

**Draft Memorandum for the Record
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting**

February 2, 2012 Meeting

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

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

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization agreed to the following:

- approve the *MBTA Bus Route 1 Transit Signal Priority Study*
- accept the changes to the proposed Draft Amendment One to the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2012 – 2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and adhere to the original schedule for the public review period
- approve the minutes of the meeting of January 19

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

There were none.

2. Chair's Report – Clinton Bench, MassDOT

C. Bench opened the meeting. He reported that public workshops and hearings are underway regarding the MBTA's fare increase proposal. The next meetings are scheduled for February 6 in Lowell, February 7 in Lynn, February 8 in Boston's West End and Hingham, February 13 at the Boston Public Library, and February 15 in Quincy. Meeting times and locations are posted on the MBTA's website, www.mbta.com. There has been large attendance at the meetings.

In response to questions, C. Bench explained that MBTA staff and CART reporters are on hand at the meetings to record public comments. Comments relayed at both workshops and hearings will be conveyed to the MBTA Board of Directors. He also reported that public officials – including the mayor of Boston, city councilors, and state legislators – have been involved in the discussions about the fare increase proposal.

D. Mohler chaired the meeting from this point forward.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports – Stephen Woelfel, MassDOT Highway Division

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee will meet today at 1PM.

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

The Advisory Council will meet next on February 8. Chris Caplice, Executive Director of the Center for Transportation and Logistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will give a presentation on scenario planning.

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

K. Quackenbush reminded members that there is still time for them to get a photo ID for access to the State Transportation Building. Staff has forms available.

6. MBTA Bus Route 1 Transit Signal Priority Study – *Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

The results of the *MBTA Bus Route 1 Transit Signal Priority Study* were presented to the MPO on January 5.

A motion to approve the *MBTA Bus Route 1 Transit Signal Priority Study* was made by David Anderson, MassDOT Highway Division, and seconded by Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). The motion carried.

7. Meeting Minutes – *Maureen Kelly, MPO Specialist, MPO Staff*

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 19 was made by E. Bourassa, and seconded by S. Woelfel. The motion carried.

8. Work Program for MassDOT Title VI Program Amendment – *Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

Members were provided with an amendment to the work program for the *MassDOT Title VI Program*. This is an amendment to a work program that the MPO approved last year to assist MassDOT in its compliance with the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) Title VI requirements.

Recipients of federal funding must comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which requires that the recipients demonstrate that they do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Additionally, FHWA's Title VI requirements address discrimination based on limited English proficiency, gender, age, and disability.

CTPS has been involved in Title VI matters for years as staff to the MPO, which must certify compliance with Title VI. Also, in the early 2000s, CTPS began assisting the MBTA to monitor its compliance.

Last year, when FHWA reinvigorated its Title VI activities, CTPS contracted with MassDOT through the work program for the *MassDOT Title VI Program* to address MassDOT's adherence to FHWA's Title VI requirements. CTPS has completed four of the seven tasks outlined in that work program. The objective of the amended work program is to continue assisting MassDOT in compliance with the Title VI requirements of both FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). This work includes assisting MassDOT to develop a language access plan and a public participation plan.

The amendment represents a 12 month extension of the original work program with as much as \$102,000 in additional funds from a MassDOT Administrative Services contract.

Members asked questions.

In response to a question from S. Olanoff, D. Mohler noted that as a result of MassDOT's adherence to FHWA's Title VI requirements members of the public can expect, for example, MassDOT to make improvements in terms of interacting with people with limited English proficiency, such as by providing translators at design hearings and making materials available in other languages.

Members will vote on the amendment to the work program at the next meeting.

9. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment One Update – Sean Pfalzer, Interim TIP Manager, MPO Staff

Draft Amendment One to the FFYs 2012 – 2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was distributed. S. Pfalzer summarized the proposed changes to the document.

The amendment includes programming of \$2.57 million for a *Pay-As-You-Drive Insurance Pilot Program*. MassDOT was awarded \$2.1 million for this project through FHWA's Value Pricing Pilot Program. Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) Ventures would provide the private match to cover the remainder of the project cost.

The amendment also adds the *Danvers – Route 35 (Water Street) over Waters River* bridge project to the FFY 2012 element of the TIP. The project was originally advertised in 2008. A total of \$5.1 million was obligated for the project, but that contract was cancelled. The project is ready to be advertised again and now costs \$8.1 million. The programmed amount would be nearly \$3 million (representing the new cost minus the money already spent on the project).

Staff recommended that the MPO consider incorporating these changes into the Draft Amendment One to the FFYs 2012 – 2015 TIP, which is currently released for public review. Since staff considers these changes not significant, staff did not recommend any changes to the public comment period for the document. Staff would post the amendment on the MPO's website and release a public notice on MPOinfo, the MPO's listserve.

Members asked questions.

E. Bourassa asked for more information regarding the change in cost to the Danvers project. David Anderson, MassDOT Highway Division, explained that problems arose during the construction of the bridge that required a redesign of the substructure and re-permitting. Normally, such issues are addressed in extra work orders, but because of the magnitude of the redesign MassDOT Highway Division determined that it was appropriate to rebid the project.

Richard Reed, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford), asked about the ownership of the right-of-way and who was responsible for engineering the project. D. Anderson replied that the right-of-way was municipal and that the project was engineered by the Highway Division.

S. Olanoff asked for more detail on the *Pay-As-You-Drive Insurance Pilot Program* and asked what the programmed funds would be used for specifically. D. Mohler explained that it is a pilot project with CLF Ventures and Progressive Insurance that would make an option available to allow some insurance customers to be billed based on how much they drive. The program is designed to change behavior by giving people an incentive to drive less. MassDOT will provide more information on the program at a future meeting.

A motion to accept the changes to the proposed Draft Amendment One to the FFYs 2012 – 2015 TIP and adhere to the original schedule for the public review period was made by Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), and seconded by Christine Stickney, South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree). The motion carried.

10. Improving the Southeast Expressway: A Conceptual Plan – *Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff, and Bill Kuttner, Project Manager, MPO Staff*

K. Quackenbush introduced the CTPS study, *Improving the Southeast Expressway: A Conceptual Plan*, which was commissioned by the MPO. He noted that the study addressed a large idea – how to connect the Central Artery/Tunnel High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane with the zipper lane on the Southeast Expressway – and that the costs to implement the ideas in the study would also be large. The Southeast Expressway was identified in the MPO’s Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) as a corridor with great needs. The ideas presented in the study, such as HOV treatments that reduce the number of cars on the road, are consistent with the MPO’s goals for improving air quality. If the ideas presented in this study can go forward at a time when more funding is available, this study could serve as the seminal work.

Bill Kuttner, Project Manager, gave an overview of the study using an AutoCAD depiction of the study area. He explained that idea behind the study was to determine a way to connect the existing Southeast Expressway movable HOV lane between its northern terminus near Savin Hill to the southern end of the Central Artery/Tunnel HOV lanes near Massachusetts Avenue. Costs were not considered in the study.

He described the traffic problems that exist in the corridor and pointed out bottleneck locations that are caused by forced merges, including the merges at the end of the movable HOV lane at Savin Hill, and at Southampton Street in the South Bay. The study authors determined that addressing those problems would require widening the right-of-way, and anticipated land requirements are identified in the study. No residences would need to be taken, but the rail lines that run parallel to the Southeast Expressway would need to be placed in tunnels at one point.

The expanded right-of-way would allow for adding a reversible lane (going north in the morning and south in the evening) and accommodating five lanes of traffic in each direction at two entry-exit sections. The plan would add one more lane of capacity to the corridor and eliminate the merges at the ends of the HOV lanes. A new general purpose auxiliary lane could be built at the Southampton Street on-ramp to improving merging at that location.

Members asked questions.

S. Olanoff asked if the plan calls for maintaining the existing off-ramps. B. Kuttner explained that the ramps would need to be redesigned. The study addressed treatments to the main travel lanes; it did not address the redesign of the ramps.

J. Gillooly, City of Boston (Transportation Department), expressed the city's appreciation for the study. He remarked that the Southampton Street connection by itself would improve traffic circulation in the corridor. That connection would be important considering that the MBTA may be reducing transit service and people will need other travel options, and because it can improve access to locations such as the Longwood Medical Area that are economic engines for the region. He spoke about the congestion and cut-through traffic that creates traffic impacts in nearby neighborhoods and the city's concerns about these effects.

E. Bourassa asked J. Gillooly if the City of Boston would support the study concept if it included a high occupancy toll lane. J. Gillooly replied that the city would consider the idea.

C. Stickney asked if MassDOT would be taking next steps on the recommendations from the study. D. Mohler discussed the unlikelihood of MassDOT taking action at this time due to financial constraints. B. Kuttner mentioned that the study includes recommendations for next steps in terms of analytical studies that could be done.

E. Bourassa suggested that the project idea be considered during the development of the next LRTP.

S. Olanoff asked about which bridges would need to be rebuilt if the plan were to go forward. B. Kuttner replied that the bridges at Savin Hill Avenue, Columbia Road, Boston Street, and Southampton Street would need to be rebuilt. Work would also have to be done on the Fairmount branch rail line.

D. Giombetti raised the issue that improvements to the corridor could lead to rising demand and a return to congested conditions. He asked how the potential for rising demand would be evaluated. B. Kuttner replied that the study recommendations include using the regional model to understand future demand.

Jim Gallagher asked for more detail about how the HOV lanes would be connected. B. Kuttner provided more details about how traffic would flow with the use of the reversible lane.

11. Members Items

R. Reed complimented K. Quackenbush on his presentation to a statewide audience at the recent Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) conference. The subject of the presentation was TIP funding.

K. Quackenbush returned the compliment noting that R. Reed also gave a terrific presentation at the conference.

J. Gillooly referenced a letter that Boston Mayor Thomas Menino sent to MassDOT Secretary Richard Davey regarding the MBTA's fare increase and service cuts proposal. Staff will distribute the letter to members.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn from the MPO meeting and enter into executive session and not to come back into public session when the executive session adjourns was made by S. Woelfel, and seconded by Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board. A roll call vote was taken. The motion carried, with all members voting yes.

**Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting Attendance
Thursday, February 2, 2012, 10:00 AM**

Members

At-Large City (City of Everett)
At-Large City (City of Newton)
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)

Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

MassDOT Highway Division

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
Massachusetts Port Authority
MBTA Advisory Board
Metropolitan Area Planning Council

MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination
(Town of Bedford)
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)
Regional Transportation Advisory Council
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)

Representatives and Alternates

Marzie Galazka
David Koses
Laura Wiener
Richard Canale
Jim Gillooly
Tom Kadzis
Hayes Morrison
Clinton Bench
David Mohler
David Anderson
Stephen Woelfel
Joe Cosgrove
Lourenço Dantas
Paul Regan
Eric Bourassa
Eric Halvorsen
Dennis Giombetti
Richard Reed

Tina Cassidy
Ed Tarallo
Steve Olanoff
Christine Stickney
Tom O'Rourke

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Daniel Amstutz

Walter Bennett

Michael Callahan

Annette Demchur

Maureen Kelly

Bill Kuttner

Robin Mannion

Anne McGahan

Efi Pagitsas

Sean Pfalzer

Pam Wolfe

Other Attendees

Callida Cenizal

Jim Gallagher

Erin Kinahan

Rafael Mares

Joe Onorato

Chris Reilly

Wig Zamore

MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning

MassDOT District 6

Conservation Law Foundation

MassDOT Highway

Town of Lincoln

Somerville resident