

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

April 9, 2015 Meeting

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

David Mohler and Steve Woelfel, Chairs, representing Stephanie Pollack, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization agreed to the following:

- use the Recommendation for Prioritizing Lower-cost Improvement Alternative as a baseline for the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) discussion at the upcoming meeting of April 16

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

John Olivieri, MassPIRG, commented on Project Mobility, the proposed public-private partnership project that would add express toll lanes to a 17-mile section of Route 3 South. He called for the MPO to pose critical questions about this project and cited examples of other public-private partnerships in the nation that have proved to be bad deals for the partnering states.

He discussed several examples including the Indiana East-West toll road on Interstate 90, which was plagued by competition issues. He noted that the deal prevented the state from building another highway within ten miles of the toll road for over 50 years and that the state was required to reimburse the private operator of the toll road when tolls were waived during an evacuation. He also pointed to a project in Colorado that required local roads to have stop signs and reduced speed limits in order to reduce competition for the toll facility. And, he discussed a toll lane project on Route 91 in California which the state was forced to buy back due to non-compete and finance issues.

Mr. Olivieri noted that public-private partnerships are often seen as a short-term windfall for a state, but that in the long-term these deals are generally a loss for the state. He discussed studies that found public-private partnerships resulting in lost profits for states, leases that favor the private entity and that inappropriately value the project, and

long-term safety issues resulting from private investors that do not have the incentive to keep the facilities in a state-of-good-repair, particularly toward the end of the lease.

He posed several questions regarding the Route 3 project:

1. How is it preferable to have a middleman finance the capital costs, when studies show that they have higher financing costs?
2. How is the state going to maintain control over policy and planning decisions? What effect will this have on other beneficial projects that might take cars off the road, such expansion of mass transit?
3. How is this project consistent with MassDOT's goals to triple non-driving miles by 2030?
4. Will the private sector have to follow the same public disclosure rules as the Commonwealth? If not what guarantee do we have that peoples' interest are being protected?

Mr. Oliveiri provided a handout to members of an editorial he authored in *The Patriot Ledger*.

Mayor Joseph Curtatone, City of Somerville, thanked the MPO for its support of important regional projects including the *Green Line Extension* project, which has secured a \$1 billion federal commitment, and the *Assembly Square Orange Line Station* in Somerville, which has unlocked \$1.5 billion of private investment and created thousands of new jobs. He discussed the need for more of this type of investment in infrastructure.

Mayor Curtatone expressed, on behalf of members of the Metro Mayors Coalition and other chief elected officials in the region and state, that funding commitments made thus far to projects should be adhered to. The commitments on the TIP should remain on the TIP (barring unique circumstances) to give predictability and clarity to residents and the investor community. He noted that communities with TIP projects have had to vote in advance for bond authorization to leverage the funds to build projects that create jobs and expand the economy. He asked members to keep that in mind moving forward. He thanked members for their work and stated that he looks forward to participating in future discussions.

2. Chair's Report—David Mohler, MassDOT

There was none.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Mike Gowing, Chair, Advisory Council*

The Advisory Council met on April 8 and received an update on the LRTP development. The Advisory Council will be preparing a recommendation to the MPO.

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

There was none.

6. Meeting Minutes

This item was not taken up.

7. Long-Range Transportation Plan—*Anne McGahan and Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff*

K. Quackenbush introduced the discussion on the LRTP by noting that today staff would be presenting the LRTP project evaluations and two alternatives for programming projects on the LRTP. The project evaluations are a means to inject objectivity and rationality into the decision-making process. Since the last meeting, staff reviewed the project rankings and revised several, but, because of the resiliency of the evaluation system, the basic conclusions presented at the last meeting remain. The two programming alternatives do not represent a staff recommendation, rather they show two investment approaches: one focuses on the approach the MPO has taken in the recent past; and the other focuses on an approach that favors investment in lower-cost operation and management type projects.

Project Evaluations

A. McGahan then drew members' attention to the Universe of Projects, which has been updated since the last meeting. The projects in the Universe that were evaluated include those projects in the current LRTP, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*, and those that add capacity and/or cost over \$20 million. There are some conceptual projects on the list that were not evaluated due to lack of information.

S. Pfalzer then drew members' attention to spreadsheets showing the evaluation results for major infrastructure projects. The evaluation was designed to identify those projects that advance the MPO's goals and objectives. The goals that the evaluation focused on are: Safety, System Preservation, Capacity Management, and Economic Vitality. The

evaluation measures used are consistent with those used for the scenario planning. The following factors were considered:

- *Safety*: EPDO value for crash severity; high-crash locations and clusters; cost effectiveness; and crash rates
- *System Preservation*: substandard pavement lane miles addressed; substandard bridges; sidewalk and bicycle facilities; and emergency response and extreme conditions
- *Capacity Management/Mobility*: bottleneck locations identified in the Needs Assessment; speed index; travel time index; volume-to-capacity ratio; bicycle and pedestrian improvements; and access to transit
- *Economic Vitality*: access to targeted development areas; existing areas of concentrated development served; and facilitating new development

Discussion

The discussion focused on each of the goal areas. Staff addressed a number of questions and the key topics discussed are summarized below.

Safety

Several members had questions about the EPDO scores and how the figures were calculated. In response, staff provided more information on the EPDO values. The EPDO value represents a weight given to each project location based on whether crashes there resulted in property damage, personal injuries, or fatalities. The evaluation spreadsheet provided values for each project for the “EPDO per 100 million vehicles” and “Cost per EPDO.” To reach the “EPDO per 100 million vehicles” value, staff inflated the actual EPDO value to correspond with the number of vehicles. The “Cost per EPDO value” was determined by dividing the project cost by actual EPDO. While not in the evaluation spreadsheet, staff could provide actual numbers for crashes that involved property damage, personal injury, or fatalities.

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston, questioned the seemingly low EPDO value for the *Rutherford Avenue (Boston)* project. He noted that there have been serious accidents on the underpass and that the project will address those problem areas. He also pointed out that the *Boardman Street (Boston)* project will provide congestion relief and prevent accidents on both ends of the project area. He suggested that the Safety evaluation consider crashes within a quarter mile of the project area.

Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), questioned the EPDO values for the *McGrath Highway (Somerville)* project and asked whether the EPDO value includes crashes that occurred on the underpass. He noted that there have been fatalities on this highway.

S. Pflazer explained that staff used the crash data from the projects' plans so that crashes that occurred outside of the project scope may not be captured in the evaluation.

David Koses, At-Large City of Newton, asked why the *Interstate 90/ Interchange 17 (Newton)* project is on the list. S. Pflazer noted that it was identified in the Needs Assessment as a bottleneck location and that the location was studied by CTPS.

A member of the audience inquired as to why the *Route 3 Widening* project deserves a "high" Safety rating considering the issues with traffic merging on that highway.

S. Pflazer explained that automobiles are allowed to use the breakdown lane during peak travel periods, which is a safety issue, and that the project would resolve that issue.

System Preservation

J. Gillooly noted that the *Rutherford Avenue* project will produce significant improvements for bicyclists and that it should score points under the "improves bicycle facilities" category. S. Pflazer noted that the project scored points for its bicycle improvements under the Capacity Management/Mobility category because it will be adding new bicycle facilities. The System Preservation category only addresses existing facilities. (The same holds true is for projects that would add sidewalks.)

Christine Stickney, South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree), asked how staff is evaluating projects that are at different planning levels. She noted that projects in the early planning stages, such as the *Braintree Split*, have not scored points for "improving substandard pavement." S. Pflazer explained that staff used the Road Inventory Report to determine pavement condition. In the case of the *Braintree Split*, the project did not score in that category because most of the express highway system is in "good" condition.

Capacity Management

D. Mohler asked several questions regarding the ratings, specifically about the relationship between the severity rating of a bottleneck location and the priority for improvement. He questioned the ratings for several specific projects: the location of the

Southampton Interchange (Boston) project is a “severe” bottleneck, but only scored “medium” for priority; the *Route 3 Widening* location is a “moderate” bottleneck but was rated “high”; and the *Route 1A/16 (Revere)* location is a “severe” bottleneck, but received a “low” rating.

S. Pfalzer noted that while the Southeast Expressway is a severe bottleneck, staff determined that the *Southampton Interchange* project would not be able to address the problem. Regarding the *Route 3 Widening*, the project received a “high” rating because it will add capacity. And the *Route 1A/16* project received a “low” rating because it will not add capacity.

D. Mohler also asked staff to follow-up after the meeting to clarify how staff determined the ratings under the Capacity Management (Buses) category.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), asked what other measures were taken into account for the Capacity Management (Autos) rating. S. Pfalzer noted that staff considered whether a project would be creating a new connection. The *New Boston Street Bridge (Woburn)* project is the only project evaluated that would make a new connection (in the regional travel demand model).

D. Giombetti noted that the *Interstate 290/495 (Hudson/Marlborough)* project is at a bottleneck location, but that it was not rated as such in the evaluation.

D. Mohler asked whether severe bottlenecks were identified from the Universe of Projects or from the entire system. S. Pfalzer replied that they were identified through the Needs Assessment (the entire system).

D. Koses asked why the *Interstate 90/Interchange 17* project got a “low” rating in the Capacity Management (Buses) category considering that there are a high number of buses operating on this corridor. S. Pfalzer replied that the project is conceptual and that the problem for buses would not be solved by the current project scope.

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), expressed concern that suburban and rural projects are at a disadvantage in this evaluation system. He suggested members keep in mind that those towns need some attention.

Economic Vitality

Rick Reed, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford), asked for more information about the criteria staff is using to assess projects. S. Pfalzer

replied that most of the criteria used for the LRTP evaluation are the same as those used for the TIP evaluation. There are some additional criteria based on the new LRTP goals and objectives. One new criterion recognizes projects that facilitate new development.

R. Reed asked for more explanation going forward about how staff arrived at project ratings and suggested that staff provide a handbook of information for communities.

R. Reed questioned the rating for the *Middlesex Turnpike, Phase 3 (Bedford and Burlington)* project. He noted that it is a bottleneck location and that it should score under the Economic Vitality category because will generate development in three communities.

In response to a question from Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), S. Pfalzer confirmed that staff used MAPC's Priority Development Area mapping work to identify projects that provide access to targeted development areas. E. Bourassa noted that MAPC has not completed the mapping work for Bedford and that the *Middlesex Turnpike, Phase 3* project would likely score in the Economic Vitality category.

K. Quackenbush stated that staff would provide the requested documentation. He noted that staff welcomes members' comments and questions on the evaluations. These and the MPO's performance based planning practice are in a state of growth and refinement.

LRTP Funding Alternatives

A. McGahan introduced the two LRTP funding alternatives that the MPO directed staff to prepare at the last meeting. One alternative represents a continuation of the programming that is in the current LRTP, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*. The other alternative represents an investment approach that would prioritize lower-cost operations and management improvements. Both alternatives include the projects programmed in the FFYs 2015-18 TIP in the FFYs 2016-18 years of the LRTP.

Alternative for Continuation of Current LRTP

A. McGahan gave an overview of the alternative that shows a continuation of the Current LRTP.

It includes the major infrastructure projects programmed in *Paths to a Sustainable Region* that have not yet been funded:

- *Rutherford Avenue (Boston)*: This project was in the FFYs 2016-20 timeband of the current LRTP, but for cost and readiness reasons was moved to the FFYs 2021-25 timeband in this alternative. The project cost was inflated by 4%.
- *New Boston Street Bridge (Woburn)*: This project remains in the FFY 2016-20 timeband.
- *Assabet River Rail Trail (Stow and Hudson)*: This project was in the FFYs 2016-20 timeband of the current LRTP, but due to readiness issues it was moved to the FFYs 2021-25 timeband in this alternative.
- *Reconstruction of Bridge Street (Salem)*: This project was in the FFYs 2016-20 timeband of the current LRTP, but due to readiness issues it was moved to the FFYs 2021-25 timeband in this alternative.
- *Reconstruction of Highland Avenue (Newton and Needham)*: The cost estimate for this project has been reduced. The project remains programmed in the FFYs 2021-25 timeband.

Funding programs were introduced in the FFYs 2021-25 timeband with programming figures assigned to each program based on past spending and projects in the Universe of Projects that would apply to these programs. The programs are as follows:

- Complete Streets Program
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Program
- Intersection Improvement Program
- Community Transportation/Parking/Clean Air and Mobility Programs

Over the life of the LRTP, 71% of funding would be directed to Major Infrastructure projects in this alternative.

Discussion

D. Mohler asked staff to clarify the percentage figures on the chart before it is released to the public.

Michael Chong, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), suggested that staff coordinate to see if any projects could be advanced earlier.

D. Mohler asked staff to include a reference on the list to the *Canton Interchange Project*; this project is expected to be funded with non-federal aid. If the state is unable to fund the project, however, MassDOT may ask the MPO to consider funding it.

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, noted that significant regional projects that are not funded by the MPO should be included on the list. D. Mohler noted that the *Allston Interchange Mobility Project* is one such project and that there may be others

that should be added. He encouraged members to inform staff if they are aware of any other projects that should be included in the LRTP.

J. Gillooly informed members that the *Rutherford Avenue* project, which also addresses Sullivan Square, could be done in phases. He also noted that there are federal earmarks associated with the project and that the timing for the programming of this project will be important to maintain access to those earmarks. He also remarked on the economic growth occurring on the South Boston Waterfront and the need for future discussions about initiatives underway there.

D. Crowley expressed concern that future project cost increases and overruns could result in few dollars left for the MPO to program in future TIPs. D. Mohler added that the amount of available funding shown on the chart assumes that the TIP projects are delivered at today's cost estimates.

D. Crowley also noted that the MPO must support the entire region. He expressed concern that there is no funding in the alternatives shown for projects in the South West Advisory Planning Committee subregion. He called for more consideration for suburban and rural areas. He suggested that staff map project locations to determine there are gaps in funding in areas across the region.

D. Koses advocated for moving the *Reconstruction of Highland Avenue (Needham and Newton)* project to an earlier timeband of the LRTP (from FFYs 2021-25 to FFYs 2016-20). He noted that the project received the highest rating in both the TIP and LRTP evaluation processes, that it is at the 25% design stage, and that it has reduced in cost.

Members discussed the *Highland Avenue* project. When asked if the project will add capacity to the system (and therefore must be programmed in the LRTP), A. McGahan noted that the bridge will be widened, so the project will add capacity. The project now costs under \$20 million (the threshold for project costs that must be programmed in the LRTP).

Stan Wood, MassDOT, advised that the *Reconstruction of Interstates 90 and 495 Interchange (Hopkinton)* project be added to the first timeband of the LRTP. The project will be funded with toll revenue, not MPO dollars. He noted that the location is a major bottleneck and that it is in an economic development area.

Alternative for Prioritizing Lower-Cost Improvements

A. McGahan then gave an overview of the second alternative that would prioritize lower-cost operations and maintenance projects. For this alternative it was assumed that no

more than 50% of funding would be spent on Major Infrastructure projects over the life of the LRTP, and that no five-year timeband would have more than 50% of its funding devoted to Major Infrastructure projects. In this alternative, 43% of funding would be allocated to Major Infrastructure projects.

A. McGahan gave an overview of project placement in the timebands for this alternative. She noted that four new projects were added: the *Bridge Replacement on Route 27 over Route 9 and Interchange Improvements (Natick)*, *Route 4/225 (Bedford Street) and Hartwell Avenue (Lexington)*, *McGrath Boulevard (Somerville)*, and *Concord Rotary (Concord)*. These projects were highly rated in the evaluation process.

Discussion

E. Bourassa asked about where the *Assabet River Rail Trail* project would be programmed. A. McGahan stated that it could be programmed within the Bicycle/Pedestrian Program in the FFY 2021-25 timeband.

S. Wood discussed the *Interchange Improvements to Interstate 93/95 (Woburn, Reading, Wakefield, and Stoneham)* project. This project has three parts, and he advocated for accelerating the add-a-lane portion on Interstate 95 in Wakefield to eliminate a bottleneck where there is a lane drop. E. Bourassa asked if this portion of the project would address safety issues associated with traffic weaving. S. Wood noted that there would be safety benefits because the project would lessen congestion. It was noted that staff did not include this project in the alternatives because staff did not have the information about which segments would be the priority or if segments of the project should be done separately.

D. Koses raised the issue of how flexing funds to transit would factor in to this planning process. D. Mohler noted that the MPO has committed to flex funds for the *Green Line Extension (from College Avenue to Route 16)* project. The cost estimate for the project is \$190 million. No other flex to transit is assumed at this time, though the MPO could further discuss the issue of flexing funds to transit, for example, for MBTA state-of-good-repair or winter resiliency projects.

D. Crowley asked whether the MPO would be responsible for any cost increase or overrun to the *Green Line Extension (from College Avenue to Route 16)* project.

D. Mohler confirmed that the MPO would be asked to fund the overage, as would be the case with cost increases to any other project. L. Dantas added that the MPO could choose to leave some funding unallocated in the LRTP for such cost overruns.

E. Bourassa asked about the process for evaluating transit projects. K. Quackenbush asked members to recall the past practice at this MPO and then went on to explain that

historically, staff has not evaluated transit projects in the same way they evaluate roadway projects. Instead, the MBTA and MassDOT provide transit priorities to the MPO. A. McGahan added that staff has relied on the MBTA's Program for Mass Transportation for this information.

E. Bourassa inquired as to whether the MPO could reserve funding in outer timebands for a transit facility, such as a bus maintenance facility that does not yet have a determined location but that would improve transit capacity. D. Mohler noted that if such a project was not prioritized by the MBTA, the MPO would have to discuss what MBTA state-of-good-repair needs the project would replace or whether to flex funds.

Given the upcoming debate about projects, D. Giombetti recommended that staff reach out directly to all municipalities in the region, particularly those that have a project being removed, added, or delayed, to the LRTP project list. D. Mohler also suggested that members inform their subregions. Staff plans to release notices through the MPOinfo email list and to contact all municipal TIP contacts.

Motion

A motion to use the Recommendation for Prioritizing Lower-cost Improvements Alternative as a baseline for the LRTP discussion at the upcoming meeting of April 16 was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

8. Project Mobility and the Public/Private Partnership Finance Mechanism—*Dana Levenson, Chief Financial Officer, MassDOT*

D. Levenson introduced a presentation on Project Mobility, a plan for installing express toll lanes in the median of Route 3 South with the aim of improving safety and reducing congestion. MassDOT is requesting that the MPO program this project in the LRTP in the FFYs 2016-20 timeband, though the agency does not anticipate that federal funds, other than possibly a Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan, will be required to finance the project.

The design, construction, financing, operation and maintenance of this facility would be handled through a public-private partnership (P3). The P3 method is a relatively new means of project procurement and facility operation that has been used for a variety of assets across the country, including toll lanes.

D. Levenson noted that in the case of Route 3 South, the private sector would carry the risk for the design, construction, financing, operation and maintenance of this facility, not the Commonwealth. Although federal funds would not be required, the project would

have to be programmed on the LRTP in order for the project to proceed with federal environmental permitting work and in the event that a federal TIFIA loan is sought for a private entity.

Darren Conboy, Jacobs Engineering Group, continued with a PowerPoint presentation that further described the project, the P3 approach to financing and operation, and how the project aligns with MPO goals.

He noted that this project would offer a solution to reduce congestion and restore mobility on Route 3. Currently, FHWA has granted temporary use of the breakdown lane as a travel lane during peak travel hours. This project would allow for restoring the breakdown lane to its intended use as an emergency lane.

D. Conboy discussed P3 toll road projects as being an effective means to manage congestion. In 2009, the Massachusetts state legislature authorized MassDOT to use P3 as a procurement method. In this case, the asset would be leased to a private concessionaire that would operate the facility, and when the lease agreement period (35-50 years) concludes, the asset would be returned to the Commonwealth in a state-of-good-repair. Financing for the project could come from a variety of sources: state payments, private equity, private loans, and federal TIFIA loans. The toll revenues from the facility would cover the financing and maintenance costs.

The area encompassed by Project Mobility would be a 17-mile corridor of Route 3 from Exit 12 to the Braintree Split with connections to Interstate 93 and Route 128. The toll lanes would be built in the median. Buses could travel for free in the toll lanes. The existing general purpose lanes would remain untolled. The breakdown lane would no longer need to be used as a travel lane.

Two toll-lane configurations are being studied: 1) a two-lane reversible facility (reversing in the AM and PM peak periods); and , 2) a single, permanent dedicated lane in each direction. In the southern section of the project area, the toll lanes could be accommodated in the median, but in the northerly section where the median is narrower, the reconstruction and widening of Route 3 would be required.

Drivers would have the option to choose to travel on the toll lanes or the free general purpose lanes. Integral to the success of the project is the provision of travel time savings for the toll lane drivers; the goal is to maintain speeds of 45 miles per hour (mph) on toll lanes. Traffic and revenue studies will have to be done to determine potential travel time savings and toll rates. All-electronic tolling technology would be employed.

D. Conboy discussed how the project is consistent with the MPO's goals for safety, capacity management and mobility, system preservation, and economic vitality. He had noted that five interchanges on Route 3 are among the Top 5% High Crash Locations in the state and that the project would reduce crashes by fixing those high-crash cluster locations, reducing congestion, and restoring the use of the breakdown lane as an emergency lane (as crash rates are higher on the corridor when the breakdown lane is in use).

In terms of capacity management and mobility, he stated that the new lanes would help traffic – including buses – move through the corridor more quickly. Also, the project would involve replacing or rehabilitating all bridges over Route 3 and bringing those local-road bridges to Complete Streets standards.

In terms of system preservation, the project would replace or rehabilitate 27 bridges in the corridor, representing about \$150 million worth of bridge construction projects in the LRTP timeframe. It would also create a state-of-good-repair for Route 3 as the lease would require the facility to be returned to Commonwealth in a state-of-good-repair at the cost of the private operator.

And regarding economic vitality, the project would improve access to existing employment centers and housing, reducing travel time, and address the perception that South Shore is hampered by mobility issues.

Construction is anticipated to take four years and cost between \$670 – 700 million.

More information is available on the project's website, www.mass.gov/massdot/route3expresslanes.

Discussion

Members posed a number of questions and made comments about the project. The members' questions and comments are summarized below (in italics) along with the responses from the presenters.

Will the private bidder have a say in the design that gets constructed? (J. Gillooly)

MassDOT has had discussions with private sector companies to gauge their interest in terms of what level of design is preferable when they bid for a project. Those companies expressed varying opinions with some preferring a minimal design and others preferring a higher level of design. For this project, the determination will be based on what is in the best interest of the Commonwealth. (D. Levenson)

When the facility is built, will there be a transfer of responsibility for maintenance of the general purpose lanes of Route 3? Who will be responsible for maintaining the toll lanes? (J. Gillooly)

As envisioned now, the operator of the toll facility will be responsible only for maintenance of the toll facility, not the general purpose lanes. (D. Levenson)

Will the decision about the toll lane configuration be made before the project goes out to bid or will the successful bidder be involved in the decision? (J. Gillooly)

At this point, it appears that the market prefers the two-lane reversible configuration. The private bidders need to be convinced that the configuration will allow for speeds of 45 mph on the toll lanes and travel times on the general purpose lanes that are faster than current speeds, otherwise they will not bid on the project. (D. Levenson)
Preliminary traffic evaluations have shown that with the reduction in volume on the general purpose lanes, there would be an improvement in level of service on those lanes. (D. Conboy)

With the two-lane reversible configuration, will the traffic be able to be absorbed sufficiently at the Braintree Split? (J. Gillooly)

The project will have to be designed to ensure that happens, otherwise the private sector will not invest in the project. (D. Levenson) The Braintree Split will be addressed through another project in the LRTP. This project could incorporate certain elements to help traffic movements at the Braintree Split. This will be addressed in the next stage of the traffic study. (D. Conboy)

It would be in the interest of the MPO to understand how this project would affect mobility in the region beyond the Route 3 area (i.e. if it improves mobility on Route 3 but reduces it on the Southeast Expressway). (Jay Monty, At-Large Town of Everett)

Consideration should be given to designing this facility so that it provides access to the Red Line station. (M. Gowing)

Envisioned in the design are access/egress points at Union Street and Burgin Parkway, which would allow drivers to access the Red Line. (D. Conboy)

Some P3 projects in the nation have not meted out the return that private investors envisioned. What happens if this project falls apart midway? Will performance bonds be part of the agreement? (M. Gowing)

It would be necessary for the private sector party to take out a performance bond.
(D. Levenson)

Some people believe these types of facilities are elitist because they provide fast lanes only for people who can afford it and do not allow for environmental justice. (M. Gowing)

Toll pricing will have to be considered going forward, including whether to use dynamic pricing or cap toll prices. On Route 3 there will always be a free alternative, by using the general purpose lanes. (D. Levenson) Environmental justice is a concern with toll lane projects. An FHWA-approved methodology for addressing environmental justice issues has been developed. (D. Conboy)

There need to be traffic mitigation plans for towns during the construction phase. Also, there should be dialogue about improving capacity on the Southeast Expressway, or else there will be a bottleneck created at the high-speed lane. Is there a plan to address this problem. (D. Crowley)

There is not. (D. Levenson)

South Shore communities are concerned about capacity issues. The breakdown lane is only used for three hours a day. If the use of the breakdown lane is eliminated, wouldn't the capacity shift from one side of the highway to the other? (C. Stickney)

The design would allow for the same number of general purpose lanes. An increase in capacity would be expected, but not an increase in utilization, so there would be increased traffic throughput with time savings. (D. Levenson)

South Shore communities are experiencing problems from cut-through traffic. The Braintree Split must be addressed or the congestion problem will only be pushed further up the highway. There is a sentiment on the South Shore that the only benefit of project will be finances for the state. More public outreach needs to be done. (C. Stickney)

MassDOT expects to hold more public outreach rather than less. There has been outreach to the South Shore Coalition and there is a new website for the project. Public outreach will help to inform the design. MassDOT is hearing the concerns that the Braintree Split needs to be addressed. (D. Levenson)

*Who pays for the environmental studies and initial designs and how much will it cost?
(C. Stickney)*

The Commonwealth would pay, but it is possible the costs would be reversible. (D. Levenson) The cost estimate for the planning work is \$38 million. (Diane Madden, MassDOT)

How will the average daily traffic (ADT) estimates for the toll lanes be determined? There have been failed P3 projects that used inflated ADT figures that did not materialize when the toll lanes were in operation. It would be better if the Commonwealth had input into the ADT estimates, as it is in the interest of the private operator to inflate the ADT. (Tom Kadzis, City of Boston)

The financial risk of this project is not with the Commonwealth. If a private party takes out a TIFIA loan or a corporate loan, it is the private party's responsibility to pay back the loan. A private investor would not entertain the project if it does not have the confidence that the facility will produce the revenue to pay off its debt service and meet its obligations. That investor will have to have confidence that its traffic and revenue studies are accurate. (D. Levenson)

Clarify the \$38 million planning cost. Would the Commonwealth spend these funds to prepare the project to be put out to bid? If the bid failed would the Commonwealth lose \$38 million? How much state money will be spent to prepare the project? (E. Bourassa)

The \$38 million estimate is based on 5.8% of the total project cost and would cover the environmental impact statement (EIS), environmental impact report (EIR), 25% design, and permitting. Some costs could later be transferred to the private concessionaire. (D. Madden) The project would be put out to bid before all of the preliminary work is completed. It would be necessary to begin the environmental permitting work before it goes to bid. The amount that will be spent to prepare the project for bidding would depend on what level of design needs to be achieved prior to the bid. If the design were only at the 5% design stage the cost would be lower. The bid may be designed so that some of the costs are reimbursable. (D. Levenson)

The members would like more specific information about the costs to the Commonwealth by the next MPO meeting. (Steve Woelfel, MassDOT)

The decision to program the project on the LRTP does have some financial implications considering the initial cost to the Commonwealth. (E. Bourassa)

Before a bid is released, more conversations need to occur regarding possibilities for revenue sharing with the private investor and reimbursement of costs. Programming the project on the LRTP will allow the project to go forward with the FHWA environmental process. (D. Levenson)

What is the approach to planning the entry and exit locations for the toll lanes? Would the study look at the effect of weaving and merging? (R. Canale)

The entry and exit locations will be located away from interchanges. Drivers will first get on the general purpose lanes and then merge left into the toll lanes. The next stage of the traffic analysis will involve microsimulation. (D. Conboy)

Who will be in charge of the project as it moves forward? (D. Giombetti)

MassDOT has the authority to implement the Commonwealth's P3 contracts. The Commonwealth's P3 Commission, established by the state legislature, oversees these contracts. (D. Levenson)

In the past, when there were discussions about widening Route 3, there was agreement that the communities along the highway should conduct planning and upgrade their zoning so that there would be no adverse effects. How does that apply here? (S. Olanoff)

The widening project and the toll lane project are two different concepts. The widening project would not have involved tolling and could have attracted more traffic. The outreach for this toll lane project is just starting. When the EIS is prepared there will be formal hearings within the communities. (D. Levenson)

If the MPO votes to add the project to the LRTP, will the body have another opportunity to consider the project given that there are outstanding issues (concerning congestion on the Southeast Expressway, for example)? What happens to the project if the MPO does not vote to add the project to the LRTP? (D. Crowley)

If not on the LRTP, the project cannot go forward because it cannot then go through the federal environmental process. (D. Levenson and S. Woelfel)

Can the MPO give conditional support to this project? (E. Bourassa)

[This question was not addressed.]

The original cost estimate for the project was \$800 million. What is the reason for the reduction? (M. Chong)

The project area was shortened by five miles on the southern end (from Exit 11 to Exit 12) so that the bridge over the North River was not included and environmental impacts would be reduced. (D. Conboy)

Is any portion of the project in the Old Colony Planning Council region? (M. Chong)

No. (S. Woelfel)

Would the Commonwealth be responsible for the TIFIA loan. (M. Chong)

No. A public agency must be a sponsor, but the obligation is with the private party.
(D. Levenson)

If the MPO includes this project in the LRTP, FHWA would like to see a robust description of the project, its finances, and schedule. (M. Chong)

A concern is that if a private entity has financial trouble, it may no longer keep the asset in a state-of-good-repair. Will that be addressed? (M. Gowing)

The contract would require the private party to take out a performance bond in the final ten years of the lease to ensure that the asset remains in a state-of good-repair.
(D. Levenson)

Is there a target for capacity increase (if the project results in induced demand)?(J. Monty)

The goal is to reduce congestion. (D. Levenson) The target would be to keep volume in the toll lanes down to 1600-1700 per hour to maintain the appropriate speeds. CTPS will be doing an initial traffic assessment. (D. Conboy)

9. Members Items

There were none.

10. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members

Representatives and Alternates

At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
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	David Mohler
	David Anderson
	Steve Woelfel
	Marie Rose
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Port Authority	Lourenço Dantas
MBTA	Janice Ramsay
MBTA Advisory Board	Micha Gensler
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 Shore Task Force	Aaron Clausen
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Mike Gowing
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/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Sreelatha Allam	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
David Baumgartner	Cambridge Systematics
Phineas Baxandall	MASSPIRG
Darren Conboy	Jacobs Engineering Group
Dana Levenson	MassDOT
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Owen MacDonald	Town of Weymouth
Diane Madden	MassDOT
Joseph Manning	IBEW Local 103
Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood)
John Olivieri	MASSPIRG
Tim Snyder	Office of State Senator Patricia Jehlen
Roy E. Sorenson	Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination
Michael Trepanier	MassDOT
Zachary Veamer	MassDOT District 6
Wig Zamore	Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership / Mystic View Task Force
Stan Wood	MassDOT

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director

Maureen Kelly
Bill Kuttner
Anne McGahan
Elizabeth Moore
Scott Peterson
Sean Pfalzer
Natalie Raffol
Harunur Rashid
