

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

September 8, 2011 Meeting

10:00 AM – 12:15 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 5 & 6, 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:

- approve Amendment Five of the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2011 – 2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for recommendation for MPO endorsement
- approve updates to the Draft FFYs 2012-2015 TIP and posting on the MPO website
- approve the minutes of the meetings of August 4 and 18 with recommended changes
- approve the work program for the *Boston Ramp Study*
- approve the work program for the *Interstate 495 and Route 9 Interchange Improvement Study: Support*

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

Wig Zamore, Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership/Mystic View Task Force, asked the MPO to adopt the civil rights complaint submittal period as the 180 days specified under federal law. Pam Wolfe, Manager of Certification Activities, MPO staff reported that staff has already made this change.

W. Zamore then made a suggestion for improving the public comment features on the MPO's website. Staff will make appropriate adjustments to the website.

He also stated that the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are not in conformity with federal law regarding fiscal constraint because they do not include funding for interim offset projects that would mitigate for delays in the implementation of the *Green Line Extension* project.

2. Chair's Report – David Mohler, MassDOT

The Chair distributed the MPO's Self Certification document for members' signatures. The document states that the MPO's planning process conforms to federal regulations.

Staff has received a request from a member of the public who would like microphones to be used at MPO meetings. Staff will purchase new microphones for use at the meetings.

Staff conducted three public workshops regarding the LRTP and the TIP, and will attend another, organized by Senator Spilka, on September 9 in Hopkinton.

The MPO has received a complaint from a member of the public regarding the MPO's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Karl Quackenbush, Acting Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), is overseeing the process to address this complaint.

3. Subcommittee Chairs' Reports

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), provided an update on the MPO's election process. All of the 101 municipalities in the region have been notified of the upcoming elections and outreach is continuing through a number of channels, including the MAPC subregional groups and the Regional Transportation Advisory Council. Fifteen municipalities in the region have expressed interest in running for a seat on the MPO so far. September 23 is the deadline for nominations. A Candidates' Forum will be held at the State Transportation Building on October 12.

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

The Advisory Council will meet next on September 14. There will be a presentation on the Bay State Greenway Improvement Plan and elections will be held. L. Wiener will not be running to retain her seat as chair of the Advisory Council. (She has served for two years.) The Advisory Council is also preparing comments for the MPO regarding the LRTP and TIP.

5. Director's Report – Karl Quackenbush, Acting Director, CTPS

CTPS has received 33 resumes so far from applicants interested in either of two vacant positions at CTPS: TIP Manager and Congestion Management Process (CMP) Manager.

6. Amendment Five of the FFYs 2011 – 2014 Transportation Improvement Program – Pam Wolfe, Manager of Certification Activities, and Sean Pfalzer, Interim TIP Manager, MPO Staff

Members were provided with the draft Amendment Five of the FFYs 2011 – 2014 TIP. (See attached.) This document was released for public review from August 8 to September 6. The MPO received one public comment from the City of Somerville requesting a change in the programming of an earmark. (See attached letter.)

P. Wolfe provided an overview of the changes to the TIP reflected in the amendment. They include:

- an increase in funds in two earmarks programmed for the *Boston – Huntington Avenue/Symphony Area Streetscape Construction* project
- the addition of the *Chelsea – Roadway Improvements* project
- the removal of an earmark for the *Somerville – Adaptive Reuse and Streetscape Improvement Study* from the FFY 2011 TIP element; the City of Somerville has requested that this earmark be moved to the FFY 2012 element and programmed for the full earmark at \$520,000

- an increase in funds programmed for two bridge projects: the *Hudson – Houghton Street over the Assabet River* and the *Wayland – Pelham Island Road over the Sudbury River* projects
- changes in the funding sources for the four Safe Routes to School Program projects to reflect that these funds are 100% federal funds: : *Canton – Hansen School, Chelsea – Wright and Browne Schools, Reading – Parker Middle School, and Scituate – Heatherly Elementary School*. Also, the funding for the *Chelsea – Wright and Browne Schools* increased by 100,000.

In response to question from Richard Reed, Town of Bedford, P. Wolfe reported that the total funds programmed for the Safe Routes to School projects have remained the same as was shown in the previous version of the amendment. The share of the funding is 100% federal funds now, however.

D. Mohler asked for a correction to the line item for the *Canton – Reconstruction of I-95 (SB) Off Ramp to University Avenue Design* earmark. MassDOT expects to use the earmark to partially fund the construction of an acceleration lane at the I-93/I-95 interchange in Canton rather than for design of the off ramp.

A motion to approve Amendment Five of the FFYs 2011 – 2014 TIP with the changes detailed above was made by Tom Bent, City of Somerville, and seconded by R. Reed. The motion carried.

7. Draft FFYs 2012 – 2015 Transportation Improvement Program – Pam Wolfe, Manager of Certification Activities, and Sean Pfalzer, Interim TIP Manager, MPO Staff

Members were provided with the draft FFYs 2012 – 2015 TIP showing updates and corrections to the TIP tables since the draft TIP was first released for public review on August 15. (See attached.) The public review period is still open.

P. Wolfe noted that staff has provided more details in this draft noting all sources of funding for those projects with multiple sources of funding. She also noted that at the request of MassDOT, staff is working on including project descriptions in the TIP tables. She then provided an overview of the document and noted the changes that were made to each annual element of the document since it was first posted on the MPO's website.

The proposed changes to the FFY 2012 element are as follows:

- an increase in funding programmed for the *Somerville – Community Path: Cedar to Lowell Street* project
- an reduction in funding programmed for the *Concord/Lincoln – Route 2 (Crosby's Corner)* project
- an increase to the funding programmed for the *Natick – Route 9/Oak Street* project and correction to the funding source and amount of the earmark for this project
- a reduction to the amount of an earmark for the *Acton/Stow – Assabet River Rail Trail Design*

- the addition of an earmark for the *Somerville – Adaptive Reuse and Streetscape Improvement Study*, as requested by the City of Somerville
- an update to the cost and cash flows of the *1,000 Parking Spaces at Wonderland Station* project

Members asked questions and made comments regarding the proposed changes to the FFY 2012 element.

D. Mohler asked staff to confirm that \$520,000 is available in the earmark for the *Somerville – Adaptive Reuse and Streetscape Improvement Study*.

David Koses, City of Newton, noted the reduction of the earmark for the *Acton/Stow – Assabet River Rail Trail Design* from \$1.3 million to \$769,314 and asked if the latter amount is enough to fund the project's design. S. Pfalzer explained that earmark has not been reduced, rather the lower amount is what remains unspent of the earmark.

E. Bourassa inquired about the changes to the cost of the *1,000 Parking Spaces at Wonderland Station* project from \$16.5 million to \$24 million. S. Pfalzer stated that the MBTA provided the updated figure which represents more accurate cash flows. D. Mohler noted that the project is already under construction. He advised staff to clarify in the document that the cash flows shown for the State Implementation Plan (SIP) projects are being recorded in the TIP for informational purposes, and that the MPO is not programming funds for those state funded projects.

D. Mohler raised questions about the programming of second year funding for projects in the Clean Air and Mobility Program that have not yet begun or spent first year funding. These include the *Bike Share* programs in Brookline and Cambridge. While expressing support for these projects, he registered concerns about presenting projects to the federal agencies that do not have a local match, and noted that this practice can tie up Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds.

E. Bourassa advocated for listing the *Bike Share* projects in the TIP, even if the monies are obligated later. He expressed confidence that the projects would move forward and get their matches. He also noted that this action would help leverage a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant.

The discussion moved on to the FFY 2013 element. The proposed changes to that element include the following:

- a reduction in Clean Air and Mobility Program funds to accommodate target project costs project
- an increase in funds programmed for the *Somerville – Beacon Street, Concord/Lincoln – Route 2 (Crosby's Corner)* projects
- an increase in the *Lynn – Route 129 (Broadway)* project, to the year of expenditure cost
- updates to the Section 5307 dollar amounts programmed for the Cape Ann Transportation Authority and the MetroWest Regional Transportation Authority

P. Wolfe provided more details about the status of the projects listed under the Clean Air and Mobility Program. The *Hopkinton – Crosswalk Beacon at Church and Main Street* project can be removed from the TIP since it has been funded by the Town of Hopkinton. The *Scituate – Sidewalk Installation and Improvements* and the *Westwood – Crosswalk Improvements on Washington Street* projects have not yet been designed and design is not underway. Scituate would like to pursue second year funding. The *Framingham – Cochituate Rail Trail* and *Arlington – Intersection of Route 3 and Route 60* projects are moving forward in design. D. Mohler noted that communities applying for Clean Air and Mobility Program funds must design their projects to federal standards, which involves submitting designs to MassDOT Highway Division.

L. Wiener reported that the Town of Arlington has a designer under contract. S. Olanoff reported that the Town of Westwood is planning to move forward to meet the FFY 2013 deadline; the town does not have a designer under contract.

Members agreed to remove the *Scituate – Sidewalk Installation and Improvements* and the *Westwood – Crosswalk Improvements on Washington Street* projects from the TIP. E. Bourassa suggested that the MPO inform the Towns of Scituate and Westwood that, while there will be no funding for the Clean Air and Mobility Program available in FFY 2014 and 2015, the MPO will resume the program in FFY 2016. He expressed support for continuing the program in FFY 2016.

D. Mohler asked staff to itemize the projects for which the Cape Ann Transportation Authority and the MetroWest Transportation Authority plan to use the Section 5307 funds.

Mary Pratt, Town of Hopkinton, asked staff to provide information about the operating costs of those two regional transit agencies.

The discussion moved on to the FFY 2014 element. The proposed changes to that element include the following:

- an update to the cost of the *Boston – South Bay Harbor Trail (Construction)* project
- updates to the Section 5307 dollar amounts programmed for the Cape Ann Transportation Authority and the MetroWest Regional Transportation Authority

The discussion moved on to the FFY 2015 element. The proposed changes to that element include the following:

- the removal of the *Chelsea – Route 1 over Arlington and 5th Streets* bridge project from this element; this project will be moved to FFY 2016
- the removal of three line items for bridge projects that will be completed in FFY 2014: *Boston – Route 99 (Alford Street) over Mystic River*; *Boston – Chelsea Street Bridge*; and *Lexington – Route 2A over I-95*

- an increase in funds programmed for the *Lynn/Saugus – Route 107 over the Saugus River* project
- a decrease in funds programmed for the *Needham/Wellesley – Route 128 Improvement Program Contract 5* project
- updates to the Section 5307 dollar amounts programmed for the Cape Ann Transportation Authority and the MetroWest Regional Transportation Authority

Members then discussed this element. D. Koses inquired about the impact of moving forward the *Needham/Wellesley – Route 128 Improvement Program Contract 5* project. MassDOT will provide this information prior to the MPO's vote on the TIP on September 22.

Members approved the revised version of the Draft TIP for posting on the MPO's website.

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

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 4 was made by John Romano, MassDOT Highway Division, and seconded by T. Bent. The motion carried.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 18 – with changes to page 5 recommended by S. Olanoff – was made by J. Romano, and seconded by T. Bent. The motion carried. Dennis Giombetti, Town of Framingham, abstained.

9. Work Program for the Boston Ramp Study – Karl Quackenbush, Acting Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)

Members discussed the work program for the *Boston Ramp Study* at the meetings of August 4 and 18. (See attached.) In response to members' comments, staff revised the work program to include an alternative in the study that would involve testing an east-bound on-ramp. Text was also added to explain that while the study would assume electronic tolling, the assumption does not imply a final toll policy decision.

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston, thanked staff and MassDOT for responding to his comments and expressed support for the changes.

D. Koses asked about the assumptions regarding Cortez Street. Mark Berger, Project Supervisor, MassDOT, replied that since Cortez Street is a local street, it is not included in the model.

D. Koses noted that the demand for using the Turnpike would be contingent upon the level of tolling. He suggested the study might examine demand based on different tolls. M. Berger explained that MassDOT has not made any decisions regarding tolling at this time.

In response to other members' questions, D. Mohler noted that some of the questions raised and requests made regarding the work program are not in the purview of the MPO since this is a MassDOT study.

A motion to approve the work program for the *Boston Ramp Study* was made by J. Gillooly, and seconded by Ron Morgan, MBTA. The motion carried.

10. Work Program for the Interstate 495 and Route 9 Interchange Improvement Study – *Karl Quackenbush, Acting Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)*

Members were provided with the work program for the *Interstate 495 and Route 9 Interchange Improvement Study: Support*. (See attached.) K. Quackenbush provided an overview of the work program, which like the *Boston Ramps Study* work program just discussed, supports a larger MassDOT study.

The work program involves travel forecasting for the interchanges of Interstate 495/Route 9, and Interstate 495/Interstate 90. MassDOT is seeking to address problems at the Route 9 intersection resulting from traffic weaving, and traffic spillover impacts at Interstates 495/Interstate 90. The future conditions to be considered in the traffic forecasting will include a land use plan that will result from an EOHCD-funded smart growth planning project that MAPC and the Central Transportation Planning Staff are conducting around the project area.

Mary Pratt, Town of Hopkinton, suggested that staff gather data regarding tanker roll-over accidents at the study location and the environmental impacts in the Cedar Swamp area.

A motion to approve the *Interstate 495 and Route 9 Interchange Improvement Study: Support* was made by T. Bent, and seconded by J. Romano. The motion carried.

11. MPO Recertification Final Report – *Pam Wolfe, Manager of Certification Activities, MPO Staff*

Members received copies of the *Transportation Planning Certification Review of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process for the Boston Transportation Management Area*, the final report issued by the Federal Highway and Transit Administrations in July 2011 which recertifies the MPO and makes recommendations for improving the MPO's planning process. (See attached letter and matrix of recommendation. The full report is available on the MPO's website.)

P. Wolfe provided an overview of the federal agencies' recommendations and commendations included in the report, and staffs suggestions for response (all which are detailed in the attached matrix). She noted that some of the items listed in the recommendations are part of the MPO's current practice and others are easily implemented improvements that staff has already underway. Staff is looking for direction from the MPO on several other items.

The federal agencies made recommendations concerning the following: the election of municipal representatives; consultations for the LRTP; strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; incorporating livability principles; funding maintenance of the highway system; the SIP; the Congestion Management Process; agreements and coordination with transit operators; the TIP; the Public Participation Process; procedures for meeting Title VI, Environmental Justice, and Limited English Proficiency requirements; and MPO self-certification.

The federal agencies commended the MPO for its TIP interactive project and intersection map, for considering safety in its planning process, and for funding important safety projects. They also recognized the MPO's freight planning work.

Members discussed the report.

In response to a member's question, P. Wolfe said that she thinks that one of the recommendations pertaining to the TIP is stating that the federal agencies do not want MassDOT to request environmental reviews of projects that are not programmed in the LRTP.

Alicia Wilson, Regional Equity Manager, MPO Staff, responded to another question about the MPO's complaint process. She noted that the federal agencies are suggesting that the MPO call its complaint process its "Non-discrimination Policy."

Members discussed the federal agencies' recommendation that the MPO develop a demographic profile of its committees. While they agreed to try to complete this survey, they raised questions about whether such a survey would only count committee members or would also include their representatives.

Members also discussed a recommendation to evaluate projects with federal earmarks using the same evaluation procedures the MPO uses for other projects. Tom Kadzis, City of Boston, noted that it appears that Congress may be phasing out earmarks, in which case the resources spent on evaluating such projects would not be worth the benefit derived. D. Mohler also advised against taking this federal recommendation as it would put the MPO in the position of having to deny projects that could be fully-funded by an earmark. If an earmarked project would do harm, the MPO could still choose not to program it.

Regarding a recommendation that the MPO begin tracking the implementation of TIP projects, staff was advised to begin tracking this information in FFY 2012. Marie Rose, MassDOT Highway Division, noted that MassDOT already tracks the implementation of projects. E. Bourassa suggested that the MPO include this topic as an agenda item in future meetings.

D. Mohler advised staff to provide more detail in the matrix to show the MPO's role in the SIP process, which includes ensuring adequate public participation.

Staff will make the revisions requested to the matrix, will implement the responses to the recommendations noted and approved by the Committee, and will provide progress updates.

12. Members Items

D. Mohler announced the upcoming SIP public hearing on September 13 at 1 PM and 5 PM, which will be held at the Department of Environmental Protection's offices on Winter Street in Boston.

T. Bent asked questions regarding the *Green Line Extension* project. He inquired as to when MassDOT plans to submit the final New Starts application to FTA, whether the project's risk analysis is available, and about the availability of state bond monies for the project. D. Mohler responded that all portions of the New Starts application have been submitted, except for the Operations and Maintenance model section, which will be submitted in December. MassDOT expects to hear a response by March 2012. He stated that he believes the risk analysis is posted on MassDOT's website. One analysis (the PMOC analysis) is not publicly available. D. Mohler noted that MassDOT's legal department is reviewing a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request from the City of Somerville to access this information. Regarding the bond monies, D. Mohler stated that bond monies are available and that MassDOT will work with Administration and Finance to develop appropriate cash flows.

W. Zamore noted that there are several websites with information pertaining to the *Green Line Extension* project, and he suggested that MassDOT link them.

E. Bourassa asked if MassDOT is evaluating the impact of Hurricane Irene in the western part of the state. D. Mohler replied that MassDOT is repairing damaged infrastructure and will seek reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). MassDOT is also documenting the costs of repairs to municipal roadways so that municipalities can apply to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) for relief funds. MassDOT has an interactive map on its website showing roads that have been damaged and repaired in western Massachusetts.

Members then applauded L. Wiener for her service as chair of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council.

13. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by J. Romano, and seconded by T. Bent. The motion carried.

Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Meeting Attendance
Thursday, September 8, 2011, 10:00 AM

Member Agencies

MassDOT
MassDOT Highway

City of Boston
City of Newton
City of Somerville
MAPC

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

Representatives and Alternates

David Mohler
David Anderson
Marie Rose
John Romano
Jim Gillooly
David Koses
Tom Bent
Eric Bourassa
Eric Halvorson
Ron Morgan
Laura Wiener
Steve Olanoff
Richard Reed
Dennis Giombetti
John Westerling
Mary Pratt

MPO Staff/CTPS

Walter Bennett
David Fargen
Maureen Kelly
Robin Mannion
Anne McGahan
Sean Pfalzer
Karl Quackenbush
Alicia Wilson
Pam Wolfe

Other Attendees

Mark Berger
Callida Cenizal
Barbara Miranda

Joe Onorato
Karen Pearson

Chris Reilly
Wig Zamore

MassDOT
MassDOT
Office of State Representative
William Brownsberger
MassDOT Highway
MassDOT Office of
Transportation Planning
Town of Lincoln
Somerville Transportation Equity
Partnership / Mystic View Task
Force