

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

June 10, 2015 Meeting

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

Meeting Summary

Introductions

Mike Gowing, Chair (Acton) called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 5)

Chair's Report—*Mike Gowing, Chair*

M. Gowing noted that Pam Wolfe recently retired from CTPS and that a card and gift from the Advisory Council is being sent to her.

The Advisory Council will attempt to send a letter to the MPO tomorrow on the three Boston Region MPO certification documents including the LRTP, TIP and UPWP.

MASSRIDES - Rebecca Cyr, Deputy Project Manager and Gary St. Fleur, Statewide Coordinator

G. St. Fleur gave a brief overview of the functions of MASSRIDES which is a statewide travel option program that encourages mode shift. MassRIDES advocates for the use of carpools, vanpools, transit, bike, walk and telework with the overall goal of reducing traffic congestion and air pollution. This is accomplished through outreach and worksite services that reach employers and commuters.

Program development must be flexible as each workplace has specific commuting characteristics. MassRIDES is engaged with over 325 partner organizations influencing over 465,000 commuters with a focus on commuter travel. The extensive outreach activity includes a commute options program. This program advocates for preferential parking, bike racks, showers, lockers, availability of transit passes and monthly promotions. Another attraction to pooling is the Emergency Ride Home feature which allows for flexibility for riders to deal with possible unforeseen need to return home during the day.

NuRide is a new program that gives rewards for restaurants, shops and online shopping as an incentive to record personal and work trips.

Questions and Comments (Part 1):

G. Saint Fleur confirmed that the 465,000 number of contacts-made statistic is the employment of all the workplaces that the program works with in response to a member's question. He also explained that the MassRIDES programs membership of 20,000 members are from throughout the State and is not limited to companies that are participating in the program. (T. Bennett)

G. Saint Fleur stated that commuter and business suggestions are passed along to the MBTA and to MassDOT when the standard NuRide metrics are not available. (D. Montgomery)

In response to a question from a member G. Saint Fleur stated that the metrics used are supportive of the impact on air quality reduction. (R. McGaw)

In response to a question from a member on emergency ride home G. Saint Fleur explained that the reimbursement is submitted online. The reimbursement for emergency ride home is connected to the rider's employer-participant account. This service can be used up to four times per year. (M. Gowing, J. McQueen)

G. Saint Fleur stated that NuRide trips are for work related trips in response to a member's question. (B. Steinberg)

MassRIDES also administers the Safe Routes to School Program which creates safer streets, promotes physical activity and builds sustainable environments in over 180 communities throughout the Commonwealth. The program covers approximately 43 percent of all schools in the state serving 300,000 students. The safety program encouraging walking to school addresses the need to reduce traffic congestion, and to improve on physical activity to heighten learning capacity and healthy living. Benefits to walking to school along safe routes include reduction of pollutants brought on by idling cars and the reduction in tardiness.

The statewide program achieves education on pedestrian safety at various pilot schools focused on 4th – 8th graders. In addition, "encouragement activities" like Walk/Bike to School Days and Walking Clubs help to spread the word on bike safety. Program areas of enforcement, evaluation and engineering all serve the goal to increase overall safety of those already walking/biking or make it possible for students to walk/bike upon completion of the training program.

Questions and Comments (Part 2):

G. Saint Fleur acknowledged that there are formal programs to work with town planning and public works departments to develop tools to identify the routes for making true

improvements. The program goal is to establish a task force inside the community so as to have all involved stakeholders be involved. (J. McQueen)

Rebecca Cyr explained that there are hundreds of thousands of elementary and middle schoolchildren being introduced to the SRTS program in the 700 schools currently being served. Currently, a team of about fourteen professionals at MassRIDES manage the statewide programs. (J. McDougall, S. Ringler)

Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes for the May13, 2015, meeting was seconded. The minutes were approved with corrections.

Comment Letter to the MPO - *Chris Porter, LRTP Committee Chair*

C. Porter explained that all three certification documents will be addressed in one letter. In the first section, dedicated to the LRTP, the Committee indicated support for the Operations and Management (O&M) Scenario based on the points covered at the last meeting. The second paragraph expresses agreement with general approach of designating funding for types of smaller projects rather than specific small projects outside the current TIP period. Reasons behind this preference are given.

One of the bulleted suggestions includes the issue of current funding constraint. It is proposed that other scenarios might be presented showing what benefits might result in a higher level of funding in making the case for more investment. The second bullet acknowledges that there are currently three different agencies doing planning for the Metro area and ideally it would be one process. The final bullet explains the Advisory Council's interest in continued involvement in the process.

The second section is dedicated to the TIP. The Advisory Council affirms the sound process and reasonable project selection methods employed. Appreciation is expressed for objective criteria, with a suggestion that changing up the weights and measures be studied for their impacts on other outcomes. The committee recommends that quantitative methods should be improved and employed whenever possible.

The third section discusses the UPWP. The Committee supports the cross-section of projects that are being advanced. It would be helpful to document the outcomes of past projects to guarantee that projects that are being selected have an impact on planning project selection.

Questions and Discussion:

Discussion was opened on the substantive content of the draft letter. J. McQueen felt that the TIP section might benefit by adding an example from the current TIP where a problem may have evolved in the planning process. M. Gowing expressed concern over placement on the evaluation list and final list of projects that actually progress, and

he stated that staff had supporting reasons for project evaluation considerations, but there are other factors that go into the evaluation based on evaluation criteria, such as project readiness and geographic distribution of projects.

D. Montgomery supports the need to be flexible enough to consider the time-bands of projects that consistently score significantly higher than other projects that might be scheduled in an advanced time-band when possible.

M. Wellons expressed an interest in making sure that safety improvements which come with high capital options will not be foregone by implementing smaller projects. M. Gowing indicated that high accident location analysis is part of the selection process of improving safety at selected intersections and corridors. C. Porter recognized that benefits lost from not selecting high capital projects are lost, but there are other associated safety benefits resulting from the smaller lower capital projects as well. R. McGaw suggested that the term "traffic safety" be added to the list of important goals for the region. M. Wellons also supported the UPWP inclusion of noise pollution assessment in selected corridor studies through the environmental justice studies.

Several document style and formatting ideas were discussed and incorporated into the letter.

Old Business, New Business and Member Announcements

S. Ringler, MA350 member, asked that RTAC emphasize the real issues relative to climate change in the future.

T. Bennett pointed out the MBTA and MassDOT just released the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) documents.

M. Gowing noted that Acton hosted the June 4 MPO Away meeting.

D. Fargen noted that a field trip is being planned in lieu of a regular meeting in July. Details of a field trip to the South Shore are being considered. The proposed Commuter Boat trip would go from Boston to Hingham aboard the Commuter Boat. The return trip, by commuter bus, would pass through several MPO sponsored projects before returning to Boston. Members will be informed of the trip details once trip plans are finalized within the next few days.

ATTENDANCE

Agencies (Voting)

MassRides

Gary St. Fleur

Municipalities (Voting)

Acton

Mike Gowing

Belmont

Bob McGaw

Cambridge

Tegin Bennett

Needham

David Montgomery

Weymouth

Weymouth

Municipalities (Non-Voting)

Boston

Tom Kadzis

Citizen Groups (Voting)

American Council of Engineering Companies

Thomas Daley

Association for Public Transportation

Barry M. Steinberg

Boston Society of Architects

Schuyler Larrabee

Massachusetts Bus Association

Mark Sanborn

MassBike

Chris Porter

MassCommute

Julia Prange Wallerice

MASCO

Paul Nelson

Riverside Neighborhood Association

Marilyn Wellons

WalkBoston

John McQueen

Guests

Susan Ringler

350MA

John MacDougall

350MA

Frank DeMasi

Association for Public
Transportation

Christopher Blackler

East Boston Resident

Ed Lowney

Malden Resident

Staff

Matt Archer

David Fargen

Robin Mannion