

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

June 16, 2016 Meeting

10:05 AM – 12:25 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)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreed to the following:

- approve the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2017 operating budget for the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)
- approve Amendment Four to the Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2016-20 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- approve an adjustment to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP
- release Draft Amendment Five to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP for a 30-day public review period
- approve the list of projects in Draft Amendment One to the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Charting Progress to 2040*, so that staff can perform travel demand modeling for air quality and environmental justice analyses (in advance of releasing the amendment for public review)

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

Members of the public made comments on the following projects and answered MPO members' questions:

Reconstruction of Melnea Cass Boulevard (Boston)

Anthony Thomas, Legislative Aide to Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, expressed the Senator's support for the *Reconstruction of Melnea Cass Boulevard (Boston)* project and discussed the importance of the project to the district for improving safety and bringing economic and environmental benefits to the area. He noted that there is a school along the corridor and between 300 and 400 students walk along the busy corridor. The project would improve safety for those students and support Boston's Vision Zero campaign, which aims to eliminate serious and fatal accidents. He also noted that the project would help connect the neighborhoods of Roxbury and the South

End, and support economic development on the corridor where development is now occurring on empty parcels.

Valerie Shelly, a longtime (68 years) Roxbury resident and member of the Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard, advocated for the project. She noted that vehicles travelling at high speeds on the corridor make for hazardous conditions for residents, particularly students traveling to school and seniors who need to access the medical center and food store there.

Dorothea Hess, a member of WalkBoston and the Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard, urged the MPO to commit funding to the project. She spoke about the potential to turn the boulevard into a “complete street” that serves all users – transit riders, bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists. To do so, she said, traffic must be slowed on the boulevard. She noted that consultants for the City of Boston identified speeding vehicles as a problem on the wide roadway. The Friends are working with the city to create a design to knit together the neighborhoods of Roxbury and South End. She noted that the project will contribute to improving the quality-of-life of residents in the neighborhood.

Marah Holland, the Health Equity and Wellness Coordinator for the Madison Park Development Corporation and a member of the Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard, discussed the project as an equity issue. She read an excerpt from a statement by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Anthony Foxx, who is encouraging aspirations to eliminate the vestiges of racial discrimination from past decades when transportation decisions led to the building of infrastructure that became barriers between wealthy and poor neighborhoods. USDOT has established several principles to guide decision making on fixing broken links between neighborhoods: 1) transportation is essential to opportunity; 2) acknowledge that past wrongs have been committed and must not be repeated; and 3) transportation decisions must be made by, with, and for the people impacted by them. M. Holland noted that Boston Mayor Martin Walsh has signed his name in support of these principles.

Reconstruction of Main Street (Route 30) (Southborough)

Karen Galligan, Southborough Department of Public Works, provided an update on the *Reconstruction of Main Street (Route 30) (Southborough)* project and asked the MPO to keep the project programmed in the FFY 2018 element of the TIP. She reported that she is optimistic about the outcome of an upcoming town meeting where there will be a vote regarding the taking easements for the project.

MPO member Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), asked if the town meeting has been scheduled. K. Galligan replied that the town is expected to schedule the meeting in a couple of weeks.

Reconstruction on Route 126 (Pond Street) (Ashland)

Yolanda Greaves, Ashland Board of Selectmen, provided an update on the *Reconstruction on Route 126 (Pond Street) (Ashland)* project. She noted that a public forum was recently held in Ashland where many residents in and around the Route 126 corridor expressed support for the project. She encouraged the MPO to fund the project in FFY 2020.

Puja Mehta, Office of State Senator Karen Spilka, expressed the Senator's support for the project and asked that the MPO program the project in FFY 2020.

Andrea Green, Chair of the Ashland Redevelopment Authority, reported that the Authority considers the *Route 126* project as its most important project. The project has been in the town's master plan for the past ten years and is in its urban renewal plan. She discussed the project as one of the few economic development opportunities available to Ashland as Route 126 is one of only two major routes in the town. She reported that the roadway conditions are unsafe, and that there are safety concerns for young people who frequent the fast food restaurants on the corridor. She asked the MPO to program the project in FFY 2020.

Reconstruction of Union Avenue (Framingham)

Eric Johnson, Framingham's Town Engineer, provided an update on the *Reconstruction of Union Avenue (Framingham)* project. He stated that the town is executing a contract now to upgrade utilities along the Union Avenue corridor in advance of the TIP project. He remarked on the benefits of the project, which includes providing a regional benefit and access to the commuter rail public transportation.

Canal Street Rail Trail Construction, Phase 2 (Salem)

David Knowlton, City Engineer for Salem, representing Mayor Kim Driscoll, provided an update on the *Canal Street Rail Trail Construction, Phase 2 (Salem)* project. The city intends to complete the project on schedule with the *Canal Street Improvement* project, which is starting this month. In order to keep to the two-year construction schedule, the design for the rail trail project must be complete by the end of this year, so that construction can begin next spring. The city is requesting that the MPO provide \$2.4 million for the rail trail project. Assigning funds to the project will allow the city to request accelerated reviews of the project design by MassDOT, the MBTA, and Keolis.

Green Line Extension

Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation (CLF), reported that CLF has provided written comments regarding the MPO's proposed Amendment Four to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP. He expressed concern that the proposed action in Amendment Four – to shift federal funds from Phase 2 of the *Green Line Extension* project to support Phase 1 – will defund the construction of a Green Line station at Route 16 (Mystic Valley Parkway), which he said is a legally required part of the *Green Line Extension* project. He called for the MPO to take time to review a detailed budget, project scope, and procurement method for the revised Phase 1 project, prior to voting on Amendment Four, to determine the necessity of reprogramming the Phase 2 funds.

He also recommended the MPO explore potential cost-saving measures that could eliminate the need to shift funding from Phase 2. CLF has suggested a cost-savings option involving interruptions to commuter rail service and the addition of bus service during the construction period. (MassDOT sent a letter in response to the suggestion stating that the proposed measure would not provide the savings CLF has estimated.)

R. Mares also expressed concern that by shifting federal funds from Phase 2 to Phase 1, \$38 million in state matching funds (currently matching the \$152 million federal funding at the MPO's discretion) would be lost to the project.

2. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT*

There was none.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports

Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, reported that the MPO's Administration and Finance Committee met this morning. They addressed the SFY 2017 operating budget for CTPS.

4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Tegin Bennett, Advisory Council Chair*

T. Bennett reported that the Advisory Council meet on June 8 and is now finalizing comments on the TIP and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The Advisory Council will be having more topical conversations in the coming months, including a discussion about autonomous vehicles.

5. Executive Director's Report—*Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director*

K. Quackenbush announced that the FFY 2017 UPWP will be posted for public review by close of business today.

6. CTPS State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2017 Operating Budget—*Paul Regan, Chair, Administration and Finance Committee*

P. Regan reported that the MPO's Administration and Finance Committee met this morning to discuss the SFY 2017 operating budget for CTPS. This year's \$6.394 million budget represents a two-percent decrease from the SFY 2016 budget. The reduction is primarily due to payroll savings resulting from recent retirements.

A motion to approve the SFY 2017 operating budget for CTPS was made by the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) (Richard Reed), and seconded by the South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree) (Christine Stickney). The motion carried.

7. Federal Fiscal Years 2016-20 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment Four—*Lourenço Dantas, Manager of Certification Activities Group, MPO Staff*

The public review period for Amendment Four to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP closed on June 8. Staff provided members with a summary of the public comments received during that review period and made the complete written comments available. Staff also distributed two other letters that were received in the past week: a comment letter from the Mayor of Medford, and a letter from MassDOT responding to comments from CLF.

Amendment Four would allocate \$152 million of federal funds to support construction of Phase 1 of the *Green Line Extension* project, which will extend light rail from Lechmere Station in Cambridge through Somerville to College Avenue in Medford, with a spur line to Union Square. The funds would be transferred from Phase 2 of the project, a planned future extension of the line from College Avenue to Route 16 in Medford.

Having reviewed the amendment and public comments, members moved to a vote on the amendment.

A motion to approve Amendment Four to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (John Romano), and seconded by the MBTA (Thom Dugan). The motion carried.

8. Federal Fiscal Years 2016-20 Transportation Improvement Program Adjustments and Amendment Five—*Lourenço Dantas, Manager of Certification Activities Group, MPO Staff*

Staff provided an overview of an adjustment and an amendment to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP. The changed items are documented in Draft Amendment Five to the TIP. Members then heard a presentation on the *Dedham Street and Interstate 95 Interchange*

Reconstruction (Canton, Norwood, Westwood) project, which is one subject of the amendment.

TIP Adjustment and Amendment

L. Dantas provided the details of the amendment, which includes several adjustments to the cost estimates for statewide items, including the following: *Adaptive Signal Control on Route 9 (Framingham, Natick)*; bridge rehabilitation work in Braintree; and programs for the Cape Ann Transportation Authority.

The amended items include cost changes to the following projects programmed in the FFY 2016 fiscal element: *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2C (Concord)*; *Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 9 (Southborough)*; bridge rehabilitation work in Boston; *Dedham Street and Interstate 95 Interchange Reconstruction (Canton, Norwood, Westwood)*. There are also cost changes to the following projects in the FFY 2017 fiscal element: *Reconstruction and Widening on Route 18 (Weymouth, Abington)*, and *Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3 (Bedford, Billerica, Burlington)*.

Discussion

Tom O'Rourke, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce), asked for more information about the cost changes to the *Dedham Street and Interstate 95 Interchange Reconstruction* project. D. Mohler explained that the project was advertised for \$52 million in September 2015. A new cost assessment has revealed that the project will cost \$16.8 million more than the cost at the time of advertisement. The cost increase is reflected in the amendment and, when approved, MassDOT will release a notice of the new cost for bidders. The additional cost will be paid from a statewide funding source, not the MPO's discretionary funding. The cost change to this state-funded project is being incorporated in the TIP amendment, however because of new federal reporting requirements.

Presentation on Dedham Street and Interstate 95 Interchange Reconstruction

Mike Furly, MassDOT Project Manager, and Marie Sullivan, Stantec, then gave a presentation regarding the cost changes to the *Dedham Street and Interstate 95 Interchange Reconstruction* project.

They explained that the project area is a one mile corridor with two lanes of traffic and no bicycle or pedestrian accommodations. The project would widen the roadway to four lanes (five a lanes at the bridge over Interstate 95), add a sidewalk on one side and bicycle lanes on both sides of the roadway, replace a bridge over Interstate 95, add a new off-ramp from the highway to Dedham Street, and add three traffic signals.

The project is located within an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Because of environmental concerns, the project includes the construction of 18 retaining walls (about two miles in length). The overhead utilities will be relocated underground. The project also includes the addition of street lighting, a timber walkway, and storm water infrastructure improvements.

The primary reason for the project cost increase is because of the current trends in the price of concrete, which has added nearly \$10 million to the project cost. Additionally, the cost of pre-cast concrete items increased significantly because MassDOT changed the requirement for concrete curing times. Other significant cost increases resulted from the price of steel for bridge work.

Discussion

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston, asked the presenters to comment about the initial estimates and the reference points used in the cost reassessment. M. Sullivan reported that the prior cost estimate for the project was developed in January 2015. Over the following year, the project team saw the trend of increasing concrete costs. Because the project would require a significant amount of concrete, MassDOT hired an independent estimator who verified MassDOT's concerns. This led to a reassessment of the cost of other construction materials, as well.

Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), asked why MassDOT has changed the standard for the curing time of pre-cast concrete items. M. Sullivan explained that longer curing times are now required to improve the performance of the concrete and avoid hairline fractures.

Ken Miller, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), asked if the project team considered using different amounts of concrete or using other materials. M. Furly explained that there are constraints because of the project area, which is in an ACEC containing wetlands, endangered species habitat, and state parkland. Retaining walls are the least expensive way of reducing right-of-way takings in the area.

Votes

A motion to approve an adjustment to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP was made by the City of Boston (J. Gillooly), and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan). The motion carried.

A motion to release Draft Amendment Five to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP for a 30-day public review period was made by the City of Boston (J. Gillooly), and seconded by the South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree) (C. Stickney). The motion carried.

9. Federal Fiscal Years 2017-21 Transportation Improvement Program—*Lourenço Dantas, Manager of Certification Activities Group, MPO Staff*

Members were provided with project tables showing the staff recommendation for programming the FFYs 2017-21 TIP, descriptions of new projects recommended for programming, and a summary of public comments received to date.

Highway Program

L. Dantas provided an overview of the staff recommendation for the TIP highway program. The staff recommendation reflects the MPO members' interest in changing project cash flows to minimize delays in the programming projects. As such, the recommendation maintains the programming of the *Reconstruction of Highland Avenue and Needham Street (Newton, Needham)* project in the FFY 2018 fiscal element, which was made possible by changing the cash flows of the *Route 128 Add-a-Lane (Needham, Wellesley)* and *Reconstruction and Widening on Route 18 (Weymouth, Abington)* projects.

The recommendation delays the *Reconstruction of Main Street (Route 30) (Southborough)* and the *Intersection and Signal Improvements at Route 9 and Village Square (Gateway East) (Brookline)* projects one year, from FFY 2017 to FFY 2018, because of readiness concerns.

The recommendation supports the MPO's members' request to program the *Reconstruction of Melnea Cass Boulevard (Boston)* project in the FFY 2019 fiscal element. The *Improvements on Boylston Street (Boston)* project was delayed to FFY 2020 as a result. The *Canal Street Rail Trail Construction, Phase 2 (Salem)* project was also added to the FFY 2019 element.

As requested by members, the multiyear *Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue (Boston)* project will begin in FFY 2020. This decision resulted in delaying the *New Boston Street Bridge (Woburn)* project to FFY 2021.

Available funds in the FFY 2021 element were programmed for several new projects that were on the First Tier List of TIP project: *Reconstruction of Union Avenue (Framingham)*; *Reconstruction of Union Street (Holbrook)*; *Intersection Improvements at Three Locations (Beverly)*; *Intersection Improvements at Route 1 and University Avenue/Everett Street (Norwood)*; and set-asides for the Community Transportation Program.

Discussion

D. Mohler reported that \$17.4 million worth of earmarks for the *Melnea Cass Boulevard* project, which are reflected in the TIP tables, are not yet available for the project. MassDOT, the City of Boston, and Congressman Michael Capuano's Office are working together to request that the federal government reassign earmarks originally intended for projects on the East Boston Haul Road and Museum Road and Forsyth Way in Boston, as those project have been constructed with other funding.

Laura Gilmore O'Connor, Massachusetts Port Authority, noted that the funding for *Melnea Cass Boulevard* includes an earmark originally intended for a freight project. She expressed the Port Authority's hope that there will be other opportunities to partner with MassDOT and the City of Boston on freight projects.

David Koses, At-Large City of Newton, expressed the city's support for the staff recommendation as it preserves the programming position of the number one ranked project, reduces delays to other projects, and incorporates new projects.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), also expressed support for the staff recommendation and recognized the creative solutions to dealing with project cost overruns that were affecting other projects. He complemented both MassDOT and the MPO staff for their work.

T. Bennett reported that the staff recommendation reflects well the Advisory Council's comments. The Advisory Council has been supportive of the updates to the MPO's project evaluation process and for programming "complete streets" projects in the early years of the TIP. She noted that the Advisory Council looks forward to the MPO's upcoming conversations about the reason for project cost overruns going. She also expressed the Advisory Council's concerns that off-street path projects are scoring lower than highway projects in the MPO's evaluation process, and the Advisory Council's interest in having those projects ranked separately from highway projects.

T. Bennett asked why some high-scoring projects, such as the *Rehabilitation of Mount Auburn Street (Watertown)* project, were not included in the staff recommendation.

L. Dantas noted that staff selected the *Reconstruction of Union Avenue (Framingham)* as a "complete streets" project to fund in FFY 2021 because it was at a greater level of readiness than the *Mount Auburn Street* project. This decision also allowed for the programming of the *Reconstruction of Union Street (Holbrook)* in FFY 2021, which gives consideration to geographic equity in the distribution of TIP funding.

T. Bennett inquired about the score for the *Melnea Cass Boulevard* project. L. Dantas reported that staff assigned a score of 61 points, which makes it the second highest ranking “complete streets” project.

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), requested that staff provide the original cost estimates of TIP projects on the TIP tables. K. Quackenbush noted that the original cost estimates were provided previously in a report on cost estimation of projects; staff intends to provide that information in the future on a single TIP document.

D. Crowley observed that the proposed TIP programming allocates only two percent of funding to the South West Advisory Planning Committee subregion over a six-year period. He asked staff to consider geographic equity for suburban and rural areas when allocating funding for in the future. K. Quackenbush noted that staff is keeping track of geographic dispersion of funding over time and staff will be able to provide more information about that to members.

J. Gillooly thanked staff for recognizing that the *Melnea Cass* project is a high priority for the city.

Richard Canale, At-Large Town of Lexington, suggested that staff provide information about how the new project scoring system affects towns in general as opposed to urban areas.

D. Mohler asked why staff chose to delay the *Reconstruction on Route 129 (Lynn)* project instead of the *Resurfacing and Intersection Improvements on Route 16 (Milford)* project. L. Dantas explained that the Lynn project was costlier and had an increase in cost, and that delaying the Lynn project allowed for the programming of the *Canal Street Rail Trail Construction, Phase 2 (Salem)* project, as well.

Vote

A motion to approve the highway program of the FFYs 2017-21 TIP for an upcoming public review period was made by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham) (D. Giombetti), and seconded by the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) (R. Reed). The motion carried.

Transit Program

Members were provided with tables showing the proposed transit projects for the MBTA, MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA), and Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA). Thom Dugan, MBTA, discussed the transition to providing a greater level of detail at the project level in the TIP, which will more closely parallel the

programming in the MBTA's Capital Investment Plan (CIP). The CIP is expected to be approved on June 20, after which the TIP tables will be updated.

Discussion

K. Miller asked that the MPO have a future meeting agenda item to discuss the action items following the MPO's last federal certification review. He noted that one of the recommendations from the review involved better involving the MWRTA and CATA in the MPO's planning processes.

T. Bennett inquired about funding for improvements to the Red and Green Line systems. T. Dugan discussed that projects in the CIP that are not funded with federal dollars may not be reflected in the TIP, including those funded by the MBTA's "pay-go" program. The "pay-go" program is funded from savings in the MBTA's operating budget. The MBTA is forecasting the spending of about \$700 million of "pay-go" funding over the next five years. E. Bourassa noted that the other MBTA capital funding sources are federal formula funds (reflected in the TIP), revenue bonds, and state funding.

E. Bourassa asked if the MBTA is using only non-federal sources to purchase revenue vehicles. T. Dugan replied that the MBTA will be using Section 5307 federal formula funds for those purchases; details will be provided after the CIP is approved. (In the current tables the funding for those purchases is shown under the "unallocated funds" line item.) T. Dugan assured members that the details will be available before the MPO votes on endorsing the final TIP.

D. Crowley asked if the Positive Train Control project has been advertised and if the \$154 million shown in that line item is for the entire project. T. Dugan replied yes to both questions.

L. Dantas noted that the TIP document will be updated with more definition on transit projects after the CIP is approved, and with a list of state-funded highway projects.

D. Mohler added that the statewide highway list is not available yet.

Vote

A motion to approve the transit program of the FFYs 2017-21 TIP, as presented today, for an upcoming public review was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan), and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

Members agreed to table a vote to release the full FFYs 2017-21 TIP for a 30-day public review period until June 23 when complete details on MBTA projects and statewide highway projects will be available.

10. Long-Range Transportation Plan Amendment One—Anne McGahan, MPO Staff

MPO staff presented changes to Draft Amendment One to the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Charting Progress to 2040*, and discussed the schedule for public review of the MPO's certification documents. MassDOT Highway Division staff also gave a presentation on the *Reconstruction of the Interstate 90 and Interstate 495 Interchange (Hopkinton, Westborough)* project, which is included in the amendment.

Changes to Amendment One

Amendment One to the LRTP was presented to members on June 2. The primary reason for Amendment One is to make the LRTP consistent with the FFYs 2016–20 TIP and its amendments, the proposed FFYs 2017–21 TIP, and the Massachusetts Capital Investment Program (CIP). The CIP documents projects prioritized by the state.

The LRTP documents regionally significant projects and investment programs planned over a 25-year timeline. For planning purposes, regionally significant projects are considered to be those that either will add capacity to the transportation system or that cost more than \$20 million. Projects programmed in the LRTP are ultimately programmed through the TIP when they are within five years of implementation.

Today, A. McGahan presented updates to Amendment One. Members were provided with tables showing the proposed programming of projects. The changes to the tables since the June 2 meeting include the following:

- updates to cash flows of the *Route 128 Add-a-Lane (Needham, Wellesley)* project consistent with FFYs 2017-21 TIP programming
- addition of funding for the *Ramp Construction on Interstate 95 (northbound) and Improvements on Canton Street and Dedham Street (Canton, Norwood, Westwood)* project in the FFY 2016 element
- cost increases to the *Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3 (Bedford, Billerica, Burlington)* and *Reconstruction and Widening on Route 18 (Weymouth, Abington)* projects consistent with Amendment Five to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP and FFYs 2017-21 TIP programming
- transfer of funds to Phase 1 of the *Green Line Extension (Lechmere Station to Union Square in Somerville and College Avenue in Medford)* from Phase 2 (College Avenue to Route 16 in Medford), in keeping with Amendment Four of the FFYs 2016-20 TIP and FFYs 2017-21 TIP programming
- addition of the *Reconstruction of Melnea Cass Boulevard (Boston)* project consistent with FFYs 2017-21 TIP programming; the project costs more the \$20 million, so it must be programming the it LRTP

- updates to cash flows for the *Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue (Boston)* project to reflect the programming of earmarks
- cost increase to the *New Boston Street Bridge (Woburn)* project, now programmed in the FFY 2021 element
- documentation of funding for two regionally significant projects in the Boston Region that are programmed in the CIP: the *Reconstruction of the Interstate 90 and Interstate 495 Interchange (Hopkinton, Westborough)* project and the project for a new bridge connection from Burgin Parkway over the MBTA railroad in Quincy

Members were also provided with written descriptions of the two CIP projects.

Discussion

E. Bourassa asked if there are any state-funded highway projects that will be added to the LRTP when the statewide project list becomes available. D. Mohler replied no.

Presentation on the Interstate 90 and Interstate 495 Interchange Project

Renata Welch, MassDOT Highway Division, gave a presentation on the *Reconstruction of the Interstate 90 and Interstate 495 Interchange (Hopkinton, Westborough)* project and discussed MassDOT's plans to address the congestion, safety, and mobility issues at the interchange. The implementation of an all-electronic tolling system provides an opportunity to address the problems at the interchange.

The deficiencies at the interchange were identified in a 2012-13 MassDOT planning study and more fully explored in a 2014 feasibility study. The interchange was constructed in the 1960s and its geometry is now substandard and unable to handle current traffic volumes. Interstate 495 is a major truck route and this location is considered a "freight significant route." Safety issues include weaving conflicts at the toll plaza, traffic queues, and truck rollovers at the ramps. The project aims to eliminate weaving, upgrade the interchange design, reduce travel time and congestion, and minimize impacts to the environment.

The interchange is located within an ACEC containing protected species habitat and a floodplain. The design of the reconstructed interchange is constrained by these environmental factors. The project requires an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) as per its Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) certificate.

After evaluating approximately 20 concept designs, MassDOT is considering three final concepts: Concepts 14-4, 14-5, and 22-3. Traffic modeling conducted for the feasibility study showed that all three concepts would provide an acceptable level of traffic operations, address traffic weaving, and reduce congestion. The concepts differ in

terms of the degree of improvement that could be achieved and the magnitude of impacts on the surrounding natural resource areas.

Public outreach conducted to date includes interactions with FHWA and regulatory agencies in 2014, meetings with the 495/MetroWest Corridor Partnership, and public information meetings.

MassDOT has hired consultants to develop the preliminary design and prepare environmental documentation. The project must be programmed in the LRTP and MassDOT's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to advance the environmental documentation and engage FHWA in the design process. August 2020 is the target date for advertising the project.

Discussion

J. Gillooly asked if the environmental rules would credit the project for reducing the roadway footprint in a way that restores more land to a natural state. R. Welch replied that such improvements would be counted favorably. She noted that such restorations would be documented, particularly those in the areas of protected habitat.

T. Bennett asked if the cost of natural restoration is included in the project cost estimate. R. Welch replied that environmental mitigation is not included in the cost estimate.

T. Bennett asked if the \$270 million for the project to be programmed in the LRTP would cover the cost of any of the three design concepts. D. Mohler replied that the figure is for the mid-range estimate adjusted for inflation.

T. Bennett asked if traffic modeling has been conducted to determine potential greenhouse gas reductions resulting from the interchange redesign. R. Welch replied that such air quality impacts would be evaluated for the EIR. D. Mohler added that an assumed project alternative would be among the group of LRTP projects evaluated for regional air quality impacts.

D. Crowley asked about the numbers of lanes on the proposed flyovers. R. Welch replied that there would be two lanes in the flyover going northbound to eastbound on Interstate 495 and one lane on Interstate 90 westbound to Interstate 495 southbound.

R. Canale asked if cost-sharing between the Boston Region MPO and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) is anticipated considering that the project area is on the border of the two regional planning areas. R. Welch reported that about 70 percent of the project area is in Hopkinton, in the Boston Region MPO

area, and about 30 percent is in Westborough, the CMRPC area. D. Mohler explained that the project will not be funded with MPO discretionary funding. With the MPOs' approval, it will be listed in the LRTPs of both the Boston Region MPO and the CMRPC, will full state funding shown on the Boston Region MPO's LRTP.

R. Canale asked about MassDOT's priorities for scheduling other major interchange projects. D. Mohler noted that because the *Interstate 90 and Interstate 495 Interchange* project is partially on Interstate 90, it is eligible to receive some funding from toll revenues. Other major intersection projects in this region (in Canton, Woburn, and Concord) are not eligible to receive toll funding. He noted that MassDOT's list of long-range priorities is in the CIP.

K. Miller expressed concern that a more collaborative approach to project selection should be established between MassDOT and the MPOs, as MPOs have an obligation under federal law to conduct long-range planning for the region.

D. Mohler noted that MassDOT held significant public outreach during the development of the CIP and that public comment will also be accepted on June 20 when the MassDOT Board of Directors and the MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB) vote on the CIP.

T. O'Rourke asked about the amount of toll funding available for the *Interstate 90 and Interstate 495 Interchange* project and how the balance of the project cost would be funded. D. Mohler stated that a cursory estimate, based on the portion of the project that is on Interstate 90, about 40 percent of the project cost could come from toll funds. MassDOT's legal and fiscal department is conducting a detailed review to determine the amount eligible to come from toll funding. The balance would come from state revenues.

E. Bourassa suggested that MassDOT consider scheduling the CIP development process earlier next year to better coincide with the MPOs' TIP processes. He expressed concern that the current scheduling does not allow the MPO to get a good sense of statewide project prioritization until the very end of the TIP development process. He also suggested that, during the next development cycle, MassDOT provide a presentation to the MPO on the CIP before it is released for public review. D. Mohler stated that the MassDOT Board of Directors and the FMCB expressed a desire to better align these processes.

Vote

A motion to approve the list of projects in Draft Amendment One to the LRTP, so that staff can perform travel demand modeling for air quality and environmental justice

analyses (in advance of releasing the amendment for public review), was made by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham) (D. Giombetti), and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

Schedule for Public Review

Staff distributed a schedule for the public review periods for the certification documents. They are as follows:

- Amendment Five to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP
 - Public review period: June 24 to July 23
 - Vote to endorse: July 28
- FFYs 2017-21 TIP
 - Public review period: June 24 to July 23
 - Vote to endorse: July 28
- Amendment One to the LRTP
 - Public review period: July 12 to August 10
 - Vote to endorse: July 18
- FFY 2017 UPWP
 - Public review period: June 17 to July 18
 - Vote to endorse: July 28

Discussion

D. Mohler asked if the schedule allows staff enough time to model projects for Draft Amendment One to the LRTP. K. Quackenbush noted that major changes to the set of projects (involving lane reductions or additions) can produce disruptions in traffic patterns in the model set; however, in this case, staff is not anticipating having problems.

The upcoming schedule of MPO meetings was also discussed. The MPO will convene on June 23, July 7, July 28, and August 18.

11. Members Items

J. Gillooly announced that the next meeting about the design process for the *Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue (Boston)* project will be held on June 30.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan). 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
	Patrick Hoey
	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Kenneth Miller
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	Marie Rose
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Port Authority	Laura Gilmore
	O'Connor
MBTA	Thom Dugan
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)	Richard Reed
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Aaron Clausen
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Tegin Bennett
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
Matt Borrelli	Needham Board of Selectmen
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT District 3

Kate Fitzpatrick	Town of Needham
Mike Furly	MassDOT
Karen Galligan	Town of Southborough
Yolanda Greaves	Ashland Board of Selectmen
Andrea Green	Ashland Redevelopment Authority
Maurice Handel	Needham Board of Selectmen
Dorothea Hess	Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard
Marah Holland	Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard
Eric Johnson	Town of Framingham
Jim Johnson	Town of Walpole
David Knowlton	City of Salem
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Owen MacDonald	Town of Weymouth
Puja Mehta	Office of State Senator Karen Spilka
Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood)
Bryan Pounds	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Constance Raphael	MassDOT District 4
Valerie Shelly	Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard
Bill Smith	Town of Brookline, Engineering
Ellie Spring	Office of State Representative Denise Garlick
Clodagh Stoker-Long	City of Medford
Marie Sullivan	Stantec
Anthony Thomas	Office of State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz
Geri Vaten	MassDOT
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

Elizabeth Moore, Director of Policy and Planning

Scott Peterson, Director of Technical Services

Lourenço Dantas

David Fargen

Elizabeth Harvey

Maureen Kelly

Alexandra Kleyman

Anne McGahan

Jennifer Rowe
