

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

April 16, 2015 Meeting

10:05 AM – 1:30 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

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

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

Members heard a number of comments from advocates of transportation projects who are seeking funding through either the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2016-19 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or the new Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Charting Progress to 2040*.

Mayor Scott Galvin of Woburn, State Senator Kenneth Donnelly, State Representative Jim Dwyer, and Woburn Alderman Rich Haggerty advocated for two projects in Woburn, the *New Boston Street Bridge Replacement* and the *Reconstruction of Montvale Avenue* projects. They discussed the importance of the *Montvale Avenue* project for improving safety and reducing congestion at one of the most dangerous highway interchanges in the state and in the country, improving access to the Anderson Regional Transportation Center and employment centers in the region.

Mayor Setti Warren of Newton spoke in support of the *Reconstruction of Highland Avenue and Needham Street (Newton and Needham)* project and asked that the MPO program the project on the TIP. He was joined by staff from the City of Newton: David Turocy, Director of the Department of Public Works; James Freas, Director of the Planning Department; and David Koses, Newton's representative on the MPO board. He was also joined by representatives from the Town of Needham: Selectman Moe Handel; Richard P. Merson, Director of the Department of Public Works; Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager; and Selectman Matt Borelli.

Mayor Warren discussed the project's importance for economic vitality and generating tax revenue for the state. He noted that the Towns of Newton and Needham have forged a partnership in recent years to promote innovation and economic development in what has been branded as the N² Innovation Corridor. Investments that have already been made in the corridor include a MassWorks grant. A market study completed by MAPC found that the Needham Street corridor has the potential to add 300,000 to

350,000 square feet of additional office space. Mayor Warren also noted that the project will bring Complete Streets improvements that will improve conditions for walking and bicycling in the corridor.

Selectman Moe Handel further discussed how the corridor has become an economic engine of the region. New housing units are being approved and redevelopment is occurring there. He noted that the project has received the highest rating in the MPO's project evaluation process.

State Senator Kenneth Donnelly advocated for the *Route 4/225 (Bedford Street) and Hartwell Avenue (Lexington)* project and the *Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3 (Bedford, Billerica, and Burlington)* project. He discussed the importance of the Lexington project for serving the Hanscom Air Force Base, which generates significant wages in the region from defense jobs. Regarding the *Middlesex Turnpike* project, he remarked upon the significant funds that the Towns of Billerica and Bedford have already expended to advance the project.

Michael Glavin, Executive Director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development for the City of Somerville, spoke on behalf of Mayor Joseph Curtatone regarding two projects in Somerville, the *Green Line Extension (from College Avenue to Route 16)* and *McGrath Boulevard*. He expressed thanks to the MPO for supporting these projects and asked for continued support. He discussed the overwhelming support in the community for the *McGrath Boulevard* project and explained that the improvements will provide a strategic link for economic development opportunities in the Brickbottom and Union Square neighborhoods. It will also resolve multimodal issues considering that the boulevard will be close to two new Green Line stations.

Michael Jaillet, Town Administrator of the Town of Westwood, and Bill Friel, Town Administrator of the Town of Canton, spoke in support of the *Interchange Improvements at Interstates 93 and 95 (Canton, Dedham, Norwood)*, or the *Canton Interchange* project. Mr. Jaillet stated that the project has been planned since 1972 and that it is necessary for the economic development of region. He discussed the recent commercial and residential development in the area at University Station and explained that more office development is planned. This development requires the planned traffic improvements to occur otherwise congestion will worsen in the area, he said.

Mr. Friel added the Town of Canton's support for the *Canton Interchange* project, including the Dedham Street corridor portion. He stated that the project is an excellent example of a smart growth project and of a federal, state, local, and private partnership.

He noted that the project will improve traffic safety, enhance economic development, and increase transit ridership (as a commuter rail station is nearby).

Elin Reisner, Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership, expressed support for Michael Galvin's comments regarding the *Green Line Extension (from College Avenue to Route 16)* and the *McGrath Boulevard* project.

Several representatives of the Town of Lexington spoke regarding the *Route 4/225 (Bedford Street) and Hartwell Avenue (Lexington)* project. Michelle Ciccolo, Selectman, noted that the project will address a key multimodal corridor that is served by the MBTA and that it will connect to the Minuteman Bikeway and serve a biotechnology area.

John Livsey, Town Engineer, discussed the actions that the town has taken to improve the marketability and accessibility of the area. The town has adopted zoning changes to encourage development and mitigate traffic impacts, and it has established a transportation management overlay district. The town funded a \$98,000 transportation study that identified \$26.7 million worth of infrastructure improvements. The town is beginning to implement the recommendations. A multimodal path has been installed connecting the intersection of Bedford Street and Route 62 to the Minuteman Bikeway at a cost of \$200,000. The town has spent \$600,000 on the design of the first phase of improvements to Hartwell Avenue, which is nearing the 25% design. Town meeting approved the spending of \$4.75 million for construction, which will include building a roundabout with bicycle and pedestrian accommodations at the intersection of Hartwell Avenue and Maguire Road, replacing a load restricted bridge, and making signal improvements at the Bedford Street and Hartwell Avenue intersection. The town is also funding the landscaping of a traffic island and the repaving of parts of the Minuteman Bikeway.

Bill Hadley, Director of the Department of Public Works, discussed how the town is working with the 128 Business Council, neighboring towns, and business to provide alternative commuting options to the area. He noted that the ridership of the shuttle bus that runs between Alewife Station and Hartwell Avenue has increased since its inception in 2013 to 1,000 rides per month. The town has invested \$70,000 towards its operation and is working with the Town of Bedford to expand service. Companies in the area have been joining the 128 Business Council with the goal of reducing single occupancy vehicle trips. He also discussed new development in the area that could generate \$500,000 in new taxes and \$350,000 in contributions for infrastructure improvements. He requested that the MPO program the *Route 4/225 (Bedford Street) and Hartwell Avenue* project in the FFYs 2021-25 time band of the LRTP.

Michelle Ciccolo, speaking as Community Development Director of the Town of Hudson, urged the MPO to provide adequate funding for bicycle trails in the LRTP and to program the Phase 3 of the *Assabet River Rail Trail* project. She provided an update on the project and described the new proposed alignment of the trail, which would avoid an orchard and pass through the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge to connect to a portion of the Central Massachusetts Rail Trail that is under design. The Towns of Hudson and Stow are working with Eversource, which is installing a transmission line, to defray some costs of the design of the trail.

Jesse Steadman, Assistant Planner, Town of Stow, further discussed the new alternative for the routing of the *Assabet River Rail Trail*. He noted that the trail will provide new options for multimodal transportation and healthy recreation, including providing a first/last mile connection, access to the nearby business district, and access to open space. He also noted that the Town of Stow has 100% Complete Streets design plans prepared for its business district.

Jeremy Marsette, Public Works Director for the Town of Natick, spoke in support of three projects in Natick: the *Reconstruction of Route 27, Bridge Replacement of Route 27 over Route 9 and Interchange Improvements*, and the *Cochituate Rail Trail, Phase 2*. The town is prepared to submit 25% design plans for these projects to MassDOT and to schedule public hearings in the coming months. He discussed the regional and economic importance of the Route 27 projects, noting that Route 27 is the principle route to Natick Center and provides access to many commercial locations and the U.S. Army Natick Soldier Systems Center. Recognizing importance of the Soldier Systems Center – which employs over 2,000 people and brings an estimated \$135 million to the regional economy – the town has prioritized the intersection improvements at Route 27 and Kansas Street, and the project will be completed this summer. This intersection was originally part of the corridor project. He stated that the Route 27 projects are complementary and to see the full benefit they should be completed within a similar timeframe. The town has fully funded the design of Route 27 project and the interchange project.

Vonnie Reis, Town Engineer for the Town of Milford, thanked the MPO for programming the *Resurfacing and Intersection Improvements on Route 16 (Milford)* project in the draft FFYs 2016-19 TIP. She stated that Route 16 is the main thoroughfare and commuter route in Milford which connects to Interstate 495 and serves Milford Regional Hospital. The hospital serves 15 communities and is undergoing an expansion; it is a major employer in the area. She explained that the project would address a number of deficiencies at the intersection there. It would add emergency vehicle pre-emption, add bicycle and pedestrian accommodations (the bicycle lane would connect to the Milford

Upper Charles Regional Rail Trail), and make the intersection ADA compliant. It would also address issues for truck traffic by adding left-turn only lanes and improving the turning radius for large vehicles.

David Knowlton, City Engineer for the City of Salem, spoke on behalf of Mayor Kimberley Driscoll to urge the MPO to keep the *Reconstruction of Bridge Street (Salem)* project programmed on the LRTP. He discussed the place of the project in the Beverly/Salem Transportation Program as it represents the missing link of improvements to Bridge Street corridor. The project addresses a major entrance corridor to the city and will provide access to a new housing development. Mayor Driscoll has submitted a letter to the MPO.

Sara Hines, Co-chair of the Ashland Redevelopment Authority, spoke in support of the *Reconstruction on Route 126 (Ashland)* project. She discussed the existing conditions on the nearly two-mile corridor, which has sprawling development, and presents dangerous conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists as it lacks street lights, sidewalks, and bike lanes. The plans are to change this sprawling corridor to a functioning town street with sidewalks and bicycle lanes.

Roy Sorenson, Director of Public Works for the Town of Bedford, thanked the MPO for their support of the *Middlesex Turnpike, Phase 3 (Bedford, Billerica, and Burlington)* project and asked for their continued support. The project is programmed in FFY 2016 and it is expected to be advertised in that year. This is the final phase of the improvements to the Middlesex Turnpike. The town proponents have already committed \$10 million for these improvements.

Mr. Sorenson was joined by the following: Trish Domigan, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin; John Curran, Town Manager of Billerica; Abdul Alkhatib, Director of Public Works for Billerica; Stephanie Cronin, Executive Director of the Middlesex 3 Coalition; Robert Buckley, Riemer & Braunstein, and Vice Chair of the Middlesex 3 Coalition; and Sam Larson, Office of State Representative Kenneth Gordon.

Mr. Curran expressed the importance of keeping the project programmed in FFY 2016. He noted that in addition to the \$10 million investment by towns there has also been about \$8 million in economic development investment in area. He stated that the permitting for the project is completed and that the Town of Billerica is ready to begin land takings when approved. He noted that the project will bring great economic growth to the area. He also read a letter of support for the project from the Executive Director of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), which has programmed \$1 million for the project.

Mr. Buckley discussed the importance of the project for economic development and for providing access to businesses for employees. He noted that discussions are underway regarding the potential development of 600,000 square feet of space along the corridor and that the improvements to the Middlesex Turnpike are a factor in that decision-making. He also noted that the Middlesex Turnpike provides an alternative commuting route to Route 3, and that without this alternative traffic will go into neighborhoods potentially bringing about adverse impacts in terms of anti-development sentiments.

Mr. Buckley also expressed support for improvements to the *Interchange Improvements at Interstates 95 and 93 (Woburn)* project, or *Woburn Interchange* project.

Mr. Larson remarked on the large investment made by the towns for the Middlesex Turnpike and noted that delaying the project could hamper economic development along the corridor. He noted that Representative Gordon will be submitting a letter to the MPO.

Ms. Domigan commented about the length of time that the project has been under development, the investments made by the towns, and the intention to stimulate economic growth along the corridor. She explained that the mode share components from the first two phases of the project will be extended to this phase; so there will be bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and bus stops will be ADA compliant. She also addressed concerns about the project schedule and the acquisition of right-of-way. The project must go through the NEPA process again, but the proponents believe the process will be quick. Right-of-way has been secured in Bedford, and the acquisition process is expected to begin in Billerica in July. The project is expected to be ready by mid-2016.

Andrew Hall, Department of Public Works, City of Lynn, spoke in support of the *Reconstruction of Route 129* project in Lynn. He noted that Route 129 is one of two major routes into Lynn and that it is an economic artery for the city. The roadway serves 35,000 vehicles a day, which is more than the roadway was designed to carry. He stated that the City of Lynn is committed to the advancement of this project.

Joe Viola, Assistant Director for Community Planning, Town of Brookline, thanked the MPO for supporting the *Gateway East (Brookline)* project. He noted that the project scored highly in the TIP project evaluation process and noted its benefits for improving regional mobility and the ability to leverage funds through private development. He discussed Brookline's plans to improve the gateway to Brookline Village, to knit together neighborhoods now separated by traffic, to make the area more walkable and accessible to all modes, and to accommodate new commercial growth with the

redevelopment of 2 Brookline Place. The project will also provide a link to the Emerald Necklace Crossing. The town submitted 25% design plans to MassDOT in 2012. It is now addressing comments and reexamining the design to improve accommodation for bicyclists. The town is having public discussions about the project as it moves toward a 25% design hearing and the 75% design plans. The project is currently programmed in the FFY 2016 element of the TIP. The town is requesting that if the project must be deferred that it be programmed as soon as possible, preferably in FFY 2017 considering the pending redevelopment of 2 Brookline Place and the upcoming construction of the Emerald Necklace Crossing.

Owen McDonald, Traffic Engineer for the Town of Weymouth, spoke in support of the *Intersection Improvements at Middle Street, Libbey Industrial Parkway and Tara Drive (Weymouth)* project. Middle Street serves a complex of medical offices that have located there in recent years due to the proximity to South Shore Hospital. The town has been advised that other medical companies would like to locate in the area, but are concerned about traffic conditions and access and egress to the area. The intersection is currently stop controlled and there are long delays at peak hours that have resulted in a higher than average crash rate. The project will reconstruct and signalize the intersection. It will comply with Complete Streets policies by providing bicycle lanes where possible, safe pedestrian crossing, and safer passage for vehicles. Emergency vehicle pre-emption will be included in the signalization.

Evan Pilachowski, City Engineer, City of Marlborough, spoke regarding three projects in Marlborough. He thanked the MPO for programming the *Reconstruction of Route 85* project in the FFY 2016 element of the TIP, which is the city's preferred year of programming. The project will address two dangerous intersections and make improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians. Mr. Pilachowski also discussed two other projects for which the city is requesting TIP funding: *Route 20 at East Main Street* and *Route 20 at East Main Street and Concord Road*. The city is working with MassDOT to share costs on local needs at the first location, including replacing a water main and a failing retaining wall. The second location is a dangerous intersection on a MassDOT-controlled section of Route 20. There are capacity constraints at this intersection, which is traversed by 30,000 vehicles per day. The project will signalize the intersection.

2. Chair's Report—David Mohler, MassDOT

There was none.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports

Sreelatha Allam, Chair of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee, announced that the UPWP Committee would meet today after the MPO meeting. The Committee will discuss the proposed FFY 2016 budget and project list.

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

There was none.

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

There was none.

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

A. McGahan presented updated information on the evaluations of projects under consideration for the Long-Range Transportation Plan, *Charting Progress to 2040*, and she presented an alternative for project programming in the LRTP. Members then discussed the evaluations and programming recommendation.

Project Evaluations

At the MPO's meeting on April 9, the MPO was presented with the evaluations for Major Infrastructure projects under consideration for the LRTP, *Charting Progress to 2040*. Major Infrastructure projects are considered to be those that cost more than \$20 million or that add capacity to the transportation system. (Conceptual projects have not been evaluated.)

At today's meeting, staff distributed an updated evaluation summary which included additional projects that the MPO asked staff to evaluate. Staff also provided a memorandum that described the evaluation process.

The newly evaluated projects are as follows:

- *Allston Viaduct Realignment (Boston)*
- *Interstate 93 and 95 Interchange (Canton Interchange)*
- *Dedham Street Ramp (Canton)*
- *Interstate 95 Add-a-Lane (Woburn)*
- *Washington Street Bridge (Woburn)*

Discussion

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), asked whether the MPO should assume that the list of projects to be funded with non-federal aid could change when MassDOT's new Capital Investment Plan (CIP) is released. D. Mohler replied that there is a possibility that the state will determine that it cannot afford to fund all the projects that were to be funded with non-federal aid.

The *Canton Interchange* project is listed in the current LRTP, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*, as being funded with non-federal aid. The project has now been added to the list of candidate projects for the new LRTP so that the MPO may consider funding it if the state is unable to fund it.

Allston Viaduct Realignment was also to be funded with non-federal aid, private contributions, and toll revenues. There may be a shortfall in non-federal aid for this project as well.

Recommendation for Project Programming: Prioritizing Lower-cost Improvements

At the meeting of April 9, the MPO discussed two alternatives for programming projects for the LRTP. One alternative focused on an investment approach that represented a continuation of the programming in the current LRTP, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*. Another alternative (Alternative 2) used an investment approach that prioritized lower-cost improvements. Members agreed to use the latter alternative as the basis of their discussion today.

Staff provided a spreadsheet showing proposed project programming for Alternative 2 for the years FFY 2016 through FFY 2040 with information regarding the percentage of funding allocated to each program area (i.e. Major Infrastructure, Complete Streets, Bicycle and Pedestrian, Intersection Improvement, and Community Transportation).

Discussion

David Koses, At-Large City of Newton, asked if staff received input from the Town of Concord regarding the *Improvements and Upgrades to the Concord Rotary* project. A. McGahan explained that staff notified all municipal contacts and sent a separate notice to municipalities who have a project that could be affected by the MPO's decision-making today.

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston, expressed concern about the proposed movement of the *Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue* project in Boston from the FFYs 2016-20 time band to the FFYs 2021-25 time band, and about the fact that there would be no LRTP projects in any Boston neighborhood in the first time band of the LRTP. He referenced a 1999 study by the MPO that identified Rutherford Avenue and Sullivan Square as in

need of improvement. He noted that the project will provide bicycle accommodations and help stimulate economic development in the area.

In response to questions from E. Bourassa, J. Gillooly stated that the *Rutherford Avenue* project would be ready for advertising in FFY 2019 and that it has an earmark for design. Early work on this project will involve surveys and documenting existing conditions.

Richard Reed, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford), inquired about the inflated cost of the *Rutherford Avenue* project if programmed in a later year. (The cost estimate shown in the Alternative 2 spreadsheet shows the project cost in current dollars.) D. Mohler then discussed the possibility that the *Rutherford Avenue* project might be a multi-year project. Before the MPO votes on the LRTP, MassDOT will provide cash flow information with costs to the year of programming.

J. Gillooly also discussed the transportation needs and challenges of South Boston's Seaport area. He asked that the MPO include the South Boston Waterfront Sustainable Transportation Plan as a future MPO agenda item and to consider funding some roadway improvements in the Seaport in the first time band of the LRTP.

He discussed the plans to improve traffic circulation in the Seaport. One-way routing into the Seaport, for example, could release capacity and reduce congestion. He noted that there are other projects based on the study recommendations, as well. The City of Boston would be recommending a \$20 million investment in the first time band of the LRTP (FFYs 2019-20).

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, added that the recommendations of the South Boston Sustainable Transportation Plan study includes lower cost projects that combined may amount to \$20 million. The funding mechanisms and the contributions of agencies to these projects have not yet been determined, however, the projects would have to be modeled for the LRTP because they would add capacity to the transportation system. Some of the projects are already listed in the LRTP Universe of Projects.

Mike Gowing, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, noted that truck traffic from Conley Terminal is expected to increase with the deepening of the port and he asked if truck traffic was a consideration in the Seaport plan. J. Gillooly explained that demand from all users will be considered. Managing capacity at the intersections will be important, he said. There may be opportunities to convert pavement where there is unneeded capacity to green space and bicycle trails and to create a safer environment.

Arthur Strang, Cambridge resident, inquired about the parking situation in the Seaport area. J. Gillooly discussed the city's goals to reduce vehicle trips to the area and increase transit trips.

E. Bourassa asked if the *Allston Viaduct Realignment* project is a priority of the City of Boston. J. Gillooly stated that the project is an important one for the Allston neighborhood.

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council, questioned the cost estimate of the *Improvements and Upgrades to the Concord Rotary (Concord)* project, noting that the cost seems high. A. McGahan replied that staff received an updated cost estimate from MassDOT Environmental.

Tina Cassidy, North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn), asked whether staff received feedback from the Town of Concord regarding the *Improvements and Upgrades to the Concord Rotary* project. She asked about the rationale for adding this project to the list as the town is not advocating for it. She noted that there are other highway projects – such as the *Woburn Interchange* and the *Reconstruction and Widening on Route 1 (Malden, Saugus, and Revere)* – that have real advocates, but are proposed to be removed from the LRTP.

Staff reported that the *Concord Rotary* was added based on its evaluation ranking. MPO staff and staff at the Town of Concord attempted to communicate, but were not able to connect. When preparing Alternative 2, staff was working under the assumption that the amount of Major Infrastructure funding should be limited in each time band. Staff was not apprised of the possibility of phasing these particular Major Infrastructure projects at the time.

E. Bourassa asked the City of Newton representative to elaborate on the proposal to move the *Reconstruction of Highland Avenue and Needham Street* project forward.

D. Koses stated that, at the appropriate time, the City of Newton will make a motion to move the project from its current position in the FFYs 2021-25 time band of the LRTP, to the FFYs 2016-19 time band so that the project can be considered for programming in the TIP. He also remarked that the project is at the 25% design stage, that it received the highest score in the TIP and LRTP evaluation processes, and that the project cost has been reduced.

D. Mohler asked members to keep in mind the need for maintaining fiscal constraint when making motions. If they move to add a project to a particular time band, they will also have to make a recommendation for reducing or moving another project out of the time band. He also explained that unallocated funds in the FFY 2020 time band will be

programmed through the TIP process next year. Members may choose to program LRTP projects in FFY 2020, however, they would not then have the option of using those funds for TIP projects next year.

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), expressed concern that if motions are made to remove projects, advocates of those projects may not be aware of the action. D. Mohler noted that all municipalities are informed of the draft status of the project list and can attend the meeting where the final vote will be made.

David Anderson, MassDOT, questioned the Economic Vitality score for the *Woburn Interchange* project, and expressed that he would expect the score to be higher based on the project's impact on development in the corridor and its high average daily traffic count (ADT). S. Pfalzer explained that staff measured projects' Economic Vitality potential by considering its proximity to targeted development locations and areas of concentrated development, population and employment figures, and whether it would facilitate new development.

D. Mohler also expressed concern about the Economic Vitality rating, indicating that the rating does not distinguish well between projects that are addressing roadways with high ADT versus lower ADT. He noted, for example, that the *Woburn Interchange* and the *Route 4/225 (Bedford Street) and Hartwell Avenue (Lexington)* project received the same score although the interchange has significantly higher ADT.

E. Bourassa discussed how the Economic Vitality evaluation takes into account how well a project supports the smart growth land use vision of MAPC's MetroFuture plan. Large interchange projects that create new highway capacity may be inconsistent with that plan because they may promote sprawling development or encourage people to move farther out. So, in some cases these projects may get a lower Economic Vitality rating. MAPC and CTPS are working on a land use allocation model to better quantify economic impacts.

D. Mohler pointed out that MAPC has identified Priority Development Areas in these communities, and suggested that if highway-driven development is assumed to occur in these communities, that it would make sense for that development to occur near a major interchange, such as the Woburn Interchange. E. Bourassa noted that the Woburn Interchange is located at an area of existing concentrated development with transit access.

Aaron Clausen, North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly), advocated for the *Reconstruction of Bridge Street (Salem)* project noting that it is the final piece in the

Beverly/Salem Transportation Program. He also discussed the *Interchange Reconstruction at Route 128/Exit 19 at Brimbal Avenue (Phase 2) (Beverly)* project, which is a priority for the City of Beverly. He noted that the first phase of the project is underway. Development is already occurring in the area and the second phase is expected to provide access to 150 acres for development opportunities. The city is looking forward to working with MassDOT and the MPO to move the project forward.

S. Olanoff expressed the Three Rivers Interlocal Council's support for programming the *Reconstruction of Route 1A (Walpole)* project on the TIP. He provided a comment letter.

Wig Zamore, Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership / Mystic View Task Force, asked whether the *Allston Viaduct Realignment* project involves modes other than highway. D. Mohler reported that the project is going through the MEPA process now. As envisioned, the project will involve replacing the viaduct, straightening the turnpike, building a commuter rail layover and maintenance facility and a new commuter rail station (West Station), and making four highway connections to a new Allston neighborhood.

W. Zamore also asked how staff would model the \$40 million worth of funds left unallocated in the LRTP. D. Mohler explained that staff typically models only projects that are regionally significant, which are those that will add capacity to the system. The \$40 million would be reserved for operations and management projects that do not add capacity. If the MPO does decide to program a regionally significant project with those funds, the MPO would amend the LRTP and include the project in the modelling.

W. Zamore then expressed concern that the City of Somerville was left out of the planning process concerning the use of diesel multiple units (DMUs) in the Allston project. D. Mohler clarified that while MassDOT has been involved in discussions about potential DMU service, DMUs are not included in the current vision for the Allston project. As scoped, Grand Junction is not a part of the project, so it may be preserved for future transit use.

A. McGahan gave an overview of the next steps in the LRTP schedule. On April 30 the MPO is expected to vote on a set of projects to model. During May the members will be reviewing chapters of the LRTP. The LRTP is scheduled to be released (along with the TIP and UPWP) for public review from June 15 through July 14. On this schedule, the MPO will vote to endorse the documents on July 23.

7. Transportation Improvement Program—Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff

Members were provided with three documents for their discussion of the draft FFYs 2016-19 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): the staff recommendation (as

shown on TIP funding tables), a memorandum describing the development process for the staff recommendation, and a summary of evaluated highway projects.

S. Pfalzer gave an overview of these materials. The funding tables show project costs currently programmed in the FFYs 2015-18 TIP compared to proposed programming for the FFYs 2016-19 TIP. Approximately \$350 million is available for programming over the four years of the new TIP.

Staff developed this recommendation considering projects programmed on the current TIP and LRTP, and in consultation with MassDOT regarding project schedules. Six projects programmed in the current TIP were identified as at risk for not being ready for advertisement in their programmed years:

- *Improvements to Commonwealth Avenue (Boston)* in FFY 2015
- *Tri-Community Bikeway (Winchester, Stoneham, and Woburn)* in FFY 2015
- *Reconstruction of Route 85 (Marlborough)* in FFY 2016
- *Gateway East (Brookline)* in FFY 2016
- *Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3 (Bedford, Billerica, and Burlington)* in FFY 2016
- *Reconstruction and Widening on Route 18 (Weymouth and Abington)* in FFY 2016

The TIP tables reflect ongoing commitments from the FFY 2015-18 TIP and projects programmed in the current LRTP, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*. It also includes new projects that were selected based on project readiness and the MPO's guidance to staff which directed them to focus programming on lower cost operations and management projects. Following the MPO's guidance, staff selected projects from the First Tier list of projects, which are the projects that received the highest scores in the MPO's evaluation process.

After consulting with MassDOT about project readiness, staff moved two projects out of the FFY 2016 element to reflect more realistic advertising dates. The *Reconstruction of Route 85 (Marlborough)* project was moved to FFY 2017 and the *Gateway East (Brookline)* project was moved to FFY 2018.

This action left available funds in the FFY 2016 element for the programming of the *Reconstruction of Massachusetts Avenue (Lexington)* project and the *Intersection Improvements at Middle Street, Libbey Industrial Parkway and Tara Drive (Weymouth)* project, as well as for increasing the cash flows for the *Route 128 Add-a-Lane (Needham, Wellesley)* project.

For the FFY 2017 element, staff identified projects that could be made ready in that year and selected two adjoining projects in Hingham: the *Intersection Improvements at Derby Street* and *Reconstruction and Related work on Derby Street*. The MassDOT District Office advised that the projects should be constructed at the same time. Additional funds in that year were programmed for the *Route 128 Add-a-Lane* project.

Available unprogrammed funds in the FFY 2018 element were used to program the *Reconstruction of Route 1A (Walpole)* project. This project was on the First Tier List of projects and can be made ready by FFY 2018.

Projects programmed in the FFY 2019 element are the ongoing commitments to the *Green Line Extension (from College Avenue to Route 16, Medford)* and the *Reconstruction and Widening on Route 18 (Weymouth)*. The following projects were also programmed in that year:

- *Signal and Intersection Improvements on Route 135 (Hopkinton)*
- *Reconstruction of Ferry Street (Everett)*
- *Reconstruction of Route 27 (Natick)*
- *Improvements on Boylston Street (Boston)*
- *Resurfacing and Intersection Improvements on Route 16 (Milford)*
- *Reconstruction of Route 129 (Lynn)*

Descriptions and information about the newly added projects were provided in the memorandum.

Discussion

S. Olanoff asked whether the additional funding in the FFY 2016 element for the *Route 128 Add-a-Lane* project will allow the project to be completed earlier. S. Pflazer explained that the total amount of money allocated for the project remains the same, but that, as programmed, there will be more funding for it in FFY 2016 and less in FFY 2018. This change does not affect the completion time of the project.

Laura Wiener, At-Large Town of Arlington, asked whether the available funds in the FFY 2016 element could be programmed for the *Green Line Extension* project.

D. Mohler replied that the MPO should not be changing the cash flows of projects during TIP development when those cash flows are conceptual, as they are for the *Green Line Extension* project. In the case of the *Route 128 Add-a-Lane* project, the project is ongoing and there is confidence that the additional funds can be spent in FFY 2016.

D. Koses questioned why the top rated project on the First Tier List – the *Reconstruction of Highland Avenue and Needham Street (Newton, Needham)* project –

was not included in the recommendation. S. Pfalzer explained that when developing the staff recommendation, staff followed the guidance from the MPO to prioritize lower cost operation and management projects, which is also the principle that guided the development of Alternative 2 of the LRTP.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), noted that of the top 25 highest rated projects, all were programmed except the *Reconstruction on Route 126 (Ashland)* project. Further, projects that scored lower than that project were programmed. S. Pfalzer explained that MassDOT Highway Division identified FFY 2019 as a realistic year for advertisement for the *Route 126* project, however, after programming other highly rated projects, there was insufficient funding in the FFY 2019 element for that project. D. Giombetti stated that the Town of Ashland believes the project can be made ready prior to FFY 2019.

Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), asked why the *Reconstruction of Highland Avenue and Needham Street* project is considered to be a Major Infrastructure project while the more expensive *Reconstruction of Route 1A (Walpole)* project is not. D. Mohler explained that the *Reconstruction of Highland Avenue and Needham Street* project adds capacity to the system because the project area contains a bridge that is a link in the MPO's model. Members then discussed the policy that has excluded the project from the LRTP. D. Koses remarked that the bridge portion of the project is very short and is merely changing the lane structure and making it a Complete Street.

A motion to program the *Reconstruction of Highland Avenue and Needham Street* project on the TIP and direct staff to determine what other project should be removed from the TIP to make room for it was made by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (S. Olanoff). The motion failed for lack of a second.

D. Crowley suggested that the MPO prepare a five-year TIP and noted that a motion to that effect may be made at the next meeting. D. Mohler expressed that if it were a five-year TIP, the document would then align with the planning timeframes for MassDOT's Capital Investment Program. Leah Sirmin, FHWA, noted that federal regulations only require a four-year plan, so that a fifth year of the TIP would be considered informational only to FHWA.

D. Giombetti asked how the state would treat projects in the fifth year of the TIP. D. Mohler replied that MassDOT gives the most attention to projects in the first and second years of the TIP (due to staff constraints less attention can be paid to projects in the third and fourth years). D. Anderson provided details about the timeline MassDOT uses for reviewing projects.

E. Bourassa inquired about the proponents of the two projects in Hingham and the projects' designs. S. Pfalzer explained that the proponent of the *Intersection Improvements at Derby Street* project is MassDOT, while the Town of Hingham is the proponent of the *Reconstruction and Related work on Derby Street* project. D. Anderson added that the projects will be designed independently until at the 100% design stage.

S. Pfalzer reported that MassDOT has expressed a desire to have the work on the *Route 128 Add-a-Lane* project completed before the *Reconstruction of Highland Avenue and Needham Street* project goes forward. FFY 2019 would be the appropriate year of programming for the *Reconstruction of Highland Avenue and Needham Street* project.

D. Anderson advised members that there are two projects programmed in FFY 2016 that will have to be watched to ensure that they will be ready for advertisement in that year. The design of the *Reconstruction and Widening on Route 18* project is going well, but the project requires the acquisition of significant right-of-way. The *Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3* project must go through its NEPA re-evaluation, the wetland mitigation strategy must be developed, and a wetland variance must be filed.

A. Strang asked whether any bridges owned by the Department of Conservation (DCR) and Recreation are included in the LRTP, TIP, or UPWP. S. Pfalzer replied that there are none programmed in the LRTP or TIP. The *Gateway East* project involves some interaction with DCR facilities though.

8. Members Items

There were none.

9. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (John Romano), and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
At-Large City (City of Newton)	Mayor Setti Warren 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	Leah Sirmin
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler David Anderson
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)	Mayor Scott Galvin 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)	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Abdul Alkhatib	Town of Billerica
Sreelatha Allam	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Bob Bailey	Boston Children's Hospital
Tegin Bennett	City of Cambridge
Matt Borrelli	Town of Needham
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT District 3
Robert Buckley	Riemer & Braunstein
William Buckley	Office of State Representative John Rogers
Garrett Burns	Office of State Representative Paul McMurtry
Michelle Ciccolo	Town of Hudson/Town of Lexington
Darren Conboy	Jacobs Engineering Group
Stephanie Cronin	Middlesex 3 Coalition
John Curran	Town of Billerica
Anthony Delgaizo	Town of Needham, Department of Public Works
Trish Domigan	Vanasse Hangen Brustlin
Kenneth Donnelly	State Senator
Brian Drydale	Town of Westwood
Jim Dwyer	State Representative
Shawn Finn	IBEW Local103
Kate Fitzpatrick	Town of Needham
James Freas	City of Newton
Bill Friel	Town of Canton
Michael Glavin	City of Somerville
Bill Hadley	Town of Lexington
Rich Haggerty	Town of Woburn
Andrew Hall	City of Lynn, Department of Public Works
Moe Handel	Town of Needham
Sara Hines	Ashland Redevelopment Authority
Michael Jaillet	Town of Westwood
David Knowlton	City of Salem
Sam Larson	Office of State Representative Kenneth Gordon
John Livsey	Town of Lexington
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Owen MacDonald	Town of Weymouth
Diane Madden	MassDOT

Other Attendees	Affiliation
John Mahoney	Office of State Representative William Galvin
Joseph Manning	IBEW Local 103
David Manugion	Town of Ashland
Jeremy Marsette	Town of Natick
Anne McKinnon	Jacobs Engineering Group
Richard P. Merson	Town of Needham, Department of Public Works
Jennifer Molina	City of Somerville
John Morgan	CHA Companies
John Olivieri	MASSPIRG
E. Petrie	HNTB
Evan Pilachowski	City of Marlborough, Department of Public Works
Constance Raphael	MassDOT District 4
Cecilia Regan	Office of State Representative John Rogers
Vonnie Reis	Town of Milford
Ellin Reisner	Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership
Kevin Shea	Town of Hudson
Elli Spring	Office of State Representative Denise Garlick
Jesse Steadman	Town of Stow
Arthur Strang	Cambridge resident
David Turocy	City of Newton, Department of Public Works
Zachary Veamer	MassDOT District 6
Joe Viola	Town of Brookline
Wig Zamore	Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership / Mystic View Task Force

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director

Maureen Kelly

Anne McGahan

Elizabeth Moore

Scott Peterson

Sean Pfalzer

Natalie Raffol

Pam Wolfe
