

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

May 19, 2011 Meeting

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

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

Decisions

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee agreed to the following:

- approve the following work programs:
 - *State Fiscal Year 2012 National Transit Database Directly Operated Bus and Rail Passenger-Miles and Boardings Estimates*
 - *State Fiscal Year 2012 National Transit Database Purchased Bus and Rail Passenger-Miles and Boardings Estimates*
 - *Impacts of Walking Radius on Transit Frequency and Reliability*
 - *Early-Morning Transit Service*
- approve the minutes of the meeting May 5
- release revisions to Draft Amendment Four of the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2011 element of the FFYs 2011 – 2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) with the additional inclusion of an earmark for the *Boston – Commonwealth Avenue, Phase 2* project for a 30-day public comment period

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

State Senator Pat Jehlen and Representative Carl Sciortino spoke in support of building the *Green Line Extension* project to Route 16 and asked the MPO to continue its support for the project. Senator Jehlen remarked the community support for the project. Representative Sciortino reported that the project has a Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Representative Will Brownsberger and staff of the Town of Belmont expressed thanks to the MPO for including the *Belmont – Trapelo Road* project in the Draft Amendment of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and asked that the project be included in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Glenn Clancy, Town of Belmont, provided an update on the project. The 75% design has been submitted to MassDOT Highway Division. The town is ready to begin discussions with landowners for acquiring right-of-way. One taking will require legislative action.

Brian Kane, Town of Brookline Transportation Board, stated that the MPO has an opportunity to begin addressing the region's crumbling infrastructure system with the LRTP. He reported statistics about delays on the transit and commuter rail system noting

that over 259,000 people were delayed this morning due to mechanical failures of MBTA vehicles. He stated that such delays are happening every day and cautioned that transit riders will go back to driving, which would result in increased vehicle miles traveled. He urged the MPO to address these problems through the LRTP.

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, urged the MPO to include the *Green Line Extension* project to Route 16 in the LRTP. He expressed concern that removing the project would negatively impact the ongoing public process around the project. He also stated that the *Green Line Extension* must be built to Medford Hillside in order to comply with the State Implementation Plan. He also stated that the project will help accomplish air quality improvement goals mandated under the Global Warming Solution Act.

Lynn Weissman, Friends of the Community Path, expressed appreciation of the MPO's work to address community needs. She asked that the MPO program full construction for the *Community Path* project on the same timeline as the *Green Line Extension* project, noting that it would be costly and impractical to build the path after the transit line. She noted that the project will create connectivity through eleven communities, reduce traffic on highways, and make connections to the Red Line. She also noted that the project has a couple of hundred supporters and no detractors. She also voiced support for building the *Green Line Extension* project to Route 16.

Wig Zamore, Somerville resident, touched on a number of topics including transportation finance, the need for higher gas taxes, land use, transit's role in job creation, and the impact of fine particulates from transportation sources on public health. He urged the MPO to advocate for higher gas taxes to build revenue for transportation projects, and to fund bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects while limiting funding for highway expansion projects. He also voiced support for the *Community Path* project and the *Green Line Extension* project to Route 16.

Franny Osman, Town of Acton Transportation Advisory Committee, urged members to support transit over highway projects and asked that the MPO add Acton's *Dial-A-Ride* program to the TIP.

Michael Donovan, Vice President for Real Estate and Planning for Boston University, thanked the MPO for its past support for improvements on Commonwealth Avenue. He noted that Boston University has contributed millions of dollars to improvements in Kenmore Square and on Commonwealth Avenue, which have improved safety in the area. He reported that Boston University has contributed \$2 million for the design of the *Boston – Commonwealth Avenue, Phase 2* project and asked the MPO to join the University in a public-private partnership to move the project forward. He noted that this major arterial has regional significance. He estimated the cost of the project at about \$18 million with a 40% contingency.

Tad Read, Boston Redevelopment Authority and Urban Ring Citizen Advisory Committee, urged the MPO to consider the *Urban Ring* not as a mega-project, but as a project with many elements that could be advanced incrementally. He remarked upon the

importance of the project elements for enabling the promise of new economic opportunities to take root in the region. He cited the projects benefits for filling gaps in transit service that are not met by the radial transit system, reducing congestion on the subway system, meeting increased demand for transit, making circumferential transit connections, enhancing transportation equity, and supporting the MetroFuture land use vision.

Tom Nally, A Better City, voiced support for including in the LRTP early action items for the *Urban Ring* project, which could be implemented incrementally. He also expressed support for investing resources in transit state of good repair and for some investment in transit expansion to support economic development. He also voiced support for the *T under D* project, *Silver Line Phase 3*, and *Red-Blue Line Connector*. He urged the MPO to include these projects in modeling for the LRTP.

Judy LaRocca, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee, asked the MPO to keep the *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail* project in the LRTP. She noted that the 25% design was completed for Phase 2A in Acton and Phase 2C in Concord using Community Preservation Act Funds, and that the proponents have a 100% design contract. She also talked about how the trail would provide access to public transportation and connections to schools and businesses. Later in the meeting she emphasized that while the project does not need to be in the first ten year band of the LRTP, the proponents would like to have the project programmed such that they will be able to have their permits reviewed over the next year or so.

Dick Williamson, Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, remarked upon the public support for the *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail* and the connections that the trail would provide. He asked for the project to be included in the LRTP.

Louise Baxter, T Riders' Union, advocated for investing more in public transit.

Ina Anderson, Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance, asked the MPO to include the *Community Path* project in the LRTP. She noted the regional importance of the project.

2. Chair's Report – David Mohler, MassDOT

There was none.

3. Subcommittee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report – Laura Wiener, Regional Transportation Advisory Council

The Advisory Council has been meeting in subcommittees to discuss the LRTP. The Subcommittee on the LRTP voted that their top priority projects are: the *Green Line Extension to Route 16*, *Community Path*, *Canton – I-95/I-93 Interchange*, *Woburn – I-93/I-95 Interchange*, *Framingham – Route 126/Route 135 Grade Separation*, and one rail trail, either the *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail* or the *Assabet River Rail Trail*.

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

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Subcommittee is scheduled to meet on May 26.

6. Work Programs– *Karl Quackenbush, Acting Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)*

Members were provided with four work programs (see attached):

- *State Fiscal Year 2012 National Transit Database Directly Operated Bus and Rail Passenger-Miles and Boardings Estimates*
- *State Fiscal Year 2012 National Transit Database Purchased Bus and Rail Passenger-Miles and Boardings Estimates*
- *Impacts of Walking Radius on Transit Frequency and Reliability*
- *Early-Morning Transit Service*

A motion to approve the work program for the *State Fiscal Year 2012 National Transit Database Directly Operated Bus and Rail Passenger-Miles and Boardings Estimates* was made by Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, and seconded by J. Cosgrove, MBTA. The motion carried.

A motion to approve the work program for the *State Fiscal Year 2012 National Transit Database Purchased Bus and Rail Passenger-Miles and Boardings Estimates* was made by P. Regan, and seconded by J. Cosgrove. The motion carried.

K. Quackenbush provided an overview of the work program for the *Impacts of Walking Radius on Transit Frequency and Reliability*. This project is related to the MBTA Core Services Evaluation project that is currently underway. It would analyze and model concepts of reconfiguring MBTA bus services to improve service effectiveness. Three scenarios would be tested. Staff would generate estimates of ridership, boardings, transfer time, as well as consider equity consequences, and examine cost indicators. The scenarios would consider changes that would increase walking time to stations, but provide more frequent and reliable service. MPO staff would work with MBTA Service Planning on this project.

During a discussion of the work program, David Koses, City of Newton, commented that the MPO should wait to consider this work program until the results of the MBTA Core Services Evaluation project are available given the controversial nature of some of the concepts being considered (such as scaling back bus routes). K. Quackenbush reported that the results of that study would be available in about a month.

Questions were also raised about whether pedestrians would have safe walking routes to stations if the concepts under consideration were implemented. K. Quackenbush noted that this study would not examine safety. D. Mohler assured members that MassDOT and the MBTA would not support implementing changes that would be unsafe for customers.

A motion to approve the work program for *Impacts of Walking Radius on Transit Frequency and Reliability* was made by J. Cosgrove, and seconded by Mary Pratt, Town of Hopkinton. The motion carried.

K. Quackenbush then provided an overview of the work program for *Early-Morning Transit Service*. This study would examine the ridership and potential ridership on MBTA bus routes that offer “early bird” service to Boston between the hours of 4:30 AM and 5:00 AM. Several of the routes terminate at Haymarket Station and another at Logan Airport. The work program tasks involve reviewing ridership profiles and employment information that can give an indication of the potential market for early bird services. The purpose of the study is to develop ideas for optimizing the early bird services. There would be no net increase in service recommended.

During a discussion of the work program, P. Regan suggested that the study also examine cost per rider. K. Quackenbush stated that this task is included in the study.

A motion to approve the work program for *Early-Morning Transit Service* was made by L. Dantas and seconded by P. Regan. The motion carried.

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

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting May 5 was made by E. Bourassa, MAPC, and seconded by J. Romano. The motion carried.

8. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment – Hayes Morrison, TIP Manager, MPO Staff

Members were provided with revisions to Draft Amendment Four of the FFY 2011 element of the FFYs 2011 – 2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which was released for public comment in April. (See attached.)

David Anderson, MassDOT Highway Division, provided an update on the design, permitting, and right-of-way status of construction projects in that element. He noted that the programming of some projects in the Interstate Maintenance funding category have been shifted to accommodate the *I-93 Fast 14 Bridge Replacement* project. He also noted the Safe Routes to School program for the Jaworek Elementary School in Marlborough has been deferred due to a right-of-way issue.

H. Morrison provided a summary of public comments received regarding the amendment:

- The Board of Selectmen of the Town Belmont and legislators representing Belmont expressed thanks to the MPO for including an earmark for the design of the *Belmont – Trapelo Road* project in the TIP. They asked the MPO to program the project in the LRTP as well. They reminded the MPO that the town has already spent \$2.5 million on pre-construction and utility work.
- Franny Osman, Town of Acton Transportation Advisory Committee, asked the MPO to fund the *Acton – Dial-A-Ride* service through the MPO’s Clean Air and Mobility Program. She also provided ridership figures for the service.

- The MAGIC subregion encouraged the MPO to continue to support the *Concord/Lincoln – Route 2 (Crosby’s Corner)* project.

H. Morrison then discussed the changes to the FFY 2011 element of the TIP, including those that are new to the proposed amendment. The proposed changes would do the following:

- move the *Boston/Cambridge – Longfellow Bridge*, *Quincy/Weymouth – Fore River Bridge*, and *Boston – Morton Street over the MBTA* projects to the FFY 2012 element
- add an earmark for design for the *Belmont – Trapelo Road* project
- add two earmarks for projects under the jurisdiction of the National Parks Service
- move the *Marlborough – Jaworek Elementary School Safe Routes to School* project to the FFY 2012 element
- add Section 5307 funding for the Cape Ann Transit Authority (CATA) and the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
- remove the *Hull – Ferry Service, Year 2* project because the proponent withdrew its application due to unanticipated higher fuel costs to operate the service
- change the cost of the *Hudson – Houghton Street over the Assabet River* project
- remove the *Boston/Somerville – Interstate 93* project
- combine the *Burlington – Interstate 95* project with the *Walpole/Norwood/Sharon/Canton – Interstate 95* project for a combined cost of \$12.6 million
- reduce the Interstate Maintenance funding for the *Danvers – Interstate 95* project by \$1 million and add \$1 million in Highway Safety Improvement Program funding for the project.
- add carryover funds for the following transit projects: *High Speed Catamaran for Quincy Harbor Express*, *Chelsea Intermodal Parking Garage*, *Wonderland Intermodal Improvements*, and *CATA Buses and Fair Boxes*

In addition, the proposed amendment included the newly revised names for MBTA programs and projects (in accordance with federal guidance).

Members asked questions and made comments.

P. Regan expressed concern about the reduction of funds being applied to the *MBTA – Three Head End Power Unit Retrofits* in the Clean Air and Mobility Program noting that this project would have air quality benefits that exceed the other projects in that program.

D. Mohler inquired as to why the *Hull – Ferry Service* was programmed for second year funding when it did not operate in the first year. H. Morrison replied that the proponents had difficulty in securing a service provider and that the service was going to start this summer. The MPO’s Clean Air and Mobility Program would then have prepared a contract stating that the award was pending ridership numbers. D. Mohler expressed the need for controls on contractual programs so that federal money is not left unspent, since this could lead the federal transportation agencies to retract funding. He also stated that it is problematic to fund an unproven service while cutting an operating program.

Members discussed the proposed addition of an earmark for the *Canton – Reconstruction of I-95 (SB) Off Ramp to University Avenue Design*.

In response to a question about the potential rescission of federal earmarks, D. Mohler explained that the affected earmarks could be those that were included in the federal transportation legislation that preceded SAFETEA-LU.

H. Morrison also noted that staff added more specific information about programs under the Regional Transit Program line items. Noting that the programs listed have multiple programs within them, D. Mohler asked about how the public would have access to information about the amount of money being spent in those sub-programs. J. Cosgrove, explained that the information would be available in the MBTA's Capital Investment Program (CIP).

D. Mohler raised questions about the amount of money being programmed for CATA. He noted that CATA is wholly funded by the MBTA and expressed concern that \$1.8 million might not actually be available to CATA and, if programmed, could come out of the MBTA's funding.

D. Mohler asked for more information about the *Chelsea Intermodal Parking Garage* project. J. Cosgrove reported that earmark funds for this project will probably lapse in September and that Congressman Capuano might try to reprogram it. The funds will likely not be used for a parking garage.

Staff recommended releasing the amendment for another 30 day public comment period because of the changes to the original amendment noted.

J. Cosgrove discussed other earmarks that could be added to this amendment.

A motion to release revisions to Draft Amendment Four of the FFY 2011 element of the FFYs 2011 – 2014 TIP with the additional inclusion of an earmark for the *Boston – Commonwealth Avenue, Phase 2* project for a 30-day public comment period was made by J. Cosgrove, and seconded by M. Pratt. The motion carried.

9. Long-Range Transportation Plan – Anne McGahan, Plan Manager, and Michael Callahan, Public Involvement Manager, Hayes Morrison, TIP Manager, MPO Staff

M. Callahan reported that MPO staff has been discussing the schedule for the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) at public meetings since February and that to publicize today's meeting, staff posted a notice of the meeting on the MPO's website and announced it via the MPO's e-mail distribution list.

He then summarized public comments that have been received over the last two weeks regarding the LRTP. (See attached comment matrix.) Over 100 comments were received including over 60 from supporters of the *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail*, 35 from supporters of the *Community Path*, over 18 from supporters of the *Green Line Extension*, as well as others supporting *Boston – Commonwealth Avenue*, *Boston – Causeway Street*, *Belmont*

– *Trapelo Road*, and the *Urban Ring*. The Conservation Law Foundation also wrote to urge the MPO to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

A. McGahan then posed several questions (outlined in the attached memorandum) for MPO members to discuss:

- How does the MPO want to invest in transportation infrastructure?
- Does the MPO want to flex highway funding to transit?
- Programmed verses unassigned funding?
- Does the MPO want to set aside funding for programs?
- Does the MPO want to continue to include illustrative projects in the LRPT?

As they addressed these questions, members worked from financial information distributed and investment strategy tables that were distributed previously. (See attached.)

In response to a question from D. Mohler, A. McGahan explained how staff determined which investment category to assign projects. She noted that staff contacted MassDOT Highway to determine the portion of projects that include modernization or expansion elements.

H. Morrison provided an overview of the financial information for the FFY 2011 – 2015 timeband of the TIP. Due to currently programmed TIP projects, the first timeband of *JOURNEY TO 2030*, the current LRTP, is over-programmed by approximately \$51 million if no Major Infrastructure funds are programmed.

E. Bourassa asked for guidance from MassDOT regarding whether the MPO can expect to have Major Infrastructure funding to program. D. Mohler advised the MPO not to program Major Infrastructure funds for named projects. MassDOT will select a currently unfunded project to receive Major Infrastructure funds.

E. Bourassa then recommended that members consider which of three projects currently listed in the first timeband of the LRTP (and not already under construction) could be deferred. Those projects are the *Belmont – Trapelo Road*, *Canton – I-95 Northbound/Dedham Street Ramp/Dedham Street Corridor*, and *Assabet River Rail Trail* projects. He stated that MAPC views the *Trapelo Road* project as the strongest of the three and noted that the project scored highly based upon the MPO's TIP evaluation criteria.

D. Mohler noted that the *Trapelo Road* project does not add capacity, but it must be in the LRTP because it costs more than \$10 million. It is a federal requirement to include projects that a cost more than \$10 million in the LRTP. Members discussed this requirement and noted how it is constraining for the MPO when programming projects particularly due to the rising cost of construction. D. Mohler asked Michael Chong, Federal Highway Administration, to find out if other MPOs in the nation face this same requirement.

H. Morrison reported that staff informed every municipality that requested a project costing over \$10 million or adding capacity of the need to have that project programmed in the LRTP.

Members then discussed the three funding scenarios presented by staff. They then decided to begin working off of Strategy 1 (as shown in Table 1A of the attached charts).

J. Gillooly recommended adding two projects to the first timeband of the LRTP: the *Boston – Commonwealth Avenue* project (costing \$18-23 million) and the *Boston – Causeway Street* project (costing \$10.3 million). Both are at the 25% design stage.

T. Bent recommended adding the *Community Path* project (costing \$17 million) to the first timeband of the LRTP to coincide with the *Green Line Extension* project.

There was also a recommendation to add the *Beverly – Route 1A* project (costing \$15 million).

Following a discussion about whether the MPO should be taking the approach to add new projects to the FFY 2011 – 2015 timeband, D. Mohler recommended that the MPO remove all projects from Strategy 1 except for the *Randolph to Wellesley – Route 128 Improvement Program*, *Concord/Lincoln – Route 2 (Crosby's Corner)*, and *Weymouth – Route – 18* projects. The MPO could then add other projects costing over \$10 million to the LRTP following the development of the TIP. With this approach staff could begin modeling the LRTP projects. The addition of projects such as the *Belmont – Trapelo Road* and *Assabet River Rail Trail* projects would have no impact on the model run since they do not add capacity and, therefore, have no air quality impact. However, the *Canton – I-95 Northbound/Dedham Street Ramp/Dedham Street Corridor* project would have air quality impacts.

It was noted that if the MPO votes to include a project costing over \$10 million in the TIP, that project must be amended into the LRTP.

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, noted that the *Boston – Haul Road* project (costing \$25 million) would have to be included in the LRTP for modeling. The project would be funded by the Massachusetts Port Authority.

Members then discussed the programming of the FFY 2016 – 2020 timeband, considering that the projects moved out of the FFY 2011 – 2015 timeband now would be included in the FFY 2016 – 2020 band.

Several members voiced interest in keeping the following projects in the FFY 2016 – 2020 timeband: the *Green Line Extension*; *Boston – Sullivan Square* and *Boston – Rutherford Avenue*; *Bedford, Billerica, Burlington – Middlesex Turnpike Phase 3*; *Braintree – I-93/Route 3 Interchange (Braintree Split)*, and *Woburn – New Boston Street Bridge*.

D. Koses stated that the MPO has reached a decision point regarding the funding of the *Green Line Extension* project and that it should discuss whether it should commit funding to the project in the LRTP.

R. Reed commented that there is a problem with the process that allows work to begin on projects for which there is little funding available, and which results in competition between municipalities for funding. He recommended rethinking the process to require initial investment by municipalities.

Members began to discuss removing projects. P. Wolfe suggested that members may wish to consult the LRTP Need Assessment for guidance.

Member agreed to continue their discussion at the meeting of May 26.

10. Members Items

There were none.

11. Adjourn

Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Meeting Attendance
Thursday, May 19, 2011, 10:00 AM

Member Agencies

MassDOT
MassDOT Highway

City of Boston
City of Newton
City of Somerville
Federal Highway
Administration
MAPC

MassPort
MBTA
MBTA Advisory Board
Regional Transportation
Advisory Council
Town of Bedford

Town of Braintree
Town of Framingham
Town of Hopkinton

Representatives and Alternates

David Mohler
David Anderson
John Romano
Jim Gillooly
David Koses
Tom Bent
Michael Chong

Eric Bourassa
Eric Halvorsen
Lourenço Dantas
Joe Cosgrove
Paul Regan
Laura Wiener
Steve Olanoff
Richard Reed
Richard Warrington
Christine Stickney
Dennis Giombetti
Mary Pratt
John Westerling

MPO Staff/CTPS

Michael Callahan
Robin Mannion
Anne McGahan
Hayes Morrison
Karl Quackenbush
Pam Wolfe

Other Attendees

Ina Anderson
Louise Baxter
Rep. Will Brownsberger
Glenn Clancy
Mike Collins
Michael Donovan
Jim Gallagher
Senator Pat Jehlen
Brian Kane
Erin Kinahan
Timothy Kochan
Judy LaRocca

Rafael Mares
Robert McGaw
John McQueen

Thomas Nally
Joe Onorato

MA Smart Growth Alliance
T Riders' Union
State Representative
Town of Belmont
City of Beverly
Boston University
Somerville resident
State Senator
Town of Brookline
MassDOT District 6
MassDOT District 5
Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
Advisory Committee
Conservation Law Foundation
Town of Belmont
Regional Transportation
Advisory Committee
A Better City
MassDOT District 4

Tom O'Rourke	Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce
Franny Osman	Town of Acton Transportation Advisory Committee
Karen Pearson	MassDOT
Tad Read	Boston Redevelopment Authority
Joyce Reischutz	Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
Bob Ryan	MLS / Boston University
Rep. Carl Sciortino	State Representative
Steve Silveira	MLS / Boston University
Robert Sloane	WalkBoston
Lynn Weissman	Friends of the Community Path
Bill Werner	ARRT
Dick Williamson	Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
Thomas Younger	Town of Belmont
Wig Zamore	Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership / Mystic View Task Force
Adam Zysk	Dewberry / City of Beverly