

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

October 6, 2011 Meeting

10:00 AM – 11:15 AM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 & 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

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

Decisions

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee agreed to the following:

- adopt and implement recommendations for addressing a complaint filed against the MPO and inform the complainant of the MPO's actions
- approve the minutes of the meeting of September 22
- select Karl Quackenbush as the Executive Director of CTPS and delegate salary and benefit negotiations to the Chairman of the MPO

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

There were none.

2. Chair's Report – David Mohler, MassDOT

There was none.

3. Subcommittee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

**4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report – Steve Olanoff, Chair,
Regional Transportation Advisory Council**

The Advisory Council will meet next on October 12. Pamela Stephenson, Division Administrator for the Massachusetts office of the Federal Highway Administration, will be the guest speaker. The Advisory Council will also conduct its annual membership review. It is looking to expand its membership.

**5. Director's Report – Karl Quackenbush, Acting Director, Central Transportation
Planning Staff**

The MPO held its first Livability Workshop last night in Medway. Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff, and Barry Keppard, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), collaborated to conduct this event. There were approximately 15 attendees. The workshop focused on livability issues associated with the *Medway – Route 109* project area.

The MPO staff has its two major 3C funding grants in place for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2012. K. Quackenbush thanked MassDOT staff for their work to put those contracts in place.

6. Title VI Complaint and Recommendations – Paul Regan, Chair, Administration and Finance Subcommittee

The MPO received a complaint in August, addressed to former MPO Chairman Jeffery Mullan. As the complainant has requested anonymity, staff has provided a synopsis of the complaint and actions that staff has taken from that point forward. (See attached memorandum.) K. Quackenbush, Acting Director of CTPS, conducted a thorough investigation of the incident which prompted the complaint. His recommendations for addressing the issues raised in the complaint are included in the attached memorandum.

The complainant expressed that at an MPO meeting there were insufficient accommodations for people with hearing and visual impairments, and that the MPO does not have accommodation to help people who are unable to write or type to make a complaint.

To address the concerns about hearing accommodations, K. Quackenbush has recommended that the MPO improve the sound system it uses for public meetings and to use that system as a matter of course. To address visual needs, he recommended that staff prepare large-print copies of key documents for public meetings (although this is not an issue with documents that are posted online as they can be enlarged on a computer), and that the design of MPO documents be changed to improve readability. He has also recommended continuing and enhancing staff training on accommodation issues, and changes to facilitate the complaint process.

The complaint also cited some actions of MPO staff. The investigation into this matter, however, revealed that the complainant might have been interacting with non-staff meeting attendees.

P. Regan expressed his confidence in the professionalism of the MPO staff. K. Quackenbush added that he and the staff take the issue of ADA and Title VI accommodation seriously, and that they are engaged in an on-going process to assess these issues to provide for appropriate accommodation.

A motion to adopt and implement the recommendations described in K. Quackenbush's memorandum and to inform the complainant of the MPO's actions on this issue was made by P. Regan, and seconded by Eric Bourassa, MAPC. The motion carried. The City of Somerville and the Town of Braintree abstained.

During a discussion of this motion, S. Olanoff expressed concern about the expense and waste of paper involved in printing large-print versions of documents when they are not requested. He suggested that large-print versions be available upon request.

Joe Cosgrove, MBTA, remarked upon the need to update and formalize the MPO's policies to reflect the action to adopt K. Quackenbush's recommendations.

D. Mohler noted that the complaint was also shared with the MassDOT Office of Civil Rights.

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

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of September 22 was made by E. Bourassa, and seconded by John Romano, MassDOT Highway Division. The motion carried. The Massachusetts Port Authority and the Regional Transportation Advisory Council abstained.

8. Report on Strategic Vision for MBTA Bus Services – *Karl Quackenbush, Acting Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

Members were provided with three reports from the study for *Strategic Visioning for MBTA Bus Service*. (See attached.) This study analyzed the potential for transit signal priority (TSP) and queue jump treatments on MBTA bus routes 15, 66, and 111. These types of treatments can be considered as lower cost investments for improving the management and operation of the transportation system. They are, therefore, a less expensive alternative to expanding the transportation system. Five of the MPO's seven visions are served by this work.

This study is the second and more detailed phase of work that examined the potential for TSP, queue jumps, and bus stop relocations on key routes in the MBTA system. The study identified intersections where these treatments are applicable, and made specific recommendations for implementing them. TSP allows for longer green times and gives priority to buses moving through intersections. The study considered travel time benefits from implementing such treatments and disbenefits to side streets, as well as land use and parking issues.

These reports have been sent to the MBTA and its consultants for next steps. TSP recommendations in the City of Boston have a higher probability of being implemented first because the city has a traffic control system in place that TSP treatments can be tied into.

9. Analysis of Silver Line to Airport Station and Chelsea – *Scott Peterson, Manager, MPO Staff*

Members were provided with a report on the *Analysis of Silver Line Service to Airport Station and Chelsea*. (See attached.) This study investigated extending the Silver Line service to Airport Station on the Blue Line and Chelsea.

Currently, Silver Line 1 connects South Station to Logan Airport and Silver Line 2 connects South Station to Silver Line Way. The Silver Line does not currently provide good access to East Boston or Chelsea neighborhoods. Extending the Silver Line would reach a large market of transit-dependent people in Chelsea and environmental justice neighborhoods.

This study analyzed three alternatives:

- 1) Realigning the MBTA's Route 112 bus route to Airport Station and consolidating bus stops
- 2) Extending Silver Line 2 bus rapid transit (BRT) service to the Chelsea commuter rail station
- 3) Extending Silver Line 2 BRT service to Airport Station and Chelsea City Hall

The results showed that Alternative 1 would generate about 240 new transit trips daily (trips diverted from auto). There was a 400 trip net gain in bus ridership. The cost to implement this strategy would be about \$10,000 to add bus shelters.

Alternative 2 would generate an estimated 600 new transit trips (and auto diversions), but would reduce local bus ridership. This strategy would cost about \$37 million to implement, due to the need to purchase new Silver Line buses and improve the Grand Junction right-of-way.

Alternative 3 would generate an estimated 500 new transit trips (and auto diversions). It would result in a reduction of local bus ridership while ridership on the Silver Line would increase. This strategy would cost about \$27 million to implement, which includes about \$10 million for the purchase of new Silver Line buses.

Members asked questions.

P. Regan asked if Alternative 2 envisions full BRT service. S. Peterson replied that the service would meet the definition of BRT as it would be a limited stop service. The Route 112 bus, which provides local service now, would have stops consolidated. So, it would be a hybrid.

P. Regan asked how many Silver Line buses could be purchased with \$10 million. S. Peterson replied that it would purchase three buses.

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston, inquired about the availability of service to residents of East Boston. S. Peterson replied that there would be no reduction in bus service to that neighborhood and in fact with better headways on Route 112 and a new stop at Neptune Road there would be an increase in service.

Tom Kadzis, City of Boston, asked about the potential reductions in local bus ridership. S. Peterson explained that the improvements to Silver Line service would draw ridership from the local bus service in Chelsea to the Silver Line.

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, asked if the revenue projections in the report take into account operating costs. S. Peterson replied that they do not. The projections take into account fare revenue, which includes revenue generated from new riders and from riders that shift from less expensive local bus service to premium service.

10. Members Items

H. Morrison expressed thanks to MassDOT and the MBTA for approving a \$29 million contract for the construction of a new MBTA Orange Line Station at Assembly Square. The city is excited about the job and tax revenue the project will create. D. Mohler recognized the MPO's role in flexing highway funds to support this transit project.

E. Bourassa announced the MPO's Candidates Forum on October 12 at 4:30 PM at the State Transportation Building. He also gave an update on the MPO election process noting which seats are contested.

J. Cosgrove noted that the \$26 million contract to construct improvements to the Orient Heights Station on the Blue Line has been approved. D. Mohler added that the project will incorporate sustainable features, a green roof and solar panels.

D. Mohler announced that the Green Line Extension Steering Group will meet today at 3:15 PM in Room 3170. It is open to the public.

11. Hiring of Executive Director – Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board

In compliance with the new Open Meeting law, members discussed of the hiring of a new Executive Director of CTPS. The position was advertised locally and nationally. Three candidates were selected and interviewed on October 3. The candidates are Lucilla Ayer, Karl Quackenbush, and Stephen Woelfel. The same questions were asked of each candidate. (See attached position description and interview minutes.)

After discussing the candidates' responses to interview questions, members selected Karl Quackenbush as the preferred candidate. During the discussion, members remarked upon his well-considered responses to questions regarding management style, ideas for continuous improvement, and retention of young staff members. They also valued his technical skills and proven ability to manage a large staff.

A motion to select Karl Quackenbush as the Executive Director of CTPS and to empower the Chairman of the MPO to negotiate salary and benefits was made by P. Regan and seconded by J. Gillooly. The motion carried. The Regional Transportation Advisory Council abstained.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by P. Regan, and seconded by J. Romano. The motion carried.

Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Meeting Attendance
Thursday, October 6, 2011, 10:00 AM

Member Agencies

MassDOT
MassDOT Highway

City of Boston

City of Newton
City of Somerville

MassPort
MAPC

MBTA
MBTA Advisory Board
Regional Transportation
Advisory Council

Town of Bedford
Town of Braintree

Representatives and Alternates

David Mohler
David Anderson
John Romano
Jim Gillooly
Tom Kadzis

David Koses
Hayes Morrison
Lourenço Dantas
Eric Bourassa
Eric Halvorson

Joe Cosgrove
Paul Regan
Steve Olanoff

Richard Reed
Christine Stickney

MPO Staff/CTPS

Mark Abbott
Walter Bennett
Michael Callahan
David Fargen
Maureen Kelly
Robin Mannion
Anne McGahan
Efi Pagitsas
Sean Pfalzer
Karl Quackenbush
Mary Ellen Sullivan
Alicia Wilson
Pam Wolfe

Other Attendees

Calli Cenizal

David Monugian
Karen O'Donnell
Tom O'Rourke

Wig Zamore

MassDOT Office of
Transportation Planning
Town of Ashland
Sierra Club
Neponset Valley Chamber of
Commerce
Somerville Transportation Equity
Partnership / Mystic View Task
Force