonwealth's Accelerated Bridge Program, and an update on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects.

3. Subcommittee Chairs' Reports – Barbara Lucas, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

The Suburban Mobility/Transportation Demand Management Subcommittee will meet this afternoon to review letters of interest submitted for the FFY 2009 program.

The TIP Criteria Subcommittee will meet on the afternoon of January 15.

4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council – *Kristina Johnson, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

At the December Advisory Council meeting, there were two presentations. Lucy Garliauskas, Division Administrator for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), discussed FHWA's priorities for the economic stimulus bill and the reauthorization of the federal transportation legislation. Brian Kane, MBTA Advisory Board, discussed the MBTA's economic condition. B. Kane's presentation will lead to the creation of an ad hoc Advisory Council committee that will propose positions on suggested recommendations for alleviating the MBTA's financial crisis. That committee will be preparing a letter to send to the MPO.

The next meeting will include presentations on public-private partnerships and the recently released MPO study, *MBTA Transit Signal Priority Study: Arborway Corridor*.

5. Approval of Work Program for Existing Traffic Operations Analysis at Intersections Along Huntington Avenue – *Karl Quackenbush, Deputy Director, CTPS*

Members received a briefing on the work program for *Existing Traffic Operations Analysis at Intersections Along Huntington Avenue* at the meeting of December 4. Under this work program, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) would analyze existing conditions at up to 13 intersections along Huntington Avenue. This analysis would be provided to the MBTA and its consultant.

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston, offered support from the City's staff and asked that the MPO staff continue to work with the City's staff when doing the analysis. K. Quackenbush stated that they would and that the MPO staff might need information from the City.

A motion to approve the work program for *Existing Traffic Operations Analysis at Intersections Along Huntington Avenue* was made by Joe Cosgrove, MBTA, and seconded by Stephen Woelfel, MassHighway. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Approval of Newton Corner Rotary Study, Phase II – *Karl Quackenbush, CTPS*

Members heard a presentation on the *Newton Corner Rotary Study, Phase II* at the meeting of December 4. In response to questions raised at that meeting by David Koses, City of Newton, MPO staff prepared and distributed a memorandum to address concerns about the model results for Alternative 4. (See attached.) Efi Pagitsas and Chen-Yuan Wang, MPO staff, presented the study findings to the Newton Board of Aldermen on the evening of January 7.

D. Koses thanked MPO staff for the memorandum and stated that they did a great job presenting the study results last evening. He asked that the memorandum be incorporated into the study. K. Quackenbush stated that the memorandum could be included as an attachment to the study.

J. Gillooly inquired as to whether the temporary closure of a Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (Masspike) ramp [to test traffic flow near the Route 16/Masspike interchange]

was part of the discussion at last evening's meeting. D. Koses replied that the Masspike has postponed the trial indefinitely.

Addressing the Masspike representative, J. Gillooly stated that the City of Boston would like to be informed if the Masspike decides to resume the test so that the City can monitor implications for Boston streets.

Jim Gallagher, MAPC, asked if the City of Newton prefers a particular study alternative. D. Koses replied that more discussion would occur, but interest was expressed in Alternative 2, which involves a new off ramp in Brighton. That alternative would be a long-term solution. The City of Newton may consider looking for funding for a feasibility study.

A motion to approve the *Newton Corner Rotary Study, Phase II* was made by D. Koses, and seconded by Lynn Duncan, City of Salem. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Meeting Minutes – Pam Wolfe, Manager of Certification Activities, MPO Staff

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of November 20 was made by Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, and seconded by S. Woelfel. The motion passed. Lynn Duncan, City of Salem, and K. Johnson abstained.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 4 – with changes recommended by Mary Pratt, Town of Hopkinton, to pages 3 and 8, and by B. Lucas to page 3 – was made by P. Regan, and seconded by S. Woelfel. The motion passed. L. Duncan, K. Johnson, and Lourenço Dantas, Massport, abstained.

8. Work Program for Red Line/Blue Line Connector Study – Karl Quackenbush, CTPS

The work program for the *Red Line/Blue Line Connector Study* is included in the current Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The state must complete the final design for the connector by the end of 2011. This work program will provide travel forecasting to support the development of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). CTPS is proposing to model up to 22 different alternatives for the year 2017 and 2030.

The alternatives would differ in three ways, by virtue of:

- how the connections between the subway lines would be effectuated (a pedestrian connection and an extension of the Blue Line will be modeled)
- the interactions with other planned projects (such as the Urban Ring and Silver Line)
- whether the connections will be modeled along with road restrictions from road work anticipated in Charles River Basin area

This is a one-year study costing \$75,000. It will be paid for by EOTPW.

Members asked several questions:

What is the cost of each alternative? (M. Pratt)

EOTPW's consultant team will determine costs as part of the DEIR. (D. Mohler and S. Woelfel)

Will the modeling identify the impact of the Connector as an independent project? (B. Lucas)

Yes. The point of modeling the various project designs with and without other large projects in the mix will allow for isolating what this project will do in and of itself. (K. Quackenbush)

Is the Connector part of one of the alternatives for the Blue Line Extension to Lynn? (J. Gallagher)

There was discussion of including the Connector as part of the Blue Line Extension if funding became available for the Extension project. The Connector should not be locked in or locked out of the Extension project, however, so that there is more flexibility when funding is available. (P. Regan) The MEPA certificate for the Blue Line Extension project makes mention of the Connector but does not require it. (S. Woelfel)

How will you address the modeling for years 2017 and 2030? (M. Pratt)

For the 2030 forecasting, the demographics adopted by the MPO (that are used for the Regional Transportation Plan Build network) will be used. For 2017, CTPS will estimate demographics and the project mix based on the MPO's plans. (K. Quackenbush)

Will attention be given to the benefits the Connector would provide to the Orange and Green Lines? (J. Gillooly)

Yes, the issue of relieving congestion on those lines will be addressed. (K. Quackenbush)

9. JOURNEY TO 2030 Amendment – David Mohler, EOTPW, and Anne McGahan, MPO Staff

B. Lucas provided a summary of a meeting held just prior to this meeting at which members of the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee, FHWA, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) discussed the MPO's request to prepare an abbreviated amendment to the Regional Transportation Plan in order to expedite the schedule. (See addendum for a summary of that meeting.) It became apparent during the meeting that the MPO would not be able to streamline the amendment process without developing a full, updated financial plan. FTA's position is that the MPO should have a full financial plan that shows project costs balanced with revenues.

At that meeting, there was also a discussion of how the anticipated federal economic stimulus plan would affect the funding of projects in the TIP and Plan. There is the expectation that large transit projects in whole are unlikely to be part of the stimulus, but there is still uncertainty as to whether parts of those projects could be included. There is also an expectation that stimulus projects would have to be federally eligible projects (following the routine MPO programming procedures), and that capacity-adding projects would have to be included in the current Plan or Plan Amendment. It is uncertain whether federal regulations might be waived for projects funded under the stimulus.

Dennis Harrington, City of Quincy, provided public comment at this time regarding the Quincy Center Concourse project. He expressed hope that the project description has been corrected to reflect the description the City provided to the MPO at past Municipal TIP Input Days. Referencing a letter of December 11, he expressed disappointment at what he called FHWA's continuation of its "bureaucratic statements" and that it does not appear to be looking for a solution to move the Quincy project forward. He urged FHWA to make an exception to federal policy to allow the project to go forward, put people to work, and revitalize Quincy Center. Michael Chong, FHWA, stated that FHWA would be willing to discuss this issue with EOTPW again.

At D. Harrington's request, D. Mohler offered to arrange a meeting between the FHWA Division Administrator, the City of Quincy, and representatives from the offices of Senator John Kerry and U.S. Representative William Delahunt. D. Harrington asked that MPO staff inform the City of Quincy when meetings relating to the Quincy Concourse project are taking place.

K. Johnson inquired as to when municipalities and the Commonwealth would be notified of whether proposed projects qualify for economic stimulus funds. M. Chong indicated that eligible projects would have to have gone through the MPO programming process. K. Johnson commented that this guidance was not provided to municipalities when they were recently asked to recommend projects to be included in the stimulus list, rather the focus was on selecting projects that are "shovel-ready."

B. Lucas stated that, if stimulus-funded projects must be federal-aid eligible, it would behoove the MPO to have a list of proposed projects. D. Mohler stated that the transportation project list will be addressed at the MARPA meeting of January 16. EOTPW expects to hold meetings with the MPOs in February or March to discuss adding these projects to the TIPs and STIP.

M. Chong added that FHWA anticipates that the stimulus-funded projects would need to be on the TIPs and STIP, but not necessarily have to be regionally significant and be in the Plan. Bill Gordon, FTA, noted that there has not yet been news as to whether there would be waivers of planning regulations.

D. Mohler noted that, unless Congress issues waivers, Title 23 regulations would apply to transportation projects that receive stimulus funds. He also noted that time limits might apply to the use of those funds. Projects that are being considered for the stimulus list, therefore, should be "shovel-ready" and federal-aid eligible. EOTPW will put a final draft of the Commonwealth's transportation project list on its web page.

In response to questions from members, D. Mohler explained that while there is no dollar threshold for projects to be considered for the list, they must be federal-aid eligible. He also noted that Governor Patrick has created six task force committees to work on developing the Commonwealth's request for stimulus funds. The projects from each area (i.e. transportation, economic development, etc.) will be bundled into one request

package. The Commonwealth will then request a sum of money for the package rather than for individual projects.

D. Mohler further explained that it is unclear at this time whether the Commonwealth will have the flexibility to make changes to the project list after the stimulus bill is passed. While the incoming Obama Administration has expressed that the bill should not include earmarks – a position supported by the Council of Governors – it will be up to Congress to determine how the stimulus funds are allocated.

D. Mohler also noted that it is unlikely that funds from the stimulus would increase the MPO targets, but the funds would likely address the TIP project queue. The MPO can expect to continue working on its regular funding cycle, as stimulus funds would be separate from targets.

Members turned their discussion back to the Plan amendment and talked about ways that they might shorten the timeframe for the amendment process after EOTPW provides the financial plan, and how to begin making decisions about the Plan project list. It was noted that the SIP projects must be included in the Plan.

L. Dantas suggested that the MPO begin by getting updated project costs then working to prioritize the projects. Anne McGahan, MPO staff, noted that members received in the fall a list of roadway projects both in the Plan and additional projects to be considered with cost updates. B. Lucas noted that roadways' volume-to-capacity ratios could be used as a way to prioritize projects. L. Dantas also suggested reviewing the staff recommended project rankings prepared and previously distributed for the development of the Plan.

B. Lucas stated that FHWA and FTA are requiring the MPO to include the SIP projects in the Plan with updated costs and revenues, but that the agencies are not requiring the MPO to pay for the projects out of MPO targets. She stated that the MPO would be looking to EOTPW to determine how the SIP projects are funded. D. Mohler stated that there is no funding for the SIP projects at this time outside of the Commonwealth's bond cap.

B. Lucas requested that for the next meeting staff again provide the updated project costs, the staff recommendations from the Plan, and notes on whether there have been significant changes from the Plan. J. Gallagher asked staff to also update information on congestion and safety.

L. Duncan requested that staff provide a timetable for the Plan amendment so that members can see if the schedule could be tightened. M. Chong added that FHWA's review of the amendment will be prompt.

10. Members' Items

B. Lucas announced that she is leaving MAPC at the end of February. She said that she would be taking vacation time at the end of February and that she will be attending one

more TPPC meeting. On behalf of the members, D. Mohler stated that she would be missed.

11. Adjourn

**Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Meeting Attendance
Thursday, January, 8, 2009, 10:00 AM**

Member Agencies

EOTPW

City of Boston

City of Newton
City of Salem
City of Somerville
Federal Highway
Administration
Federal Transit
Administration
MAPC

MassHighway
MassPike
Massport
MBTA
MBTA Advisory Board
Regional Transportation
Advisory Council
Town of Bedford
Town of Hopkinton
Town of Framingham

Representatives and Alternates

David Mohler
Clinton Bench
Jim Gillooly
Thomas Kadzis
David Koses
Lynn Duncan
Thomas Bent
Michael Chong

William Gordon

Barbara Lucas
Jim Gallagher
Stephen Woelfel
Shirin Karanfiloglu
Lourenço Dantas
Joe Cosgrove
Paul Regan
Kristina Johnson

Richard Reed
Mary Pratt
Ginger Esty
Dennis Giombetti

MPO Staff/CTPS

Annette Demchur
John Hersey
Maureen Kelly
Robin Mannion
Anne McGahan
Hayes Morrison
Sean Pfalzer
Karl Quackenbush
Arnie Soolman
Mary Ellen Sullivan
Pam Wolfe

Other Attendees

Tony Centore
Dennis Harrington
Steve Olanoff
Duncan Power
Sonia Sujanani

Town of Medfield
City of Quincy
Advisory Council
ARRT, Inc.
MBTA Advisory Board

**Memorandum for the Record
Transportation Planning and Programming Committee of the
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

January 8, 2009 Meeting

9:00 AM –10:00 AM, State Transportation Building, MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

The members of the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee (TPPC) asked the MPO's federal partners - the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) – to meet with them in a special session to discuss issues surrounding the amendment to *JOURNEY TO 2030*, the Regional Transportation Plan. This meeting followed on the TPPC's request to prepare a limited scope amendment to the Plan in order to expedite completion of the amendment. This interim amendment would include the State Implementation Plan (SIP) projects (as required by the federal partners) and defer the completion of a full, updated finance plan. (See attached letters.)

The representatives from FHWA and FTA stated the federal agencies' positions regarding the request. The FHWA Division Office requires the MPO to include full updated financials in the Plan. FHWA does not have the discretion to waive the financial constraint requirement. The FTA Division Office also requires the MPO to have a full financial plan that shows project costs balanced with revenues – costs must equal revenues. Neither agency is requiring a complete rewriting of the Plan.

The amended Plan must also include the substitute SIP projects and assure timely progress on their implementation; without those the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will not approve the air quality conformity determination of the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). While the federal agencies do not expect the SIP projects to be funded out of the MPO's targets, it was noted that if there were not enough state revenues for the legally required SIP projects, they would have to be funded from other available sources, which could include the MPO's targets.

FTA is currently providing technical assistance to EOTPW for the finalization of cost estimates for proposed transit projects. EOTPW has or will soon have updated costs for projects including the Urban Ring, Fairmount Commuter Rail Line Improvements, Green Line Extension, 1,000 Parking Spaces, and Blue Line Station Modernization. FTA also is working with EOTPW to determine if the Green Line Extension project will be funded through the federal New Starts Program or with non-federal aid. FTA has concerns about discretionary funding for certain transit projects, such as the Silver Line Phase 3, Assembly Square Orange Line Station, and Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line Improvements.

There was also a discussion of how the anticipated federal economic stimulus bill would affect the funding of projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Plan. Members had questions about the timing of the stimulus bill and as to whether: the stimulus funds would help address the queue of TIP and Plan projects; the stimulus plan

project lists would coincide with TIP project lists; the MPO should conduct its planning with the expectation that a certain amount of revenues will be available; and whether the MPO would have the discretion to flex stimulus funds between highway and transit projects.

The federal representatives reported that they have not been informed of the formal details of how the stimulus funds would be applied. However, they did explain that there is an expectation that projects that would receive stimulus funding must be federally eligible projects (following the routine MPO programming procedures and listed in the TIP and STIP), and that the projects cannot impact air quality conformity (cannot be capacity adding). The focus is on developing a list of projects that are “shovel-ready.” It was noted that most large transit projects in this region are not “shovel-ready” and, therefore, are unlikely to qualify for stimulus funding.

Regarding the Green Line Extension project, members had questions about when FTA would determine if the project would receive New Starts funding, and if the federal share for New Starts projects would increase during the Obama Administration. The FTA representative explained that FTA is evaluating a number of variables to determine if the project is eligible for New Starts, and will be considering the project’s cost effectiveness and ridership potential. As regards the federal share for project funding, he indicated that New Starts projects are, in practice, typically funded at 50% federal share or less. FTA is concerned about where the remaining funds for the transit program would come from.

The meeting did not result in a solution that would enable the MPO to develop an interim Plan amendment. However, members had a clear understanding of the reasons one could not be approved by the federal agencies. Members then discussed the need to find ways to accelerate the amendment timeframe. The federal partners noted that their review of the Plan amendment would be quick.

Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Meeting Attendance
Thursday, January, 2009, 9:00 AM

Member Agencies

EOTPW
City of Boston

City of Newton
City of Salem
City of Somerville
Federal Highway
Administration
Federal Transit
Administration
MAPC

Massport
MBTA
Regional Transportation
Advisory Council
Town of Bedford
Town of Hopkinton

Representatives and Alternates

Stephen Woelfel
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Joe Cosgrove
Kristina Johnson

Richard Reed
Mary Pratt

MPO Staff/CTPS

Maureen Kelly
Anne McGahan
Sean Pfalzer
Arnie Soolman
Pam Wolfe

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Koses
Newton Planning and Development Department

December 16, 2008

FROM: Chen-Yuan Wang and Efi Pagitsas

**RE: Response to Comments on Alternative 4 Model Results,
Newton Corner Rotary Study, Phase II**

The purpose of this memo is to address your concerns about the model results for Alternative 4 in our final report. We have examined those results in detail and find that they appear reasonable to us. We hope to persuade you to this view. First, we discuss four issues that bear on the model results. Then, we discuss the results with respect to Route 9 and St. James Street, as these are two roadways whose projected volumes struck you as unreasonable.

The Decrease in Turnpike On-ramp Volumes in Alternative 4 Seems Reasonable

The modeled decrease in turnpike traffic resulting from the introduction of tolls at Exit 16 and Exit 17 is consistent with past observations. Specifically, at the West Newton on-ramp, the reduction is consistent with what had been observed in 1996 when the toll was removed. Then, traffic increased by 33% at the on-ramp as a result of the removal of the toll. Now, in this study, we predict that traffic would decrease by 26% in the AM peak hour and 38% in the PM peak hour with a reinstatement of a toll there. Thus, predicted changes are similar to actual historical changes.

There is no observation against which to compare the modeled result for the Newton Corner on-ramp, but the model predicted that the relative traffic decrease there would be somewhat less than at West Newton. This makes sense to us because many of the motorists at West Newton would have the ability and inclination, with the toll restoration, to shift back to the Turnpike/Route 128 interchange or other alternative routes before West Newton.

Many Roadways Would Already Be at Capacity in the 2030 No-build Case

Many roadways in the study area and vicinity, including Route 9 and St. James, would already be at capacity in the 2030 no-build case. This means that there is almost no room for traffic to grow on these roadways, and they cannot, therefore, accept traffic that would divert away from the Turnpike due to the imposition of tolls.

Results Shown on the Maps are a Combination of Two Tolls Introduced Simultaneously

The volumes shown on Figures 13 and 14 in our report are net results of a lot of route changing going on simultaneously due to the two tolls being assumed. They would interact with one another and the impacts of each would be obscured by the impacts of the other. Also, there is a "domino" effect when you raise the cost of traveling on one route, and this also muddies the effects of the toll change alone. That is, the results are the net effect of vehicles leaving the turnpike and switching to other routes, but also of vehicles on those routes, in turn, switching to other routes, due to the increase in congestion on their preferred routes. That is what happens in a congested network like this.

The Model Properly Reflects the Route-Shifting Effects of the Toll Options

For many roadway segments, one can trace the net effect of vehicles shifting routes. For example, we traced where the 300 vehicles are that would be removed from the turnpike, east of Newton Corner in the AM peak hour, and we have found about as many of them as we expect to find. From the updated Figures 13 and 14 (attached), across an imaginary screen-line just east of Newton Corner in the study area, you can see traffic increases ranging from 20 to 60 vehicles per peak hour on Mt. Auburn Street (Route 16), Arsenal Street, N. Beacon Street (Route 20), Nonantum Road, Commonwealth Avenue (Route 30), Beacon Street, and Boylston Street (Route 9). These increases total over 200 vehicles, or two-thirds of those that would be removed from the turnpike in the AM peak hour. The rest of the fewer than 100 vehicles are dispersed on the streets that are outside the immediate study area.

As you are aware, many of the Newton Corner on-ramp users (about 20%, according to the O-D survey in Phase I study) are from the suburbs west and south of Newton. The route shifts of some of these users would not be detectable on these maps. For example, the trips from Needham heading to Boston now switching to routes such as Kendrick St.-Nahanton St.-Brookline St. or Needham St. (in Dedham)-Spring St.-Centre St. (in West Roxbury) are not shown in Figures 13 and 14.

The sections below specifically address your questions of the model results on Route 9 and St. James Street.

Traffic Impacts of Alternative 4 on Route 9

We examined the V/C (Volume to Capacity) ratios of the section of Route 9 east of Route 128 south of the study area. The model indicated that all the locations on Route 9 in this section would be highly congested in 2030 with V/C ratios greater than 1 for both the no-build and Alternative 4 scenarios. This means that, during peak hours in 2030, drivers along this section of Route 9 would experience extensive delays and other drivers would not be attracted to it.

As shown in the updated Figures 13 and 14, we predict that Route 9 east of Hammond Street in Newton, and similar locations on parallel roadways (such as Beacon Street and Commonwealth Avenue), would have more traffic in Alternative 4 than in the no-build scenario. This increased congestion would consequently deter some drivers from taking Route 9 in the section west of Hammond Street. This is why traffic volumes under Alternative 4 assumptions are somewhat lower in that section of Route 9 than in the no-build scenario.

The increased traffic on Route 9 and its parallel roadways in the eastern part of Newton is mainly due to new tolls at the Newton Corner on-ramp. This option would also cause traffic increases on other parallel roadways on both sides of I-90 east of Newton Corner. Overall, the model properly represents the reality that the diverted vehicles, due to the new tolls, would spread through roadways parallel to I-90 to the north and south of it, depending on the origin-destination pattern of these trips.

Traffic Impacts of Alternative 4 on St. James Street

The primary reason that traffic would not increase significantly along St. James Street under this alternative is that it would be very congested during the peak hours in 2030, even without a Turnpike toll increase. The model showed that during peak hours the St. James Street's V/C would be greater than 1 for the northbound direction; close to 1 for the southbound direction. Therefore, there would be little room for traffic to grow on St. James Street.

In addition, the model showed that several roadways in the Newton Corner vicinity, such as Centre Street on both sides of I-90, Washington Street, and Centre Avenue, would also have V/C ratios near or greater than 1. This would also discourage people from using St. James Street, as they would have to pass through these congested roadways before they can even reach St. James Street.

It is likely that some of the Newton Corner on-ramp users coming from the south and west of Newton Corner would divert to St. James Street in order to avoid the new tolls. But the net increase of this diversion may not be as much as we expected due to the roadway's capacity restraints. Another group of St. James Street users, those who come from the I-90 eastbound off-ramp, would probably decrease (as the model showed that the off-ramp would have a total decrease of 100 to 200 vehicles per peak hour due to the new tolls at the West Newton on-ramp). The mixed effect of these diversions and mainly the roadway capacity restraints result in a slight increase in traffic on St. James Street, although intuitively one would expect a significant increase.

In conclusion, we believe that the model results are reasonable and the model properly represents the future conditions based on the underlining land use and transportation assumptions under the proposed options. We hope that the above analysis answers your questions. Please let us know if you have further questions about the results or the model.

CW/cw

cc: Karl Quackenbush, CTPS

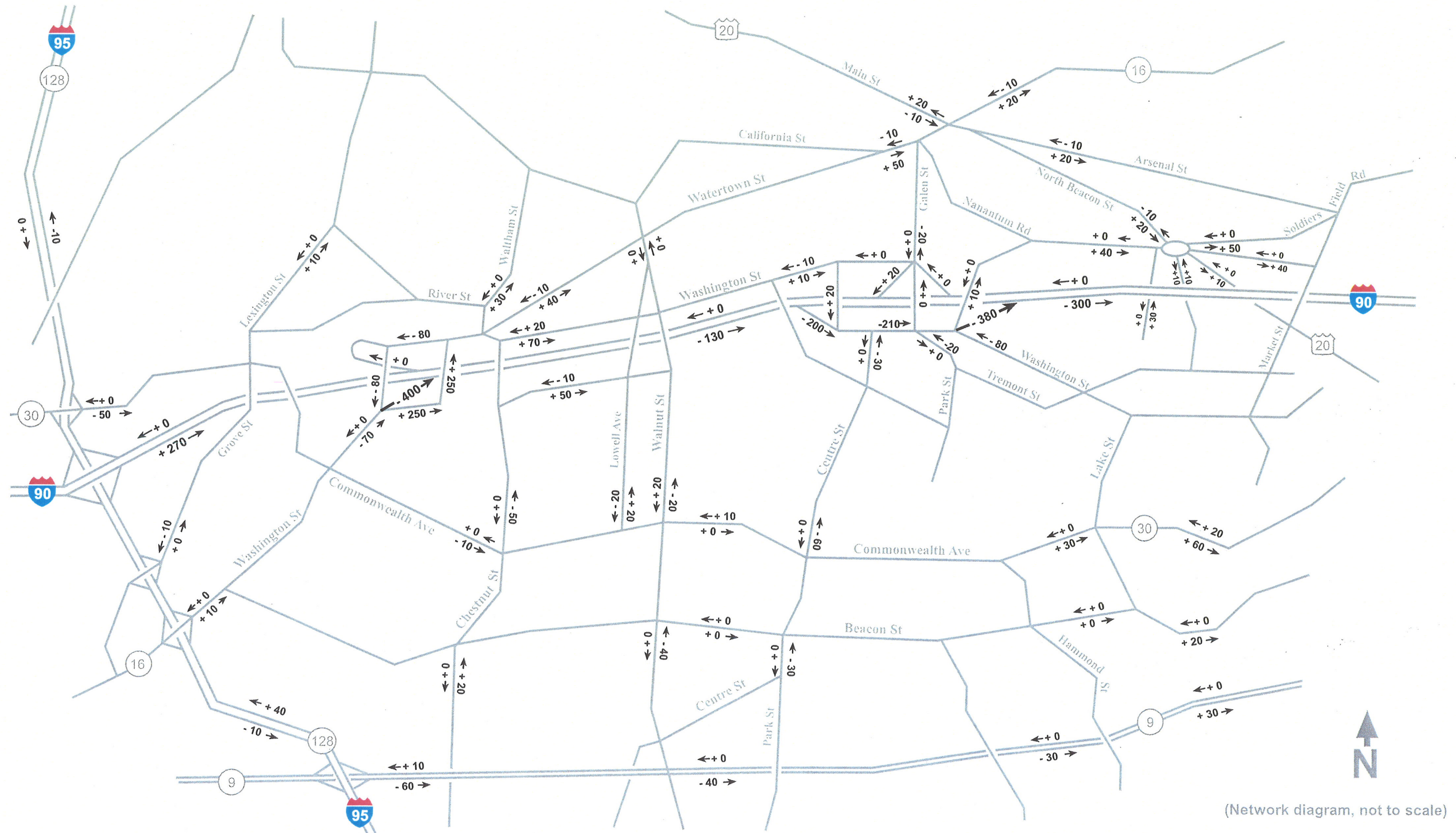


Figure 13: Alternative 4 - Projected 2030 AM Peak-Hour Traffic-Volume Changes from No-Build

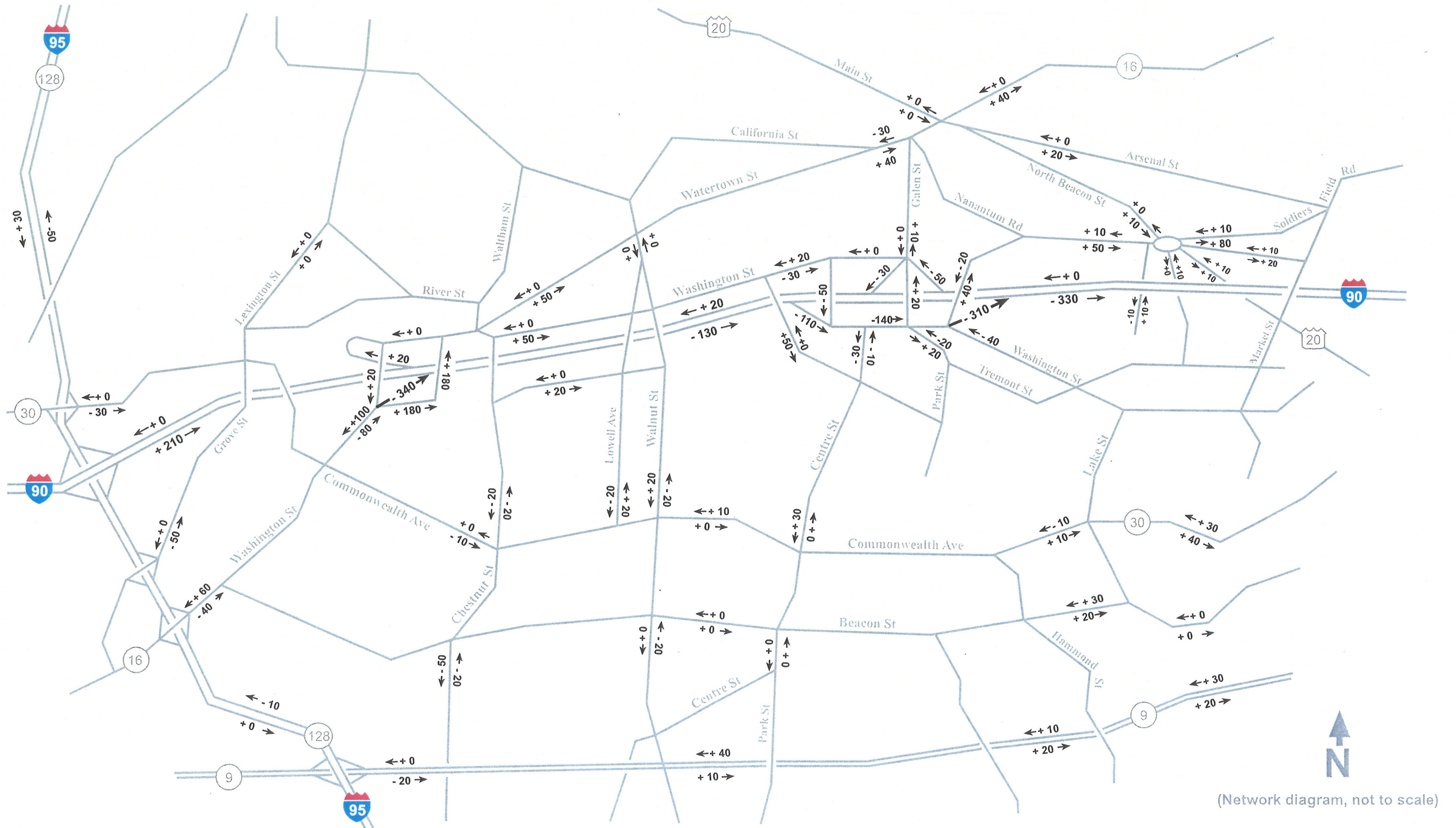


Figure 14: Alternative 4 - Projected 2030 PM Peak-Hour Traffic-Volume Changes from No-Build



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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Bernard Cohen
Secretary of Transportation
and MPO Chairman

Arnold J. Soolman
Director, MPO Staff

The Boston Region MPO, the federally designated entity responsible for transportation decision-making for the 101 cities and towns in the MPO region, is composed of the following:

Executive Office of Transportation
and Public Works

City of Boston

City of Newton

City of Salem

City of Somerville

Town of Bedford

Town of Framingham

Town of Hopkinton

Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Massachusetts Bay Transportation
Authority Advisory Board

Massachusetts Bay Transportation
Authority

Massachusetts Highway Department

Massachusetts Port Authority

Massachusetts Turnpike Authority

Regional Transportation Advisory
Council (nonvoting)

Federal Highway Administration
(nonvoting)

Federal Transit Administration
(nonvoting)

November 21, 2008

Lucy Garliauskas, Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration, Massachusetts Division
55 Broadway, 10th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02142-1093

Richard Doyle, Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration in Region I
Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
Kendall Square, 55 Broadway, Suite 920
Cambridge, MA 02142-1093

Robert Varney, Regional Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1
1 Congress Street, Suite 1100
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Administrators Garliauskas, Doyle, and Varney:

On November 20, the members of the Boston Region MPO voted to request a meeting with representatives of the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and Environmental Protection Agency. The purpose of this meeting would be to discuss whether the agencies would approve the MPO's preparation of a limited scope amendment to its Regional Transportation Plan, JOURNEY TO 2030, that would temporarily defer full completion of an updated finance plan that is called for in the federal guidance on the subject.

We are requesting approval to submit a limited scope amendment to JOURNEY TO 2030 that would:

- Use the current financial plan as discussed in Chapter 12 of JOURNEY TO 2030
- Incorporate the SIP transit commitment projects with their current costs (these projects were noted and provided for in JOURNEY TO 2030)
- Revisit the list of projects for fiscal constraint

The MPO would respond to the other, more extensive elements of the federal guidance as part of the development of the next long-range transportation plan.

Staff will contact your offices to ask if you or others representing your agencies will be available to meet in the very near future with representatives of the MPO to discuss the MPO's proposal for a limited scope amendment. We would like the opportunity to fully explain the reasons for our request and the ways we believe this approach can adequately meet metropolitan planning requirements and fairly respond to the needs of both the federal agencies and the MPO.

I am looking forward to discussing this further with you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David Mohler
Chair, Transportation Planning and Programming Committee

cc: Rick Marquis, FHWA
Ed Silva, FHWA
Michael Chong, FHWA
William Gordon, FTA
Don Cooke, EPA



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Transit Administration
Region I
55 Broadway Suite 920
Cambridge, MA 02142-1093
617-494-2055
617-494-2865 (fax)

Federal Highway Administration
MA Division
55 Broadway 10th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02142-1093
617-494-3657
617-494-3355 (fax)

DEC 11 2008

David Mohler
Chair, Transportation Planning and Programming Committee
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
State Transportation Building
Ten Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

Re: **Regional Transportation Plan, Journey to 2030**
Substitute Transportation Control Measures Amendment

Dear Mr. Mohler:

In response to your request for representatives of the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration to meet with the members of the Boston Region MPO to discuss the preparation of a limited scope amendment to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), we met with you and Undersecretary Wendy Stern on December 5, 2008 to discuss the details of the proposed action. Based on our discussion and the requests stated in the letter from the MPO on November 21, 2008, we have outlined the following:

- Current Situation: The FHWA and the FTA cannot advance any new capacity expansion projects until the Boston Region RTP is amended to include the TCM/transit substitution projects.
- Lead Agency: EOTPW guidance and leadership is necessary to layout the financial framework for the RTP. Under the best of circumstances, it appears that it will take approximately six months for the Boston Region MPO to complete the RTP amendment process. We will work with you to expedite the process as much as possible.
- Use the current financial plan as discussed in Chapter 12 of JOURNEY to 2030: The FHWA and the FTA are deferring on the requirement for a comprehensive analysis of operations and maintenance of the transportation system with the understanding that the MPO will undertake such an analysis with the next formal update of the RTP. Operations and maintenance costs were a key issue highlighted in the Transportation Finance Commission's Report. At that time, the MPO should have a clearer understanding of future Federal and State transportation funding.

Instead of annualizing revenues for the entire timeframe of the RTP from FY 2009- FY 2030, it is acceptable for the MPO to annualize transit revenues for the first band of the RTP, FY 2009-2013.


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- Incorporate the SIP transit commitment projects with their current costs (these projects were noted and provided for in JOURNEY to 2030): In order to include these projects in the RTP the MPO needs to develop a financially constrained plan to support these projects consistent with the guidance previously provided to the MPO, with the exceptions noted above.
- Revisit the list of projects for fiscal constraint: The FHWA and the FTA recommend that the MPO program projects consistent with the priorities of the region.

As stated at the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee meeting on December 4, 2008, the FTA and the FHWA staff are available to meet at a follow-up working session and provide assistance to the MPO as it undertakes the task to amend the RTP.

The FTA and the FHWA have coordinated this letter with EPA. Please contact Michael Chong or Peter Butler if you have any questions or would like to schedule a follow-up meeting with us.

Sincerely,



Richard H. Doyle
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration



Lucy Garliauskas
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

cc: B. Cohen, Secretary
W. Stern, Undersecretary
D. Cooke, EPA