

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Summary of June 9, 2010 Meeting

This meeting was held in Conference Room 4 of the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA.

1. Introductions – *Laura Wiener, Chair*

Laura Wiener, Chair and representative of Arlington, called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members, guests, visitors, and staff introduced themselves (see the attached attendance list).

2. Chair's Report – *Laura Wiener, Chair*

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee is preparing the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program. The FFY 2011 Unified Planning Work Program, which outlines transportation planning studies in the region, is also under development and will be released for public comment soon.

3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes of May 12, 2010 – *Laura Wiener, Chair*

A motion to approve the draft minutes was made by Steve Olanoff, representing Westwood, and seconded by Walter Bonin, representing Marlborough.

During the discussion Rick Arena, representing the Association for Public Transportation, said the draft minutes do not accurately represent members' feelings and comments about the draft State Freight and Rail Plan presentation by MassDOT. He said that members had challenged the state's projected rail share of freight distribution and their assumptions of the impact of moving Beacon Park Yards from Allston to Worcester.

L. Wiener asked R. Arena to submit amended text for the minutes before the July meeting. The text should be distributed more than one week before the meeting. Richard Flynn, representing the Eastern Massachusetts Freight Rail Coalition, said the minutes should be approved as soon as possible so a statement can be transmitted back to MassDOT before too much time elapses after the presentation.

John McQueen, representing WalkBoston, said that he would like to see members' questions included in the minutes. L. Wiener said the minutes should be a summary of the discussion and should not be excessively long.

4. Discussion of the Proposed Visions and Policies for the Next Long-Range Transportation Plan – *Pam Wolfe, MPO Staff*

P. Wolfe explained the background for the visions and policies of the next Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The MPO has wrestled with the concepts for the last several

months and has created a set of visions for the future and policies that will implement them. They are the foundation of the Plan.

Federal and state laws and guidance, and regional plans, are the framework that guided development of the visions and policies. The Sustainable Communities Partnership between the federal DOT, HUD, and EPA is an example of federal guidance. The Healthy Transportation Compact and Global Warming Solutions Act are examples of state guidance, and MetroFuture and previous MPO activities and plans are examples of regional guidance.

The concepts guiding the next LRTP include linking land use and transportation planning, using a management and operations approach, protecting air quality and the environment, preserving and maintaining the existing system, increasing healthy modes of transportation, promoting livability, and environmental justice. These themes are addressed through the seven topic areas for which visions and policies were created. These topics areas include: system preservation, modernization and efficiency; livability; mobility; environment; regional equity; climate change; and safety and security.

Individual policies and visions were developed from the aforementioned concepts and topics. P. Wolfe gave examples of the policies including:

- Find efficiencies through technology before expansion.
- Help implement MetroFuture through transportation investments.
- Close gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network.
- Support investments to improve existing transit service.
- Support investments that will encourage development on brownfields.
- Support transportation demand management strategies.
- Invest in projects that will increase the non-motorized mode share.
- Invest in projects that will reduce the burden on low income and minority neighborhoods.
- Invest in projects that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region.

Member Questions

In response to members' questions, P. Wolfe made the following additional comments:

- The policies will guide staff's evaluation of the region's needs and proposed solutions to address the needs. The Advisory Council will review the needs, and proposed projects and programs, in the summer and fall.
- The Plan will be completed next spring.
- The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee approved the visions and policies. They are now seeking feedback from the public and will not finalize them until the Plan is adopted next year.
- The proposed schedule for the development of the LRTP has not changed. However, it may be redefined during the process.
- The tasks associated with development of the LRTP will get more specific in subsequent steps. For instance, performance measures will be established.

Member Comments

- The visions and policies are impressive, but they should address public health and economic growth. The LRTP should include a policy to enhance and develop intercity passenger rail corridors. (John Businger, National Corridors Initiative)
- The State Freight and Rail Plan and the Northeast Corridor Infrastructure Plan should also inform the LRTP. The Plan should consider how rail issues in other regions influence rail and highway use in our region. (Frank DeMasi, Wellesley).
- Ultra fine particulate matter is an area of very active research. The standards will be set by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2011. (David Ernst, MassBike)
- A specific objective for mode share should be established by the MPO. (Tad Read, Boston Redevelopment Authority)

MPO member representative Jim Gallagher, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, in response to a question by F. DeMasi, said the issue of illustrative projects has not been considered yet.

5. Presentation of the MPO's Recommended Clean Air and Mobility Program Projects – Hayes Morrison, MPO Staff

H. Morrison went over the proposed amendment five to the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is currently out for public review and comment.

A major component of the proposed amendment is the Clean Air and Mobility Program projects. The Clean Air and Mobility Program merged, and expanded upon, the former Suburban Mobility and Transportation Demand Management programs. The Program includes \$2 million in each year of the TIP from 2010 to 2013. Any project eligible for the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program is eligible for Clean Air and Mobility. The MPO received 25 applications requesting more than \$7 million. H. Morrison went over the projects that the MPO is proposing to fund in the program, and distributed a matrix with short descriptions of each.

The proposed TIP amendment also removes the South Bay Harbor Trail from the 2010 element of the TIP, makes cost adjustments to several projects, and includes four new projects in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding category. Approximately \$24 million in ARRA funds were made available because some project bids came in under the estimate. Finally, the MBTA adjusted some of its cash flows to increase funding in its parking program and reduce funds in its accessibility program. The MBTA did not reduce the total expenditures of either program; it simply is adjusting the funds that will be spent on each program during FFY 2010.

Richard Canale, representing the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC), made a motion for the Advisory Council to write a comment letter supportive of the proposed amendment. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

6. Briefing on the Development of the Draft FFY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Hayes Morrison, MPO Staff

H. Morrison described the cash flows for several advance construction projects that are recommended for inclusion in the FFYs 2011-2014 TIP. These are large-scale projects, in excess of \$25 million, funded over multiple years of the TIP. They total about \$212 million over the next four years. Funding these projects leaves approximately \$23 million in the FFYs 2011-2014 TIP, which staff recommends using on projects from the FFYs 2010-2013 TIP. The remaining MPO target funding available for new projects is only \$1.3 million in 2014. The staff recommends using the available funds on the Clean Air and Mobility Program.

The Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) and MassDOT negotiate on the amount of target funds available to the MPOs. It was announced today that an additional \$5.3 million might be available in the Boston Region MPO's 2011 TIP element. Additional funds would likely go towards projects that were in the staff recommendation for the FFYs 2010-2013 TIP, or are listed for possible funding in the Long-Range Transportation Plan within the 2010 to 2015 time frame.

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee is scheduled to discuss the draft FFYs 2011-2014 TIP on June 24. The 30-day public review and comment period on the draft TIP will likely begin in July.

L. Wiener said that the Advisory Council should prepare a comment letter despite the shortage of funding available. The MPO looks to the Advisory Council to comment.

Member Comments

- The Advisory Council could focus its comments on the need for additional funding. The legislators need to receive the message that more funding is necessary. The message should emphasize that the most optimistic saving from reform is very small compared to the actual need identified in the Transportation Finance Commission report. The time for revenue is now. There are economic implications to the shortage of transportation funds. The Advisory Council should encourage the MPO to make a statement to the Legislature. (S. Olanoff)
- Nothing on revenue will happen in an election year. What should be the fallback position? Should we do something different? (R. Arena)
- How much federal revenue does Massachusetts forgo because the state cannot provide its matching funds? (F. DeMasi)
 - H. Morrison said the state has sufficient funds to match all available federal funds.
- The Route 109 project in Medway is a critical east-west road that should be included in the FFYs 2011-2014 TIP. (Chan Rogers, SWAP)
- The Advisory Council should encourage the Legislature to continue pushing for reform in the near term. The public will be more willing to support additional revenue if they are confident in the stewardship. (J. McQueen)

L. Wiener suggested the Advisory Council write a letter supporting the staff recommendation for the FFYs 2011-2014 TIP, but also make a strong statement in support of the need for additional revenue.

J. Businger made a motion for the Advisory Council to prepare the letter recommended by L. Wiener. F. DeMasi seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

S. Olanoff made a motion for the Advisory Council to send a letter directly to the Legislature's Joint Committee on Transportation expressing concern for the lack of transportation revenue. R. Arena seconded it. The following comments were made in the ensuing discussion:

- More state transportation funds are needed even if the state can provide the necessary match for federal funds. Additional funds could address the backlog of state of good repair projects for the MBTA and the highway system. (S. Olanoff)
- The letter should be transmitted through the MPO. Individual Advisory Council member entities can send letters to the Legislature. The Advisory Council can ask the MPO to transmit its views to the Legislature. The Advisory Council was created by the MPO and it exists to advise the MPO and comment on their actions. (P. Wolfe)
- The letter should also be sent to the House Speaker, Senate President, Chairs of the respective Ways and Means Committees, and Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Transportation. (J. Businger)
- A carbon copy should be sent to the Secretary of MassDOT, the MPO, and the region's Congressional delegation. (S. Olanoff)
- The Advisory Council needs to stay focused on its role and mission. Sending a letter directly to the Legislature is outside the Advisory Council's purview. (L. Wiener)
- The Advisory Council should submit a single letter to the MPO asking them to transmit our letter to the Legislature. (R. Flynn)
- S. Olanoff accepted R. Flynn's suggestion as a friendly amendment to his motion.
- Interacting with the Legislature can help the Advisory Council fulfill its role, which is to provide policy guidance to the MPO. (R. Canale)
- Both revenue and reform are needed for the MBTA. (F. DeMasi).
- The MPO will not offer resistance because they agree with the Advisory Council on the issue. The suggested way to send the letter is satisfactory. (J. Businger)

The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Committees Report

- TIP Committee – The TIP Committee met before the meeting and discussed the draft amendment to the FFYs 2010-2013 TIP. (L. Wiener)
- Freight Committee – The Committee continues to review the draft State Freight and Rail Plan. The Committee would like to make a recommendation for the share of freight to be moved by rail and short sea shipping. (W. Bonin)

- Membership – The Membership Committee recommends that the 128 Business Council be accepted as members of the Advisory Council. Schuyler Larrabee, Vice Chair, made a motion to accept them as a member. F. DeMasi seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.
- Program – The Committee will meet at 2:00 PM before the next Advisory Council meeting on July 14. (L. Wiener)

8. Member Announcements

The Association for Public Transportation's annual meeting is next Tuesday, June 15, at the Harvard Club. They will discuss high-speed rail and freight. (R. Arena)

On July 26 there will be a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act in the Boston Common. (Marilyn McNab, resident of Boston)

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.

Attachments:

Attendance List for June 9, 2010

ATTACHMENT 1: Attendance List for June 9, 2010

Cities and Towns

Lauren Rosenzweig, Acton
Laura Wiener, Arlington
Tom Kadzis, Boston
Bob Campbell, Braintree
Walter Bonin, Marlborough
Kurt Mullen, Needham
John Gillon, Quincy
Frank DeMasi, Wellesley
Steve Olanoff, Westwood

Agencies

Tad Read, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Karen Pearson, Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Jim Gallagher, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Richard Canale, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC)
Ed Anthes-Washburn, Seaport Advisory Council
Chan Rogers, Southwest Advisory Planning Committee (SWAP)

Citizen Groups

Richard Arena, Association for Public Transportation
Schuyler Larrabee, Boston Society of Architects
Richard Flynn, Eastern Massachusetts Freight Rail Coalition
David Ernst, MassBike
Tom Yardley, MASCO
John Businger, National Corridors Initiative
Chris Anzuoni, New England Bus Transportation Association
Marilyn Wellons, Riverside Neighborhood Association
John McQueen, WalkBoston

Guests and Visitors

Neil Angus, Devens Enterprise Commission
Ed Lowney
Marilyn MacNab
Wig Zamore, STEP, MVTF

MPO Staff

Walter Bennett
Mike Callahan
Hayes Morrison
Sean Pfalzer
Cherly Revalli
Jamie Simchik, ULI Infrastructure Committee
Pam Wolfe