



Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

May 14, 2014 Meeting

3:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

DRAFT Meeting Summary

1. Introductions

David Montgomery, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 8)

2. Chair's Report - David Montgomery, Chair

D. Montgomery reminded the Advisory Council that at the upcoming May 15, 2014 MPO meeting, the MPO will be voting on the Draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Draft Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for public review. This is a time for the Advisory Council to provide input on the drafts.

3. Committee Reports and Upcoming Activities

This meeting was preceded by one of the Advisory Council's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Committee. The Committee discussed the schedule of the new LRTP over the next several months and it examined the Advisory Council's role in providing assistance in this process.

Freight Committee

Upcoming activities include a Freight Committee meeting from 1-2:30 PM on June 11, 2014. The meeting will precede the regular Advisory Council meeting.

TIP/UPWP Committee Report: Comment Letter

M. Gowing, Vice Chair, summarized the meeting of the Advisory Council's TIP/UPWP Committee. The Committee recommended that the Advisory Council's TIP and UPWP comment letter focus on broad policy issues rather than specific individual projects.

The Committee also recommended that MassDOT select projects that are highly rated in the Boston Region's evaluation list and that the selected projects are geographically distributed throughout the region where possible.

Committee members felt that the state ought to cover some of the cost overruns that occur in the design process and that MPO target funds should not have to absorb all of these costs. The state should be urged to keep projects on schedule to help keep costs down. The Committee suggested that scope-change project cost increases also

be absorbed directly by the state. The MPO should not have to absorb the cost increases that resulted from problems with cost estimates performed by the state.

A member wondered how the criteria are weighted for smaller projects, pointing out that in the last year of the TIP only three projects were funded, presumably due to the MPO funding of the Green Line Extension (GLX) project. He questioned the use of MPO funds to finance such big-ticket projects.

Chairman D. Montgomery reflected on balancing the needs of projects that have been rescheduled and LRTP projects that have been awaiting TIP funding for many years only to be bumped off the TIP by larger projects. With so few projects forecast in the TIP, he felt it could be difficult to garner Advisory Council membership enthusiasm.

4. FFYs 2015-18 Transportation Improvement Program Development - *Pam Wolfe, Manager, Certification Activities, MPO Staff*

Pam Wolfe discussed the timeline of the development process for FFYs (Federal Fiscal Years) 2015-18 TIP. The TIP is a four-year, scoped document that identifies and programs federal funds coming into the region and serves as the implementing document for the LRTP. TIP development includes outreach to the municipalities and MAPC Subregions. This involves bringing in new data and updated project information shared with project proponents. MPO staff evaluates the projects and shares the results with area municipalities who provide their perspective on the program. MPO staff compiles a "First Tier" list of recommended projects for the MPO. The MPO then decides which projects will be included in the draft TIP before releasing the document for a 30-day public review period. Upon consideration of public comments to the draft TIP, a final TIP is endorsed by the MPO and the document is prepared and distributed to the federal agencies for their review and approval.

MassDOT sets a priority to a number of highway, transit and regional transit authority projects that are presented to the MPO as statewide priority projects. This includes the state's \$77 million Accelerated Bridge Program that funds large-project repairs and maintenance to the region's major bridges. Of the total \$600 million federal funding coming to Massachusetts, statewide funds represent roughly \$523 million which is matched with state funds. Approximately one-third of the total matched funds, \$159 million in FFY 2015, are programmed at the discretion of the various Massachusetts MPOs for their respective regional targets. The TIP document lists the MPO regional target-funded projects along with many of the state projects.

A key component in the development process for the TIP is the Universe of Projects list which identifies all of the projects in the region to be considered for funding. Some projects are only at the conceptual stage of development, others have progressed toward design. At about the 25% design phase, projects will have prepared a Functional Design Report which MPO staff will use as a resource for project evaluations based on TIP criteria. The criteria address the major policy priorities of the MPO including system preservation, livability, mobility, environmental justice, climate change, greenhouse gas

impact, and safety and security. Each category has a rating and the evaluations show which projects will best advance priorities and goals of the MPO. This list helps MPO staff to understand as much about projects as possible, and helps the MPO and MassDOT evaluate the potential benefits of each project, if constructed. This Summary of Evaluated Projects is distributed for consideration by the municipalities prior to the preparation of a final list of projects.

The MPO staff recommendation, including the Overview of Issues in Developing a Staff Recommendation for the Draft FFYs 2015-18 TIP, identifies the status of each project with any schedule changes and which projects have had cost fluctuations. MPO staff seeks to continue funding and programming current MPO-committed projects; cost increases and scheduling adjustments may cause projects to be moved to another FFY. Based on direction from the MPO, staff tries to keep projects in the approved years of the TIP; however, projects might be moved into the future because of cost increases, schedule changes and programming of new projects.

The FFYs 2015-18 TIP will go into effect October 1, 2014, and will fund projects in four separate fiscal years between FFY 2015 and FFY 2018. Issues facing the TIP include funding availability for local projects and the backlog of projects already programmed in the LRTP and awaiting funding. These two concerns limit the number of new projects the MPO can undertake.

Public review sessions for the draft TIP will be held on June 12, 16 and 17. The MPO is scheduled to endorse the final TIP on June 26.

Discussion:

A member asked for clarification on how TIP funds were split. P. Wolfe explained that certain funds were committed to statewide projects that are available for projects in all of the MPOs while other funds are set aside for programming by the local MPOs for projects within their regions.

In response to a member's question on funding for the GLX, P. Wolfe explained that GLX Phase 1 would be state-funded and is not part of the MPO's regional target. Phase 2 is scheduled to be funded by the MPO.

A member inquired as to where people would be able to track projects that have moved from MPO target funding to state funding. P. Wolfe said that such movements would be listed in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which is a compilation of the TIPs for all of the MPOs in the state and is available on MassDOT's website.

In a follow-up question, the member asked if the state-evaluated projects used the same criteria as the MPO. [WAS THERE AN ANSWER TO THIS? IF NOT, DELETE?] If a project were in the TIP for a given year under the MPO but moved to the STIP, the member wondered if the state could adjust project completion dates. P. Wolfe noted that project advertising and completion dates can change and said that sometimes a project may not be ready for advertising by the end of a given FFY even if so programmed in the TIP.

A member asked if it is possible to cap the amount of money allocated to the GLX so that future cost increases do not consume limited MPO funding resources. P. Wolfe said that that is an appropriate item for inclusion in a comment to the MPO.

5. FFY 2015 Unified Planning Work Program Development – *Michelle Scott, MPO Staff*

The annual UPWP is one of the so-called “3C” documents that MPOs are required to produce under federal rules. The UPWP is a companion to the LRTP and the TIP. The TIP focuses on capital projects like constructing or re-constructing roads, bridges and bike paths, while the UPWP is focused on planning dollars that come from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). These funds are to support the decision-making process of the MPO and to conduct planning work identifying transportation needs.

The Boston Region MPO programs its 3C metropolitan planning dollars. The FHWA and FTA planning dollars reflected in the UPWP identify work that will be undertaken by CTPS (in its capacity as MPO staff), and by MAPC for transportation planning activities in the region. CTPS also conducts work on behalf of other agencies in the region including MassDOT, MBTA and Massport, which pay for the work independently.

UPWP funding is much smaller in scale than the TIP budget. Three quarters of the proposed \$6.7 million UPWP budget is federally-funded while other agencies make up the balance.

The UPWP includes ongoing planning work that MPO staff and MAPC conduct from year to year for the MPO’s decision making process. Planning is also completed for products like the LRTP and the TIP.

The UPWP development cycle starts in November. The MPO gathers ideas through contact with residents and municipalities throughout the region. MPO staff held meetings this past year with the Advisory Council and with communities in December, 2013. The TIP and UPWP follow a parallel path to completion. The schedule of activity for the documents is broadly distributed and reviewed.

Staff evaluates the project suggestions that have been received and develops a budget based on available funding. The MPO’s UPWP Committee considers the staff recommendation for funding of projects and in turn recommends to the full MPO its preferences for studies and programs to be funded in the upcoming year.

Representatives of the Advisory Council are active in discussions on project and study selection at the UPWP Committee and regular MPO meetings. A draft UPWP document is subsequently released by the MPO for public circulation and review.

Planning projects included in the UPWP fall into three distinct categories. The first of these is existing work being carried out by CTPS and MAPC and represents “ongoing” projects and studies, limited term studies, and studies that carry-over into the next

UPWP planning year. All these studies support the MPO's ongoing decision making and planning from year to year.

The second category of work included in the UPWP is new studies. The final category is work that is undertaken on behalf of (and paid for by) other transportation agencies.

Work activities are authorized in the UPWP to carry out 3C federal requirements. These activities seek to meet MPO certification requirements, produce an LRTP, a TIP and a UPWP, maintain a regional modeling capability, and support a process for monitoring air quality and traffic congestion.

The MPO engages communities and other stakeholders throughout the region in the transportation planning process through its support for the Public Participation Program which includes many forms of outreach activities, including supporting the Advisory Council.

Through the UPWP, CTPS staff and MAPC provide direct technical assistance programs to municipalities to address issues such as improving roadway problems, improving bicycle and pedestrian access, and working for improved access for mobility-impaired individuals.

Work involving regional transportation modeling contributes to the analysis of current and future transportation issues. Typical studies of this nature include looking into relationships between transportation investments and economic development.

Agency funding of planning studies and activities includes several MassDOT projects undertaken by the MPO staff, with MPO approval. The Ferry Transportation Compact, analysis of particular roadway locations, and support of the state's modeling and data resources are projects funded by agencies but undertaken by MPO staff on such agencies behalf. CTPS conducts modeling and analysis for projects like the South Station Expansion and the South Coast Rail projects.

Other areas of work that include the MPO staff are collecting data, analyzing fare increases, and service planning work for the MBTA. Staff also supports MassDOT and the MBTA's Title VI activities.

The proposed new UPWP projects in the staff recommendation include several projects to be carried forward next year. The MPO's UPWP Committee decides on projects to recommend to the full MPO based on the body of projects called the Universe of Projects. This list is comprised of all the project ideas that have been presented from all sources. The Committee considers how the potential projects support the MPO's visions and policies as documented in the LRTP, and how the studies improve the MPO's knowledge and technical capacity in addressing transportation needs.

The Committee considers if all transportation modes are being addressed in a balanced way throughout the region. Finally, consideration is made regarding the study's potential to turn into a TIP project, as the UPWP is meant to select projects that will be implemented.

M. Scott introduced the proposed new projects as of April 17, 2014. The first three projects focus on roadway improvements:

- Address Safety and Mobility and Access to Sub-regional Priority Roadways
- Low-cost Improvements for Bottleneck Locations
- Priority Corridors for the LRTP Needs Assessment

These projects are reiterations of projects done in the past and they focus on providing recommendations for specific corridors or intersection locations. Some projects focus specifically on active transportation, namely:

- Bicycle Network Gaps Feasibility Evaluations
- The Community and Human Services and Transportation Support

Other projects have a service and systems theme, including:

- Title VI Service Equity Analysis Methodology
- Core Capacity Constraints
- Household Survey Based Travel Profiles and Trends: Selected Policy Topics

Questions and Comments

A member asked if there is room for cities and towns to submit recommendations for the project on addressing safety, mobility and access, M. Scott stated that this program targets issues that are brought forward by the municipalities. Proponents of the project should mention specific safety and access issues they would like to see studied when submitting comments on the Draft UPWP. The MPO can take these specific requests for consideration after the UPWP work commences in October.

In response to a member's question, M. Scott explained that the Freight Planning Action Plan is an ongoing program under the UPWP.

In response to a member's question on freight issues, M. Scott indicated that freight issues will be considered holistically as studies of a given location are undertaken. This would hold true for issues concerning design and placement of crosswalks as well.

M. Scott indicated that the bicycle network gaps feasibility evaluations would include off-road and on-road facilities in response to the member's question.

M. Scott addressed the planning activities and timelines leading up to the completion of the document:

- May 21 – the draft of the UPWP will be online pending the authorization by the MPO to release the document for public review.
- June – the MPO meeting calendar refers to meeting dates and venues for public comment. Comments that are received by the MPO staff will be incorporated into the final draft.
- June 18 – end of the comment period for the Draft UPWP.

- June 26 – UPWP scheduled endorsement by the MPO.

6. TIP/UPWP Committee: *Comment Letter*

D. Montgomery stated that in response to guidance from the Advisory Council's TIP/UPWP Committee, the Advisory Council's TIP and UPWP comment letter to the MPO will include references to satisfaction with and support for the 2015 TIP, support the ongoing freight study and its increased funding level and continued annual funding increases in the future, and highlight the Council's support for studies that identify improvements that become implementable projects.

D. Montgomery will prepare a draft comment letter prior to the June 11 meeting so that the Advisory Council comments can be incorporated into the final drafts of the TIP and UPWP documents.

7. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded at 4:30 PM. The motion passed.

ATTENDANCE

Voting Member Entity

Attendee

Agencies

Executive Office of Elder Affairs
MassRides

Emmett Schmarsow
Catherine Paquette

Municipalities

Acton
Belmont
Cambridge

Marlborough
Millis

Needham
Weymouth

Mike Gowing, Vice Chair
Bob McGaw
Cleo Stoughton; Brian
DeChambeau
Walter Bonin
Dom D'Eramo
David Montgomery, Chair; Rhain
Hoyland
Owen MacDonald

Citizen Groups

American Council of Engineering Companies
Association for Public Transportation
Boston Society of Architects
Boston Society of Civil Engineers
Massachusetts Bus Association
MassBike
MASCO
Riverside Neighborhood Association
WalkBoston

Tom Daley
Barry M. Steinberg
Schuyler Larrabee
Christopher Smith
Mark Sanborn
Chris Porter
Tom Yardley
Marilyn Wellons
John McQueen

MPO & other non-voting

Boston
TRIC

Tom Kadzis
Steve Olanoff

Staff

Pam Wolfe
David Fargen

Michelle Scott
Matt Archer