

# Memorandum for the Record

## Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

### February 7, 2013 Meeting

10:00 AM – 12:15 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Clinton Bench, 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 the work programs for the *MetroWest Regional Transit Authority Transit Planning Assistance* and the *Massachusetts Turnpike Boston Ramps* studies
- approve the minutes of the meeting of January 17
- concur with the selection of two roadway corridors to be studied under the work program for *Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment – FFY 2013*

### Meeting Agenda

#### 1. Public Comments

Wig Zamore, Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership and Mystic View Task Force, expressed concern about potential dangers to environmental justice communities in the Inner Core from trains carrying ethanol.

#### 2. Chair's Report—*Clinton Bench, MassDOT*

C. Bench reminded members and attendees that MassDOT's proposed plan, *The Way Forward: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation Plan*, is available on MassDOT's website. The plan is intended to keep the transportation system in a state of good repair and to promote economic development.

#### 3. Committee Chairs' Reports - *Clinton Bench and Callida Cenizal, MassDOT*

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee will meet at approximately 1 PM today. The committee will be discussing the work completed by staff during the first quarter of FFY 2013 and the Universe of Projects to be considered in the upcoming development of the FFY 2014 UPWP. All are welcome to attend.

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

The Advisory Council will meet on February 13. The agenda includes presentations on the MPO's Transportation Equity work and the Regional HOV Lane System Planning Study. The Advisory Council will also discuss changes to its bylaws as recommended by the MPO.

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

K. Quackenbush announced that Lee Morrison, Chief Technical Editor of Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), will be retiring in May after a 36-year career. He noted that this retirement will be a tremendous loss to CTPS and lauded L. Morrison for his work, which ensured that good quality materials were presented to the MPO. C. Bench also expressed the MPO's appreciation for his service to the MPO.

**6. Work Programs—Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff**

K. Quackenbush introduced two new work programs and addressed questions.

***MetroWest Regional Transit Authority Transit Planning Assistance***

The work program for the *MetroWest Regional Transit Authority Transit Planning Assistance* represents the second round of service planning work that CTPS would conduct for the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA). CTPS first provided planning services to the MWRTA in 2008 and 2009, shortly after the MWRTA was formed. The result of that body of work was a slate of recommendations, several of which were implemented by the MWRTA.

For this round of planning assistance, CTPS would use the MWRTA's data to review ridership and schedule performance and then document changes that have occurred since 2008 and 2009 on a route by route basis. Then CTPS would make recommendations concerning potential changes or extensions to the MWRTA's bus routes.

This study is included in the UPWP and would be funded by the MPO.

Members discussed the work program and asked questions.

Laura Wiener, At-Large Town of Arlington, suggested that this type of work might be done for all of the RTAs in the region. K. Quackenbush and C. Bench reported that CTPS did reach out to the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA) to let that RTA

know about the planning assistance that CTPS could provide. CATA did not pursue the offer. The Boston MPO also provides planning services to the MBTA. Neighboring MPOs provide planning assistance to the other RTAs that provide service within the Boston MPO region (the Greater Attleboro Taunton RTA and the Lowell Regional RTA, for instance).

James Errickson, At-Large City of Everett, asked whether community outreach is included as part of this work program. K. Quackenbush replied that CTPS staff would be available to participate in outreach efforts led by the MWRTA. CTPS's work would be largely confined to a technical advisory role.

Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), asked if staff would be available for outreach after the study recommendations are released to the public. K. Quackenbush replied that staff would be available under the scope of work and if funding is available. C. Bench added that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires recipients of federal funds to conduct a robust public outreach process prior to implementing any service changes. Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), also noted that the MWRTA conducts an outreach program to the community it serves.

David Koses, At-Large City of Newton, asked staff to keep him apprised of the work considering that the work program discusses a possible expansion of the MWRTA's bus routes, which could affect Newton.

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), requested that CTPS coordinate with MAPC given that MAPC is conducting planning around the Framingham Technical Park area which involves making connections from businesses to transit and the commuter rail.

A motion to approve the work program for the *MetroWest Regional Transit Authority Transit Planning Assistance* study was made by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent), and seconded by the MBTA (Joe Cosgrove). The motion carried.

### ***Massachusetts Turnpike Boston Ramps Study***

The work program for the *Massachusetts Turnpike Boston Ramps* study would support MassDOT's planning for the possible provision of additional ramps from the Massachusetts Turnpike to the Back Bay and Fenway areas of Boston. MassDOT has been examining the possibility of adding new ramps as well as alternatives for "grounding" the Bowker Overpass.

About two years ago, CTPS provided travel forecasting assistance associated with the possible alternatives. MassDOT is now requesting that CTPS subject those forecasts to traffic analysis, and that is the chief focus of the work program. In addition, CTPS would provide preliminary design concept refinements and graphics, cost estimates for the alternatives, and updated data regarding crashes and transit ridership.

The study will be funded by MassDOT State Planning and Research (SPR) contracts.

Members discussed the work program and asked questions.

John Romano, MassDOT Highway Division, asked whether CTPS would be conducting new traffic counts. K. Quackenbush replied no, but noted that CTPS would be updating the method it uses to develop the base year for the existing conditions analysis.

Christine Stickney, South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree), asked for more information about the funding for the project, given that one of the funding sources is listed on the work program as a "Future MassDOT SPR Contract." K. Quackenbush clarified that the currently operating MassDOT SPR Contract will fund the project through March, and then the next SPR contract will be activated in April. Robin Mannion, Executive Deputy Director of CTPS, added that staff expects \$20,000 of the current SPR contract to be applied to this project with the balance coming from the future contract. No MPO funds will be used for this project.

S. Olanoff asked for more information regarding the change in methodology for the traffic analysis work. K. Quackenbush explained that there have been major updates to the *Highway Capacity Manual*, which contains all of the technical methods used for traffic analyses. This document is routinely updated by panels of traffic engineers. MassDOT would like CTPS to update the base year analysis to incorporate the updates.

S. Olanoff asked how updating transit data relates to the project. K. Quackenbush replied that MassDOT has asked CTPS to update this data as an ancillary task. CTPS will not be using that data to conduct its traffic analyses. C. Bench added that the transit data will help MassDOT answer questions about transit demand and capacity, and travel patterns in the study area.

A motion to approve the work program for the *Massachusetts Turnpike Boston Ramps* study was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Paul Regan), and seconded by the City of Boston (Jim Gillooly). The motion carried.

## **7. MPO Meeting Minutes—*Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff***

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 17 was made by the North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) (Ed Tarallo), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (T. Bent). The motion carried. The Massachusetts Port Authority (Lourenço Dantas) abstained.

## **8. Mode Shift Presentation—*Trey Wadsworth, MassDOT***

T. Wadsworth gave a PowerPoint presentation on MassDOT's program to reduce the single occupant vehicle mode share and to increase the mode share for transit and active transportation modes.

MassDOT adopted its GreenDOT policy in 2010 with the objectives of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, promoting healthy transportation options, and supporting smart growth. It established a mode shift goal in October 2012 and adopted the GreenDOT implementation plan in December 2012. GreenDOT is part of the policy framework formed by the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) and the Healthy Transportation Compact.

GreenDOT incorporates seven sustainability themes under the following topics: air; energy; land; materials; planning, policy, and design (including mode shift); waste; and water. Goals under the planning, policy and design theme include designing a multi-modal transportation system, promoting healthy transportation and livable communities, and tripling the mode share of bicycling, transit, and walking. Each goal has associated tasks and performance indicators for the short-term, mid-term, and long-term.

MassDOT has identified four tasks to achieve the goal of tripling the distance people travel by walking, bicycling, and riding transit by 2030:

- connect land use planning with transportation planning and investments
- stabilize travel demand growth on roadways from single occupancy vehicles
- collect data regarding factors influencing mode choices and utilize better planning tools
- increase training opportunities on GreenDOT and mode shift

The reasons for making a mode shift include the following:

- Demographics and consumer preference: Young and older customers are demanding and requiring different travel options.
- Public health: There is a need to provide healthy travel options and to reduce reliance on autos, which contribute to negative health outcomes.

- Economic growth: Customers need options due to unstable fuel costs and road congestion has a negative impact on economic productivity.
- Sustainable transportation: the GWSA requires a reduction in GHG emissions.

The measure that will be used to determine if the mode shift goal is being met will be “person miles travelled” (PMT). The baseline for this measure will be determined using federal data on vehicle miles and transit passenger miles travelled, and a formula for estimating bicycling and walking PMT. PMT can be measured annually, and it can link to GHG emission factors and land use patterns.

Currently, 2.4% of trips are by the walking, bicycling, and transit modes. This is the baseline for measurement. The goal is to increase this mode share to 4.3% by 2020 and to 7.4% by 2030.

MPOs can help support GreenDOT policies in the following ways:

- measuring GHGs in project planning and design
- considering GHG emissions in project selection
- considering adding trees along streets when doing corridor studies
- considering wildlife protection
- supporting Complete Streets in project designs and studies
- starting environmental and waste reduction programs in the office

Specific actions that the MPO can implement include the following:

- increasing delivery of Complete Streets
- increasing bicycle parking
- increasing connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian networks
- helping RTAs increase system performance
- incorporating healthy transportation options into studies
- encouraging bicycling, transit and walking, rather than simply accommodating those modes
- connecting land use planning and transportation planning more meaningfully
- stabilizing single occupancy vehicle travel demand growth
- advocating for GreenDOT and helping communities make their transportation systems sustainable
- increasing low impact developments
- considering climate change adaptation

Through the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and technical assistance to communities, MPOs can identify activities that support GreenDOT, measure projects for their support of GreenDOT, set a vision for sustainable transportation, and help communities to incorporate sustainability into their plans.

Following the presentation, members discussed this topic and asked questions.

J. Gillooly expressed support for the mode shift goal and suggested steps that could be taken to help project proponents move more quickly to implement projects that incorporate Complete Streets concepts. He noted that project proponents often must request design exceptions in order to incorporate Complete Streets concepts into projects. He suggested that MassDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) consider changes to the design review process to allow proponents to avoid the rigorous process of securing exceptions for Complete Streets projects.

E. Bourassa expressed agreement and added that the conversation about supporting Complete Streets should also occur at the MassDOT District level and be relayed to those responsible for developing right of way plans.

C. Bench spoke of the benefits of having this new GreenDOT policy statement, which will serve to ease the way for changes to internal procedures and rules within MassDOT.

Michael Chong, FHWA, noted that FHWA is open to working with MassDOT in order to streamline the design process.

P. Regan inquired about the formula and source of data MassDOT uses to estimate bicycling and walking PMT and about the new formula that is expected. T. Wadsworth explained that currently those PMT estimates are a function of transit usage. The data used is from the American Community Survey, which records work trips only and thereby misses about 85% of all trips. In the future, data from the recently conducted Statewide Household Travel Survey will be used. This survey captured data on all types of trips.

Richard Canale, At-Large Town of Lexington, asked whether MassDOT will adjust the baseline used to measure mode shift when the Statewide Household Travel Survey data is incorporated. T. Wadsworth replied yes. The base year will remain at 2010, which is when the survey was conducted.

R. Canale inquired as to how well the survey captured multi-modal trips. T. Wadsworth replied that the survey captured data for every link of a person's trip. The survey included 15,000 households in the region. He expressed confidence in the quality of the data.

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), inquired about the extent to which MPO staff has incorporated GreenDOT policies into the TIP and UPWP planning criteria. K. Quackenbush replied that the MPO staff has discussed GreenDOT policies with MassDOT and that the policies are incorporated in the planning criteria. He noted that the development of the FFY 2014 UPWP will include discussion of projects that support both GreenDOT and the MPO's visions and policies. The evaluation criteria for the UPWP are consistent with MassDOT's and MAPC's objectives.

E. Bourassa asked T. Wadsworth to discuss the incorporation of GreenDOT into the state's MPO's LRTPs. T. Wadsworth explained that MassDOT is calling for MPOs to develop a strategic regional vision for zero growth in single occupancy vehicle travel and GHG reductions by 2015. This strategy will be integral to the next versions of the LRTPs.

L. Dantas raised the issue of how the MPO will align its visions and goals with GreenDOT, and the potential changes to the LRTP that would be required to focus more heavily on the non-auto modes. He noted that the MPO is responsible for planning and programming, but that it has little oversight of design or implementation of projects. He asked what specific actions the MPO could take to help attain MassDOT's vision. T. Wadsworth replied that the MPO could focus transportation investment to areas most suitable for growth such as densely-developed nodes.

C. Bench added that over the next year, MassDOT will help to better articulate strategies that it hopes MPOs will implement to help achieve the mode shift goal. The Boston Region MPO will have a significant role in reducing GHG emissions in the state. One strategy that MassDOT is considering includes the development of a bus rapid transit plan to complement other transit plans.

K. Quackenbush noted that the MPO can align its decision-making with the efforts of other agencies. Recent updates to the TIP evaluation criteria incorporate the land use goals of MAPC's MetroFuture plan, for example, and the MPO will soon be presented with new proposed performance measures, some of which address mode share.



M. Chong remarked that regulations under the new transportation legislation, MAP-21, are expected in the coming year. There will be a notice of proposed rulemaking on regulations possibly in August or September. MAP-21 is performance-driven.

D. Giombetti discussed the growth potential that exists in some suburban areas. Given that very densely developed areas will offer the largest impact when mode shift is measured, he noted the importance of recognizing the mode shift that may be achieved on the smaller suburban scale as well. T. Wadsworth reinforced that point by discussing the development of Priority Development Areas and Priority Protection Areas, a process through which communities identified places where they would like to see growth and areas to be preserved.

T. Bent discussed the need for the state to conduct outreach to residents to inform them about the goals of GreenDOT given that its implementation will have impacts at the neighborhood level. He remarked that the expansion of bicycling infrastructure (such as the addition of cycle tracks, for example) often requires the removal of street parking, which has impacts for residents and business. He emphasized that the public needs to be informed of the goal and the plan to achieve it.

J. Cosgrove asked about the progress staff has made toward being able to measure how investments in transit reliability associated with state of good repair relate to ridership. K. Quackenbush replied that staff has recently completed some work on this topic and is proposing further work in the FFY 2014 UPWP. Staff is actively looking for ways to develop meaningful relationships between reliability and ridership.

Members of the public then had the opportunity to comment.

W. Zamore called for MassDOT to consider black carbon as it aims to reduce GHGs. He informed the MPO that a prominent scientific report has been released that names black carbon as a primary GHG emission for control. Diesel fuel is a source of black carbon. He spoke about the health impacts of black carbon which, he said, has been identified as a cause of lung cancer.

Regarding MassDOT's mode shift goal, W. Zamore stated that the plan for tripling transit ridership must be backed up with funding. He also noted that attention must be paid to reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) at the same time as transit ridership is expanded. He suggested measuring average miles travelled. He also suggested doing test cases in areas where the state is currently investing in transit.

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation, asked for an explanation of how MassDOT developed its baseline figures and how it determined the specific goals for

increasing each of the three modes – walking, bicycling, and transit. T. Wadsworth replied that the figures were derived by holding the auto PMT constant to 2030 and letting the other modes rise.

## **9. Transportation Improvement Program Update—Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff**

S. Pfalzer provided an update on the development of the Universe of Projects for the FFYs 2014 – 17 TIP. Members were provided with a list of known projects, vying for funding in this TIP. The projects on this list were compiled over several years and updated this year by working with TIP contacts, conducting outreach to the MAPC subregions and through workshops to identify community priorities.

The list contains projects that have been programmed on the FFYs 2013 – 16 TIP. It also contains projects that staff will evaluate in February, including nine new projects for which staff has recently acquired functional design reports (FDRs). Also included are projects that are at the conceptual or pre-25% design phase. Staff has not evaluated these projects since they do not have FDRs.

The Universe of Projects list indicates project proponents, project types, estimated costs, design status, availability of FDRs, and the projects' status in the TIP and LRTP (year or time band programmed). S. Pfalzer explained the project design stages noting that the environmental review, design process, and acquisition of right of way occurs at the 25% design stage, then plans are refined at the 75% design stage.

S. Pfalzer noted that members have been given a revised version of the Universe of Projects list with several projects added.

Staff will post the project evaluation results as well as the GHG emission estimates for projects by March 4.

Following the presentation, members asked questions.

E. Bourassa asked if public hearings have been held for several projects that are at the 75% design stage. S. Pfalzer replied that projects at that design stage would have gone through a public hearing.

E. Bourassa asked if the City of Woburn has held design hearings for the *Woburn – Bridge Replacement*, *New Boston Street over the MBTA*, and *Woburn – Reconstruction of Montvale Avenue* projects, which are both at the 25% design stage. E. Tarallo replied no, and stated that the city is working with its MassDOT Highway District office.

M. Chong expressed concern that there are some projects programmed in FFY 2013 at the 25% design stage.

In closing, S. Pfalzer alerted members to a chart that staff prepared at members' request. It provides the data staff used to create a chart showing a comparison of the percentage of the region's employment, population, daily vehicle miles traveled, and target program funding by community type.

**10. Memorandum: Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways: Selection of Study Locations— Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff, and Chen-Yuan Wang, MPO Staff**

In October, the MPO gave staff approval to begin the work program for *Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment – FFY 2013*, and asked that staff inform them of the corridors that they would select to study. At this meeting, members were provided with a memorandum titled, *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways: Selection of Study Locations*, which describes the process staff used to select the corridors for study.

C. Wang gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the selection process, which aimed to identify subregional priorities for improving roadways (arterials and collectors) that have issues associated with safety, access, and mobility. To do this, staff reviewed feedback received from subregions during outreach conducted for the UPWP and LRTP, gathered information from MassDOT, and assembled crash data.

Staff reviewed 20 candidate locations (listed in the memorandum) and reviewed them with consideration of the following criteria: safety conditions (vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian crashes), multimodal significance (supporting transit, bicycle, or pedestrian activity), subregional significance (carrying a significant proportion of subregional vehicle, bicycle or pedestrian traffic), subregional priority, and implementation potential (availability of funding for project design and implementation).

Two locations were identified for further study:

- Routes 127A and 127 in Gloucester and Rockport (the Cape Ann Loop)
- Route 3A in Cohasset and Scituate (from the MBTA commuter rail station in Cohasset to Henry Turner Bailey Road in Scituate)

Both locations meet the objectives of the study and support the objective of their respective subregions. Improvements to the Cape Ann Loop, part of the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway, are the highest priority for the North Shore Task Force subregion. The

Essex National Heritage Commission recently obtained state bond funding for improving the safety, access, and mobility of the byway. The South Shore Coalition and the Towns of Cohasset and Scituate are in favor of a corridor study on Route 3A. The needs on this corridor are identified in the recently completed Cohasset Master Plan.

Staff proposes to spend 60% of the work program's budget in FFY 2013 and 40% in FFY 2014.

Members asked questions about the proposed study locations.

L. Wiener asked if the study would include a focus on bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access. K. Quackenbush replied that one of the selection criteria considered multimodal significance. In selecting the location, staff gave priority to corridors that incorporate bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes.

L. Wiener asked if there are bicycle lanes on routes on Route 127. C. Wang noted that the route is a popular area for bicyclists. Although the right of way is narrow, but there is interest in finding a way to redesign the roadway to better accommodate bicycling. E. Bourassa added that the Cape Ann Loop is considered as a bicycle route by the Essex National Heritage Commission.

C. Bench asked if Eastern Avenue and Main Street (Route 127) in Rockport would be part of the study. C. Wang replied no.

Members reached consensus and gave staff approval to study the two locations.

## **11.Members Items**

P. Wolfe announced that the next MPO meeting will be held on February 21.

T. Bent announced that the Chambers of Commerce for Medford, Somerville, and Winchester will be holding a transportation forum. More details will be forthcoming.

C. Cenizal announced that the UPWP Committee will meet at 12:30 PM today.

P. Regan announced that the next MBTA Advisory Board meeting will be on February 19. The MBTA General Manager will be attending and the agenda will include an overview of FFY 2014 MBTA budget.

## **12.Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

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## Attendance

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### Members

### Representatives and Alternates

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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)	Richard Canale
City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)	Lara Mérida
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jim Gillooly
	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Michael Chong
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Clinton Bench
	Callida Cenizal
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Joe Cosgrove
Massachusetts Port Authority	Lourenço Dantas
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)	Richard Reed
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
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)	Tom O'Rourke

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<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT District 3
Timothy Kochan	MassDOT District 5
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Meridith L. Mooney	Boston University
Steven Smalley	Office of State Senator McGee
Trey Wadsworth	MassDOT
Wig Zamore	Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership / Mystic View Task Force

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**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director  
Daniel Amstutz  
David Fargen  
Maureen Kelly  
Robin Mannion  
Anne McGahan  
Elizabeth Moore  
Scott Peterson  
Sean Pfalzer  
Michelle Scott  
Pam Wolfe

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