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### **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

#### **Summary of the January 11, 2012 Meeting**

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

**1. Introductions** – *Steve Olanoff, Chair*

Steve Olanoff, Chair (Westwood) called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 5)

**2. Chair's Report** – *Steve Olanoff, Chair*

S. Olanoff announced that at the last MPO meeting held January 5, 2012, two work scopes dealing with commuting and construction operational impacts were approved. The topics of the studies to be conducted include an evaluation and review of Job Access and Reverse Commute projects and the a study of traffic impacts of traffic mitigation plans considered for use during repair work on the Callahan Tunnel.

In addition, MPO staff reviewed the MBTA Bus Route 1 in the Transit Signal Priority Study that involves getting advanced signals when buses approach traffic lights to help maintain the schedules of the buses. Another work scope reviewed proposes to conduct a study that would analyze the mobility and safety issues on different corridor segments originally listed in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Needs Assessment. Three of these corridors will be selected for approval by the MPO.

MAPC presented an overview of the data and reporting features of their economic development capabilities. With regard to MPO certification activities this year, it was noted that all activities have been moved forward this year which will result in documents ready for public review prior to the summer months.

Next month the speaker will be MIT professor, Dr. Chris Caplice, Executive Director, MIT Center for Transportation & Logistics. His presentation is titled "Future Freight Flows: Using Scenario Planning to Assist in Long-Term Planning".

There was an MBTA Advisory Board meeting on Monday, January 9, 2012 with a presentation on the impending fare increase and service cutbacks of the MBTA.

The Advisory Council received a letter from David Mohler, Chairman of the MPO, acknowledging the Advisory Council input to the Long Range Transportation Plan. A previous letter addressed the concerns the Council had to the TIP project selection process, and another letter from the MPO related to the comments the Advisory Council made regarding the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for FFY2012.

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**3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes of December 14, 2011 – *Steve Olanoff, Chair***

A motion to adopt the December 14, 2011 meeting minutes was made and seconded. The minutes of December 14, 2011 were unanimously approved.

**4. Strategies for Reassessing Our Transportation Resources – *Richard A. Davey, Secretary & CEO, MassDOT***

Following a brief introduction by Chair Olanoff, Secretary Davey emphasized his commitment to expand the message of transportation advocacy to a wide variety of sources including businesses, hospitals, education centers, public officials, and others who share a view of transportation reform. Pointing to innovative projects like the I-93 Fast 14 Bridge Replacements and the Accelerated Bridge Program, he discussed MassDOT's intent to make sure that reforms are tangible to customers. In terms of revenues, MassDOT is advancing the conversation about reform by talking about what it has meant directly to the customer in terms of saving money and completing projects on time and on budget.

When noticeable physical improvements are made, the customer's experience will improve and have a real impact on the system user. Some improvement projects include the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) approach to interact with the system user. Some effective ITS strategies currently being advanced include variable message signs; count-down signs along transit routes; a pilot project with Massport to display both flight and bus travel information on the Silver Line between Logan Airport and South Station. Secretary Davey reiterated that the customer wants transportation workers to help make the transportation system work better. To that end, MassDOT has developed strategies to promote creative thinking in the promotion of innovative problem solving. This applies to all facets of the organization and touches on solutions to problems big and small that will improve the customer experience.

Secretary Davey stated that transparency is a cornerstone of how business is conducted at MassDOT. He also discussed changes in management approaches at the agency designed to maximize revenues, reduce costs, and spur greater innovation. In being fully transparent in all activities relating to projects like the Big Dig, there are no surprises for the public. Media and the public are fully aware of detailed weekly maintenance on the Big Dig. The Secretary related that a recent audit conducted by FHWA had a positive result in terms of transparency in dealing with Big Dig maintenance issues.

Being more transparent also means getting out into the field to talk with customers on a regular basis. Opening up the doors for tours to let people see what is involved in running the system is a positive improvement in maintaining transparency in the system. As owners of the transportation system, he said that MassDOT must continually assess how to take care of and improve the system.

Transportation reform includes the idea that the agency is run more like a business. If MassDOT is to be taken seriously when discussing increasing a revenue base, the agency must demonstrate that revenues are maximized and costs are reduced wherever possible. Ways to maximize revenues include mining all revenue sources like the highly used Registry website in an attempt to increase advertising revenue. Through tightly monitoring project activity, budget management can be pushed down at all levels. The capital budget must be managed quickly and the hope is

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that the operation side is not steeply cut. MassDOT is thinking about all possibilities for raising revenue. This will require thinking outside of the box by trying new and innovative ideas for improving the delivery of service to MBTA customers.

He said that the four points he listed in his talk are the focal points of the public conversation now and over the upcoming few months. More bold discussion will happen as the year progresses. The discussion of MBTA fare increase and service reduction workshops will be used to educate the public, explaining why the issue exists. The workshops will also be a forum to address regional transportation issues and future demands on the transportation system.

Members of the Advisory Council were encouraged to actively participate in increasing support for the transportation system by talking at the outreach meetings and discussions within the community. The Secretary urged Advisory Council members to talk to legislative and municipal leaders about the kind of transportation system they want. The current system is not affordable, a better solution is needed.

### **Responses to Questions:**

In response to members' questions, Secretary Davey made the following additional comments:

- The current fare and service initiatives address the current budget shortfall and do not address the long-term deficit, which persists, even though there has not been a fare increase in five years.
- MassDOT is working with Regional Transit Authorities to help foster regional cooperation between them. MassDOT will work with the RTAs to accomplish common objectives.
- In addressing a well-balanced work staff at MassDOT there are areas that will continue to require contractor assistance due to the nature and specificity of some tasks.
- We have a working relationship with independent freight partners who are regularly part of discussions on current projects. MassDOT has a freight planner and an independent freight rail plan.
- Short-line railroads are a critical link in the overall rail system. More time will be spent on this issue in the future.
- MassDOT is spending more time with the Federal authorities to improve permit performance time in the future.
- A good way to shift more people out of cars is to improve access to HOV, vanpools and carpools and other multi-occupancy vehicles.
- The MBTA will not be running the commuter rail in the upcoming service contract. Length of contract will be a serious consideration in developing a proper contract for bid.
- MassDOT's advocacy for the reforms that have occurred continues. MassDOT is managing its finances wisely; continues to operate on the punch-list of reform; and can attain a good, affordable system that we all want.

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- 5. Member Announcements** – There were none.
- 6. Committee Reports** – There were none.
- 7. Adjourn** – The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 PM.

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**ATTACHMENT 1: Attendance List for January 11, 2012**

**Cities and Towns:**

Mike Gowing, Acton  
Tom Kadzis, Boston  
Jeff Rosenblum, Cambridge  
William Friel, Canton  
Walter Bonin, Marlborough  
Dom D'Eramo, Millis  
John Gillon, Quincy  
Frank S. DeMasi, Wellesley  
Steve Olanoff, Westwood

**Agencies:**

Tad Read, Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Steven Rawding, MassDOT - Aeronautics Division  
Calli Cenizal, MassDOT - Office of Transportation Planning  
Catherine Paquette, MassRIDES  
Allison Felix, Metropolitan Area Planning Council  
Bruce Leish, Metrowest Regional Collaborative

**Citizen Groups:**

Mary Ann Murray, Access Advisory Committee to the T  
Tom Bailey, American Council of Engineering Compaines  
Barry M. Steinberg, Association for Public Transportation  
Schuyler Larrabee, Boston Society of Architects  
Malek Al-Khatib, Boston Society of Civil Engineers  
Jenna Bernabe (Rep. Dick Flynn), Eastern Massachusetts Freight Rail Coalition  
Jack Guild, Institute of Transportation Engineers  
Chris Anzuoni, Massachetts Bus Association  
Jillian Zywer, Massachetts Motor Transportation Association  
Mark Molloy, Massachetts Motor Transportation Association  
David Kucharsky, MassCommute  
Tom Yardley, Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization  
Jon Seward, MoveMassachusetts  
John Businger, National Corridors Initiative  
Marilyn Wellons, Riverside Neighborhood Association  
Monica Tibbits, Route 128 Business Council  
John McQueen, WalkBoston

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**Guests and Visitors:**

Rachel Fichtenbaum – Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Amanda Richard for Sen. McGee  
Ed Lowney  
Alex Bloomenstiel  
Stan Franzeen, Junction TMO

**MPO Staff:**

Pam Wolfe  
Anne McGahan  
Walter Bennett

Mary Ellen Sullivan  
David Fargen

Alicia Wilson  
Mike Callahan