

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

August 2, 2012 Meeting

10:00 AM – 11:45 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 Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization agreed to the following:

- approve Amendment Two of the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2012-15 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as amended at this meeting
- approve the minutes of the meetings of June 21 and June 28
- approve the following work programs:
 - *MassDOT Road Inventory Supplemental Grant*
 - *MBTA Transit Contribution to the Reduction of Greenhouse Gases*
 - *Federal Transit Administration Formula Grant Funding Review*

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

There were none.

2. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT*

The state transportation bond bill has passed.

There will be an announcement on August 3rd about a proposed amendment to the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The amendment would remove the project for the *Design of the Red-Blue Line Connector* from the SIP. Under the SIP, MassDOT is required only to design the project, not construct it. MassDOT petitioned the Department of Environmental Protection to remove the project from the SIP. MassDOT sees that no air quality offsets are needed as a result of its removal because simply designing the project would not produce any air quality benefit.

The public review period for MassDOT's GreenDOT Implementation Plan closes today.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

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

State Senator Thomas McGee was the featured speaker at the July meeting of the Advisory Council.

The Council's Membership Committee met recently to discuss changes to the Council's bylaws.

The Council will not meet in August. The next meeting will be in September.

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

Christine Bettin was introduced to the MPO as the new Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator at Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS). CTPS is also recruiting for a modeler, transit analyst, and general planner.

Members were provided with a memorandum from Bill Kuttner, MPO staff, titled, "Recent Trends at Toll Plazas: Additional Data." This memorandum follows a previous one in which staff provided an analysis of traffic trends in the Boston area based on toll data. This memorandum adds to the first with an analysis of data from Turnpike toll plazas west of Route 128. These analyses were conducted at the request of MPO members.

6. FFYs 2012-15 Transportation Improvement Program—*Sean Pflazer, TIP Manager, MPO Staff*

S. Pflazer gave a summary of the public comments received on draft Amendment Two of the FFYs 2012-15 TIP during the public review period, which closed on July 24. He also provided an overview of the changes included in the amendment.

Public Comments

The Friends of the Community Path expressed support for additional funding for the *Community Path (Cedar Street to Lowell Street)* project and for funding the *Green Line Extension* project. The Friends also urged the MPO to identify future funding for the *Community Path Extension* to Lechmere/North Point to correspond with the phasing of the *Green Line Extension* project.

There were 153 comments (from residents of Somerville, Cambridge, Boston, Arlington, Medford, Lexington, Acton, Belmont, and Brookline) supporting the *Community Path Extension* as a mitigation project for the delay of the *Green Line Extension* project. These commenters urged MassDOT to fully-fund the design and construction of the *Community Path Extension to Lechmere/North Point*, not just to the Inner Belt area. They stated that this link over the Fitchburg line tracks is essential for connectivity with Cambridge, Boston, and the Charles River Path network. They also noted that the project is consistent with MassDOT's goals and policies, and has environmental justice and economic benefits.

Some of the 153 commenters also noted that the *Community Path Extension* would serve as a vital link to the network by providing safe access to Boston, jobs, transit, and other destinations. Some noted that it would enhance quality of life by improving opportunities for physical activity and improving air quality. And some stated that it would help maintain financial stability by reducing car ownership and usage.

Amendment Two

Amendment Two includes the following changes to the FFY 2012 element of the TIP:

- cost increases for the *Belmont/Watertown – Trapelo Road* project (the cost increase was accommodated with funds from the *Concord/Lincoln – Route 2 and 2A (Crosby's Corner)* project and with target funds)
- cost increase to the *Somerville Community Path, Cedar to Lowell Street* project
- cost increase to the *Danvers – Route 35 (Water Street) bridge* project
- change in programming of funds for the *Boston – Chelsea Street* bridge (to reflect that the project will be complete in FFY 2012 rather than FFY 2013)
- change in year of programming for two earmarks:
 - *Acton/Maynard – Assabet River Rail Trail (Construction)* moved to the FFY 2014 element
 - *Boston – Improvements to Gainsborough and St. Botolph Streets* moved to the FFY 2013 element
- adjustments to Grant Anticipation Note (GANs) payments for the *Central Artery/Tunnel* project
- cost adjustments for two Accelerated Bridge Program projects
 - *Boston/Cambridge – Longfellow Bridge*
 - *Quincy/Weymouth – Route 3A over the Fore River*
- change in year of programming for the *Boston – Morton Street over the MBTA and CSX Railroad* project (moved to FFY 2013)
- change in year of programming for transit programs funded under Sections 5307 and 5309 (moved to FFY 2013 due to the Federal Transit Administration's schedule for awarding grants)

- programming of grants awarded through the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Programs

Approval of Amendment

A motion to approve Amendment Two of the FFYs 2012-15 TIP was made by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent), and was seconded by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric Bourassa).

A motion to amend the previous motion to shift \$7.6 million from the *Station Accessibility* line item in the FFY 2012 element to the *Track Right of Way* line item, in order to fully-fund the *Haverhill Double Track Program*, was made by the MBTA (Joe Cosgrove), and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (Paul Regan).

During a discussion of the motion, J. Cosgrove explained that the *Haverhill Double Track Program* has increased in cost from \$17.4 million to \$26.9 million due to the need for additional drainage work and the reconstruction of the bridge over Route 133. The additional \$7.6 million would allow the project to proceed without a suspension.

D. Mohler asked if the MBTA plans to fund the *Station Accessibility* projects (which include upgrades to elevators and escalators) that would be defunded in FFY 2012 in a future year. J. Cosgrove replied that the MBTA expects, based on the federal reauthorization (MAP-21), to fully-fund those projects in FFY 2013 and FFY 2014.

Members discussed the implications of accepting the MBTA's amendment to the motion. D. Mohler noted that the MPO will need to decide whether the proposed change is substantial enough to require Amendment Two to be released for another public review period. David Anderson, MassDOT Highway Division, noted that another 30-day public review period would not have a substantial impact on the advertising of highway projects in the TIP. (Those to be advertised in FFY 2012 must be advertised by September 30.)

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), expressed concern about the significant increase in the project cost and asked whether the additional work would have an impact on the public's use of the roadways in the project area. J. Cosgrove explained that the issues concerning the drainage and bridge work came up during the permitting process and were not part of the original project scope. There was a public process during the permitting process.

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department), noted that resolving the matter in a third amendment of the TIP is an option, if the body did not want to incorporate the changes into Amendment Two. If refocusing this funding does not jeopardize projects that would otherwise be moving forward, he said that he would be comfortable addressing this as a comment on Amendment Two and voting on the amendment at this meeting.

T. Bent asked if the reduction of funds in the *Station Accessibility* line item would affect scheduled improvements to any specific transit station this year. J. Cosgrove replied that the schedule for those improvements has not yet been finalized.

D. Mohler asked if the MBTA is certain that the federal reauthorization is certain to fill the gap in funding that will be created in the *Station Accessibility* line item. J. Cosgrove indicated yes.

Members voted on the motion to amend TIP Amendment Two by shifting \$7.6 million from the *Station Accessibility* line item in the FFY 2012 element to the *Track Right of Way* line item, in order to fully-fund the *Haverhill Double Track Program*. The motion carried.

Members agreed that this change would not require the TIP amendment to be released for another public review period.

Members then voted on the motion to approve TIP Amendment Two as amended. The motion carried.

7. Meeting Minutes—Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 21 was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham) (Dennis Giombetti). The motion carried.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 28 was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

**8. Work Program for MassDOT Road Inventory Supplemental Grant—
*Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation
Planning Staff***

Members were presented with the work program for the *MassDOT Road Inventory Supplemental Grant*. This work program would enrich the data in MassDOT's Road Inventory database, so that the database contains proper street names and other new information, and thereby improve the MassDOT Registry of Motor Vehicles Division's (RMV) Crash Data System. This work will allow for more accurate reporting of the locations of motor vehicle crashes.

CTPS will hire two interns for this project. This project is in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and will be funded with a special grant from MassDOT.

A motion to approve the work program for the *MassDOT Road Inventory Supplemental Grant* was made by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent), and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

During a discussion of the motion D. Crowley asked why MassDOT chose CTPS to do this work rather than to release a Request for Proposals. D. Mohler replied that CTPS was chosen in the interest of time and cost and because of the quality of CTPS's data work.

Laura Wiener, At-Large Town (Town of Arlington), asked if the results of this work would be transferable to the municipal level to benefit their crash reporting. K. Quackenbush and D. Mohler replied yes; the project would enrich the existing crash reporting system to which municipal police report crashes.

J. Gillooly asked if staff would be working with police on this project. K. Quackenbush replied that staff would be interacting only with databases. D. Mohler added that it is the RMV that interacts with the police to ensure that crash data is reported correctly.

**9. Work Program for MBTA Transit Contribution to the Reduction of
Greenhouse Gases— *Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central
Transportation Planning Staff***

Members were presented with the work program for the *MBTA Transit Contribution to the Reduction of Greenhouse Gases*. This study would be conducted for the MBTA, which participates in the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Sustainability Commitment.

CTPS would conduct an analysis to illustrate the value of transit in terms of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission savings. Staff would conduct six model runs. The first would model the existing MBTA system, to establish a baseline. Four other runs would model the system minus each mode in turn (bus, commuter rail, etc.) to show the impact on GHG emissions if that mode were not available to transit users. The last run would model the transportation system if the entirety of the MBTA services were not operating. The model runs would produce a set of travel measures and GHG metrics. The study would focus on the pollutants carbon dioxide and methane.

A great deal of analysts' judgment will be applied to the model results to ensure that they are sensible. Rather extreme scenarios are going to be modeled, and it will be more important than ever before to make sure that the results presented are credible. Also, it will be important to stress that the travel behavior modeled would be that which would be most likely to occur in the immediate aftermath of shutting down one part of the MBTA. Longer term, travelers could adjust where they work, shop, or live, as well as their auto ownership, if the transit system were to be drastically altered for a long time.

The work program would be funded by the MBTA. It is not included in the UPWP, but due to delays in the startup of one other project, there is a window now during which the work could be performed without delaying any pre-existing projects

Members discussed the work program.

Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, asked if APTA provided any guidelines for such studies, so that comparisons could be made nationwide. K. Quackenbush explained that staff would use transit metrics that APTA has agreed to, so the study results should be consistent with other studies.

David Koses, At-Large City (City of Newton), asked if this study would help prepare the regional travel model for potential future model runs that would test MBTA service cuts. K. Quackenbush replied that the model is well equipped to run such tests now. He added that staff will be able to learn from this study and be better prepared for future work involving the study of GHG emissions and the transportation system.

David Kucharsky, At-Large Town (Town of Lexington), asked if this study involves analyses similar to those done for the MBTA fare hikes. K. Quackenbush replied that the fare hike scenarios tested significant cuts in MBTA bus service, but not to the extent that this study would model the total elimination of each mode in turn.

D. Mohler asked if the study would involve testing the removal of services provided by other Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs), or only those of the MBTA. K. Quackenbush replied that the model includes the RTA services, but the study would only test the removal of MBTA services.

D. Mohler asked if the study would result in changes to the regional model. K. Quackenbush replied that some future such changes could occur, but that the study would definitely enhance staff's understanding of travel phenomenon under extreme assumptions.

E. Bourassa asked if the model can estimate bicycle trips. K. Quackenbush replied that bicycle trips are captured under the "non-motorized mode" category, which includes bicycling and walking trips. Currently, extra steps must be taken to separate the bicycle trips from the walking trips. The next generation of models will separate the two modes. Attention was given to this matter when the Statewide Household Travel Survey was designed. Data gathered during the survey is being incorporated into the model now and will be active in the model next year.

A motion to approve the work program for *MBTA Transit Contribution to the Reduction of Greenhouse Gases* was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

10. Work Program for Federal Transit Administration Formula Grant Funding Review— *Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

Members were presented with the work program for the *Federal Transit Administration Formula Grant Funding Review*. This work program would be conducted for the MBTA, which is interested in better understanding how the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) formula funding program works. FTA releases formula funds annually to Urbanized Areas (UZA). Those funds are allocated based on data from the National Transit Database (NTD) and the census. The RTAs in the Boston UZA have an agreement about how those funds are split.

CTPS would prepare a memorandum about the formula funding programs and build a spreadsheet tool. This tool would allow the MBTA to test scenarios to determine the following: the impact on the MBTA budget if the formulas were altered; level of service changes that might alter the NTD data and result in changes to the MBTA's allocation; or the impact to the MBTA of changes in the overall amount of formula funds.

This study would be funded by the MBTA. It is not in the UPWP, but the MBTA client is very flexible as to when it is fit into the staff's work program, and that will be accomplished without causing delay to any pre-existing project.

During a discussion of this work program, J. Cosgrove noted that the RTAs in this region have not revisited the split agreement for formula funds since the 2000 census. This work program would inform any discussion about the split.

D. Mohler asked about how many transit agencies' data would be included in the spreadsheet and about plans for the maintenance of the spreadsheet. K. Quackenbush replied that the spreadsheet would be set up with contemporary data from all the transit agencies in the country that report to the NTD. There are no plans for CTPS to maintain this spreadsheet in the coming years. The spreadsheet would be turned over to the MBTA, and it would be their responsibility to refresh the data in it for use in future years.

A motion to approve the work program for the *Federal Transit Administration Formula Grant Funding Review* was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried. MassDOT (Secretary) (D. Mohler) abstained.

11. MPO Elections Update—*Eric Bourassa, Transportation Director, MAPC*

The annual MPO election will be held on October 24 at the MAPC Fall Council meeting. MAPC and the MBTA Advisory Board will oversee the election.

The seats of the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) and the South Shore Coalition are open for election this year. Any municipality in those two subregions can run. A candidate municipality must be nominated by any of five municipalities in the MPO region (101 municipalities). Nominations are due by September 28. Ballots will be mailed thereafter. A Candidates' Forum will be held on October 10.

In response to members' requests, a schedule of members' terms will be distributed.

12. Review of MPO Memorandum of Understanding—*David Mohler, Chair*

According to its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the MPO must review its MOU annually. Members were asked to review the document and inform staff if they have any suggested amendments to the document. The MPO will address this issue next month.

13. Update on Federal Reauthorization—*Guy Bresnahan, Office of Transportation Planning, MassDOT*

G. Bresnahan gave a preliminary briefing on the federal reauthorization of the transportation legislation. Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) was signed into law on July 6, 2012. Key points from his presentation are summarized below.

MAP-21 provides \$118 billion for highway, transit, and transit safety programs through September 30, 2014. It maintains highway and transit funding at current levels adjusted for inflation in 2014, and it maintains the 80/20 highway/transit funding split. It contains no federal earmarks. Highway funds apportioned to Massachusetts are \$588 million in FFY 2013 and \$593 million in FFY 2014.

Highway programs have been consolidated into four core programs: the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP), Surface Transportation Program (STP), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ). MAP-21 expands the TIFIA credit assistance program significantly. It includes provisions for project streamlining and promotes performance-based investment decisions.

The NHPP consolidates the Interstate Maintenance (IM) and National Highway System (NHS) programs and the on-system portion of the Highway Bridge Program. States are required to set performance goals to improve the condition and performance of the NHS consistent with national goals and performance management measures.

The STP is expanded to include off-system bridges as well as certain consolidated programs authorized under the new Transportation Alternatives Program including enhancements, recreational trails, ferry boats and terminal facilities and, Safe Routes to School. A new category has been added to address “boulevards and other roadways largely in the right of way of former Interstate routes and divided highways.” Fifty percent of the Transportation Alternatives Program funds are sub allocated to MPOs with populations over 200,000 to operate competitive grant programs.

The CMAQ and HSIP programs remain intact. The current prohibition on the use of CMAQ funds for the construction of single-occupancy vehicle lanes has been removed.

States are guaranteed a 95% rate of return on their Highway Trust Fund contributions. When a state receives its distribution of highway funds, the CMAQ and Metropolitan

Planning set-asides are taken “off the top” and the balance distributed to the remaining programs, with 63.7% for NHPP, 29.3% for STP, and 7% for HSIP.

Within 18 months of the enactment of MAP-21, the U.S. DOT will establish performance measures in consultation with states, MPOs, and other stakeholders. States will be required to establish performance targets within one year of final rulemaking. MPOs will be required to establish regional performance targets in coordination with the state within 180 days after the adoption of state performance targets.

Other highway provisions include: the establishment of the National Bridge and Tunnel Inventory and Standards Program; the establishment of a National Freight Policy; an increase in federal share for freight mobility projects; the categorization of the Ferry Boat and Terminal Facilities Program as a formula program; and the redefining of the Metropolitan and Statewide Planning Process as a performance-based process.

There are seven national goals set for the highway system: safety (reducing fatalities and injuries); infrastructure condition (maintaining the system in a state of good repair); congestion reduction; system reliability (improving efficiency of the system); freight movement and economic vitality; environmental sustainability; and reduced project delivery delays.

On the transit side, MAP-21 recalibrates distribution formulas for several core transit programs and requires recipients of funds to develop Transit Asset Management Plans. MAP-21 expands the use of performance measures and targets to evaluate transit system condition and performance. Apportionments for Massachusetts are not available at this time.

Changes to the transit program include: the categorization of the Bus and Bus Facilities and State of Good Repair programs as formula programs; the incorporation of the JARC program as part of the Section 5307 formula program; the incorporation of the Elderly and Disabled and New Freedom programs into a single Section 5310 program; the replacement of the Fixed Guideway Modernization Program with a new State of Good Repair program; the establishment of the High Intensity Motorbus State of Good Repair Program; and a streamlining of the New Starts process.

The next steps are for Congress to approve final funding authorizations through the annual budget appropriations process. It does not appear as though Congress will act before September 30, 2012, however, and a continuing resolution may be required. FHWA and FTA will also need to develop implementing regulations for MAP-21.

Members discussed this information.

L. Wiener raised the issue of how the MAP-21 changes would impact the MPO's programming of the FFY 2013 TIP and whether projects would be delayed. G. Bresnahan noted that the MPO should not expect that funding for projects programmed in the FFY 2013 TIP would be affected, and that the MPO should expect similar funding levels in FFY 2013 as it had in FFY 2012. He emphasized that MPOs will want to be cognizant of the national goals set out in MAP-21 and be aware that states will be held accountable for their investment decisions.

J. Gillooly asked if MAP-21 addresses the issue of pre-existing earmarks. G. Bresnahan explained that there is no language in the bill regarding rescissions to existing earmarks. Existing earmarks would be preserved as long as proponents are actively implementing them.

D. Mohler addressed a question about bridges. He explained that on-system bridges are those that were part of the NHS (which has been absorbed into the NHPP program) and are federal-aid eligible. Off-system bridges are those on local roads that are not federal-aid eligible. Off-system bridges are now federal-aid eligible under the STP program.

T. Bent asked if the streamlining of the New Starts process would affect the application of the *Green Line Extension* project. D. Mohler stated that MassDOT does not expect that the project will be affected.

14. Members' Items

E. Bourassa announced that the Hubway bike share system is expanding to Cambridge, Brookline, and Somerville. New stations have been installed in Cambridge's Central Square and Harvard Square. A bicycling event will be held on August 8. T. Bent added that new stations are being installed in Somerville as well.

15. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Everett)	James Errickson
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Laura Wiener
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	David Kucharsky
City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)	Lara Mérida
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jim Gillooly Tom Kadzis
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler David Anderson
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Joe Cosgrove
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa Eric Halvorsen
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Denise Deschamps
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Ed Tarallo
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Steve Olanoff
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)	Christine Stickney
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Dennis Crowley

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Benjamin Bloomenthal	MBTA
Pat Brown	
Rep. Will Brownsberger	State Representative
Idva Calno	Boston Transportation Department
Callida Cenizal	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Paul D. Guertin	Coler and Colantonio Engineers
Joe Onorato	MassDOT Highway Division
Chris Reilly	Town of Lincoln
Kevin Sheehan	Town of Holbrook

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
Daniel Amstutz
Maureen Kelly
Robin Mannion
Anne McGahan
Elizabeth Moore
Sean Pfalzer
Mary Ellen Sullivan
Pam Wolfe
