

# Memorandum for the Record

## Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

### July 28, 2016 Meeting

10:05 AM – 12:55 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 minutes of the meetings of June, 2, 16, and 23, 2016
- approve the revised work program for the *Shared-Use Mobility Services: Study of Their Impacts on the Region's Transportation System*
- endorse the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- endorse Amendment Five to the FFYs 2016-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- endorse the FFYs 2017-2021 TIP, as amended today

### Meeting Agenda

#### 1. Public Comments

Members heard public comments regarding the following projects:

##### ***Gleasondale Road (Route 62) Bridge over the Assabet River (Stow)***

State Representative Kate Hogan asked the MPO to program the project for the rehabilitation of the Gleasondale Road (Route 62) Bridge over the Assabet River in Stow on the FFYs 2017-21 TIP. She reported that in 2015 MassDOT observed signs of structural deterioration on the nearly 70-year old bridge. As a result, traffic on the bridge was restricted to one lane. MassDOT has developed a timeline for repairing the bridge, dependent on the inclusion of the project in the TIP. She stated that design funding is available and that the project is shovel ready. She also remarked on the importance of the project to Stow and neighboring communities as more than 2.1 million people travel over the bridge annually. She also expressed appreciation to MassDOT for the agency's partnership with the town on this project.

State Senator James Eldridge also urged the MPO to program the project on the TIP. He noted that many of his constituents rely on smaller state roads like Route 62 for their travels and that the current situation—with only a single lane of traffic on the bridge—is a challenge. He praised the Town of Stow and MassDOT's District Three office for their work to manage the situation to this point.

Bill Wrigley, Stow's Town Manager, cited the close working relationship that the Town of Stow has with MassDOT's District Three office and he offered the town's continued support to MassDOT in regards to managing traffic congestion in the project area. He asked that the MPO include the project on the TIP.

***Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2C (Concord)***

Marcia Rasmussen, Concord Board of Selectmen, expressed the selectmen's support for Amendment Five to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP and the programming of funds for the *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2C* project in Concord. She remarked on the ongoing public support for the project and the Town of Concord's focus on sustainable transportation options. She reported that the project will be ready for advertisement at the end of this month. (The Board of Selectmen also provided a letter to the MPO.)

Barbara Pike, Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, expressed the Friends' support for Amendment Five and the programming for the *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2C* project. She noted that the project is ready for construction and that the additional funding will pay for important safety upgrades and cover the project's cost increase since the last design submission.

MPO member Marie Rose, MassDOT, reported that the project is almost ready for construction. The right-of-way is expected to be secured by the end of August. MassDOT is currently reviewing the documentation for Plans, Specifications and Estimates (PS&E).

Kent Carlson, Co-chairman of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Citizen Advisory Committee, expressed his support for Amendment Five and the programming for the *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2C* project. He also expressed appreciation for the support MassDOT has provided in regard to the project.

***Reconstruction on Route 126 (Pond Street) (Ashland)***

Yolanda Greaves, Ashland Board of Selectmen, noted that the MPO received almost 150 comments in support of the *Reconstruction on Route 126* project in Ashland and one in opposition. She thanked the MPO for including the project in the FFY 2020 element of the FFY 2017-21 TIP.

Andrea Green, Ashland Redevelopment Authority, also remarked on the strong community support for the project and thanked the MPO for programming the project in the TIP. She noted that some Ashland residents are hopeful that the project could be programmed in an earlier fiscal element of the TIP, if possible.

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

There was no report.

## **3. Committee Chairs' Reports**

There were no reports.

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

T. Bennett announced that upcoming meetings of the Advisory Council will focus on topics relevant to UPWP studies. The Advisory Council will meet next on August 10. A discussion about autonomous vehicles is on the agenda. The presenters will be Shannon Greenwell, MassDOT, and Price Armstrong, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (and former MassDOT staff).

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

There was no report from the Executive Director.

Laura Wiener, At-Large Town of Arlington, asked staff about the attendance at the recent "Office Hours" outreach event held by the MPO staff. Lourenço Dantas, Manager of the Certification Activities Group, reported that MPO staff members made themselves available for conversations—in office and via the phone—with the public during two weekdays, both in the afternoon and early evenings. Attendance was sporadic, but staff did receive a couple of phone calls and had a small group discussion at a session on Thursday. The attendance was no better or worse than at past open house events that staff has held. He noted that July is not the preferred time to hold such events, and staff expects higher attendance in the future when these events are not held during the summer.

## **6. Meeting Minutes—*Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff***

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 2 was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric Bourassa), and seconded by the City of Boston (Jim Gillooly). The motion carried. The Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) (Richard Reed) abstained.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 16 was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the City of Boston (J. Gillooly). The motion carried.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 23 was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the City of Boston (J. Gillooly). The motion carried.

## **7. Revised Work Program for Shared-Use Mobility Services: Study of Their Impacts on the Region's Transportation System—Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director**

K. Quackenbush presented the revised work program for the *Shared-Use Mobility Services: Study of Their Impacts on the Region's Transportation System*. The original version of the work program was introduced to members last October. Staff is now proposing to modify it because much of the data staff was expecting to gather and analyze is unavailable.

The goal of the work program was to gather information on emerging shared-use modes of transportation (including services such as Uber and Lyft) and to answer questions about the use of these services, trip-making characteristics, how these services are interacting with existing transit system, and how they enable people to live a less car-dependent lifestyle.

Task 1 remains unchanged in the revised work program. Staff is working on this task now by preparing a memorandum about the findings of a literature review. Task 2 and 3, which involve data gathering and analysis, have changed. Staff obtained data from the Hubway bicycle-share service, including data on trip origin and destination, and user surveys. Staff also obtained data from the Lyft service, including origin and destination data at the zip code level. Data are not available from Uber or Bridj.

The revised work program has the same objectives as the original. Staff also expects to have lessons learned from the project. K. Quackenbush noted that the conversation with various companies is evolving.

### ***Discussion***

D. Mohler inquired about the change in the work program budget. K. Quackenbush noted that the budget has increased. The increase reflects the time spent in the process of interacting and negotiating with the companies and preparing the data for analysis.

T. Bennett asked if staff would incorporate the lessons learned from this study into the final report and make recommendations about other ways to capture data from these services. K. Quackenbush replied yes.

J. Gillooly asked if the available data include surveys that indicate why people are making the choice to use these services, or whether staff could obtain testimony from users of Uber and other providers through surveys. K. Quackenbush replied that the Hubway data set includes user survey information and that staff could consider surveys as part of a future work effort. D. Mohler asked how staff would conduct those surveys. K. Quackenbush suggested that there may be creative ways to survey customers, such as by using social media.

Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, asked if the companies are refusing to provide data because the data is proprietary. Michelle Scott, the project manager on the MPO staff, replied that Lyft considers their data proprietary and would require a non-disclosure agreement to share it. Other companies will not share the data even with an agreement.

Tom O'Rourke, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce), suggested putting the project on hold until the relationship with the companies evolve and more data is available. While noting the value of the project, he expressed concern that the current lack of resources may not make the project worthwhile right now. K. Quackenbush expressed his hope that staff be allowed project, as there will still be benefits from doing so.

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), inquired about the total budget for the project. K. Quackenbush replied that the project is funded through a MassDOT contract. The total project cost, inclusive of the \$32,000 already spent, is approximately \$79,000.

D. Mohler asked for more details about the spent funds. K. Quackenbush reported that funds have been spent on the literature review and meetings with clients. M. Scott discussed how staff also has made inroads on tools for analyzing trip data.

Following the discussion of the work program, D. Mohler apprised members that in the future they will be notified when, as in this case, there are material changes to UPWP project budgets and tasks.

***Vote***

A motion to approve the revised work program for the *Shared-Use Mobility Services: Study of Their Impacts on the Region's Transportation System* was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan), and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried. The South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (D. Crowley) was opposed.

## **8. FFY 2017 Unified Planning Work Program—*Alexandra Kleyman, MPO Staff***

A. Kleyman provided an overview of the public comments received during the public review period for the draft FFY 2017 UPWP, which ran from June 17 to July 18. Staff also provided a summary of comments and staffs' proposed responses to those comments.

A total of 29 comments were received. Commenters included a candidate for state representative, members of the MBTA Oversight Committee, and other members of the public. None of the commenters requested changes to projects or budgets. Comments from MassDOT included requests for clarifications about changes to budgets for line items that carry over year-to-year, and clarifications to project descriptions.

Comments from members of the public included those expressing general support for work programs and projects in the UPWP, questions regarding the UPWP process and requests for resources, and ideas of specific locations to study in future UPWPs.

Staff made changes to the text in the UPWP in response to public comments. In addition, staff plans to add an appendix to the UPWP document that will show the geographic distribution of UPWP resources over the past five years by municipality. This appendix will be updated each year to help better target outreach to municipalities.

### ***Discussion***

D. Mohler inquired about staffs' proposed response to groups that expressed interest in becoming more involved in the UPWP process. A. Kleyman noted that staff will be following up with those groups during the fall outreach effort to make them aware of opportunities to be involved, such as by attending subregional meetings.

D. Mohler asked how staff plans to track the distribution of UPWP resources in the appendix. A. Kleyman reported that, in the past, staff tracked the amount of spending in each municipality. This year, staff is tracking UPWP task outputs, such as reports and memoranda, which focused on particular municipalities.

### ***Vote***

A motion to endorse the FFY 2017 UPWP was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (John Romano), and seconded by the City of Boston (J. Gillooly). The motion carried.

## 9. FFYs 2016-2020 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment Five—*Lourenço Dantas, MPO Staff*

L. Dantas presented proposed revisions to Draft Amendment Five to the FFYs 2016-2020 TIP. These revisions were recommended by MassDOT during the public review period. Staff provided TIP tables showing the revisions.

The proposed changes in Amendment Five are as follows:

- programming of an earmark for the *Tri-Community Bikeway (Stoneham, Winchester, Woburn)* project
- change in funding source for the *Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3 (Bedford, Billerica, Burlington)* project in the FFY 2016 fiscal element and the programming of an earmark in the FFY 2017 element
- addition of a bridge preservation project for the bridge on Route 20 (Old Boston Road) over Interstate 495 (Marlborough)
- cost increases to the following projects:
  - *Highway Lighting System Replacement on Interstate 93 (from Southamptton Street to Neponset Avenue, Boston)*
  - *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2C (Concord)*
  - *Resurfacing on Route 9 (from the limit of the Add-a-Lane to East of Overbrook intersection, Wellesley)*

Staff also provided a summary of public comments received during the public review period for the document, as well as the full comment letters. The MPO received many comments in support of the *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2C* project, and some in opposition to the project. One opponent cited environmental concerns.

Members signed self-certification letters, for inclusion in the final TIP, that indicate that the MPO is compliant with federal law.

### ***Discussion***

E. Bourassa asked about the reason for the \$1.6 million cost increase to the *Resurfacing on Route 9* project. Marie Rose, MassDOT Highway Division, reported that the project area was expanded to include another intersection at the request of the Town of Wellesley. A representative from MassDOT District 6 provided more information.

T. O'Rourke observed that cost of the *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2C* project had increased by 50% is now increasing by another \$1 million. He asked for the reason for the cost increase. L. Dantas explained that the new costs are related to the logistics of

removing existing rail track in the project area, agreements between the MBTA and Keolis, and an increase in unit prices. Marcia Rasmussen, Concord Board of Selectmen, further explained that the original cost programmed in the TIP was based on the 25% design plans. Since that submission there was a change in the scope of the project to include a redesign of an intersection and the creation of a new crossing for the commuter rail. The cost increase that occurred following the submission of the 100% design plans is partly due to the rail crossing and because bids have been coming in higher.

D. Crowley inquired about the cost change to the *Dedham Street/Interstate 95 Interchange Reconstruction (Canton, Norwood, Westwood, Dedham)* project, which is reflected in Amendment Five. D. Mohler explained that the project was originally advertised in 2015. Following the advertisement, MassDOT reassessed the project cost and found that it would be higher than the original value. The updated cost estimate is reflected in Amendment Five. MassDOT will re-advertise the project to let bidders know of the cost change. M. Rose added that MassDOT reassessed the project after finding that bids were coming in high for other large projects.

J. Gillooly asked for clarification about a line item for the *Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3* project. D. Mohler explained that the line item reflects a cost decrease in the FFY 2016 fiscal element because, in that line item, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) funds are being reduced, while earmark funds are being added. The cost of the project overall has not changed.

Richard Reed, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford), inquired about the source of funding for the increase of the *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2C* project. D. Mohler replied that the statewide CMAQ funds would be used and possibly an earmark.

#### **Vote**

A motion to endorse Amendment Five to the FFYs 2016-2020 TIP was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) (R. Reed). The motion carried.

### **10. FFYs 2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program—*Lourenço Dantas, MPO Staff***

L. Dantas presented proposed revisions to the Draft FFYs 2017-2021 TIP, which were incorporated during the public review period for the document. Staff provided TIP tables showing the revisions.



The proposed changes to the draft include the following:

- update to the description of the *Highway Lighting System Replacement on Interstate 93 (from Southamptton Street to Neponset Avenue, Boston)* project
- programming of an earmark for the *Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3 (Bedford, Billerica, Burlington)* project and a reduction in Surface Transportation Program funding for that project
- reprogramming of the *Carton Street Pedestrian Bridge (Brookline)* project from the FFY 2018 fiscal element to the FFY 2017 element with a cost change
- reprogramming of the *Cochituate Rail Trail and Pedestrian Bridge (Framingham, Natick)* project from the FFY 2020 fiscal element to the FFY 2018 element

Public comments received during the public review period for the document are summarized in Appendix F of the TIP document. The complete set of letters was also provided to members.

### ***Discussion***

P. Regan inquired about the information that the MBTA was supposed to provide for the transit element of the TIP during the public review period, and staff reported that the information has not been provided yet. He then raised questions about the ability of the MPO to approve the TIP in the absence of that information. D. Mohler conveyed the expectation that the MBTA would provide the information to the MPO in the first quarter of the fiscal year and that the TIP would need to be amended at that time. The TIP currently has line items showing funding for various broad transit programs and the information the MBTA would provide would better align the TIP and the MBTA's Capital Investment Program (CIP).

E. Bourassa inquired about the reason for the MBTA's delay in providing the information. D. Mohler expressed his understanding that it has taken the MBTA longer than expected to align the TIP and CIP so that the TIP reflects a level of detail that allows better tracking of spending on transit projects.

P. Regan asked about what the transit figures currently programmed in the TIP are reflecting. D. Mohler noted that he believes they reflect the figures programmed in the FFYs 2016-20 TIP, which the MPO approved last year, for the second, third, and fourth years of that TIP.

P. Regan expressed his frustration over this year's CIP development process. He noted that the CIP was released six months later than usual and that now public information and documentation should be available, at the very least, on the MBTA's state-of-good-repair projects.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), remarked on the good job that members and staff did to consider comments both from the membership and the public during the development of the TIP. He expressed that the TIP is a well-developed document.

A motion to endorse the FFYs 2017-21 TIP, as presented today, 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).

Members further discussed the TIP and made other motions to amend it, prior to voting to endorse the document.

M. Rose reported that the MassDOT Highway Division has serious misgivings about programming the *Carton Street Pedestrian Bridge* project in the FFY 2017 fiscal element due to readiness concerns. FFY 2018 would be a more appropriate programming year, in their opinion.

A motion to reprogram the *Carton Street Pedestrian Bridge* project from the FFY 2017 fiscal element to the FFY 2018 element of the FFYs 2017-21 TIP was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (M. Rose), and seconded by MassDOT (D. Mohler).

D. Mohler indicated that if the Town of Brookline is able to address the outstanding environmental and right-of-way issues on the project so that it will be ready for construction in FFY 2017, priorities for statewide CMAQ funding could then be adjusted to schedule the project in that year.

E. Bourassa asked if such a reprogramming of statewide CMAQ funds would affect other projects. D. Mohler replied that it would not affect other projects.

Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), asked if the City of Brookline has been made aware of the proposed delay in the project. M. Rose referenced the discussion with town officials that occurred at the July 7 MPO meeting, when they were informed that some documents were missing from their 75% design submission. A representative from the Town of Brookline, Joe Viola, who was in attendance, then expressed the town's belief – as represented in a letter to the MPO from the town administration and Board of Selectmen – that the project could be ready for construction in FFY 2017.

In response to a question from T. Bennett, D. Mohler reported that, per Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rules, an inflation factor of four percent per year is applied to highway projects in the TIP.

D. Giombetti asked if delaying the *Carton Street Pedestrian Bridge* project by a year would result in MassDOT approaching the project review differently. M. Rose explained MassDOT's rule regarding reviews of TIP projects. Projects programmed in the current year of the TIP have a 30-day review; those programmed in the following year have a 60-day review; and those programmed in outer years have a 120-day review. She offered that MassDOT could, in the case of the *Carton Street Pedestrian Bridge* project, give the project a 30-day review even though it would be programmed two-years out.

Members then voted on the motion to reprogram the *Carton Street Pedestrian Bridge* project from the FFY 2017 fiscal element of the FFYs 2017-21 TIP to the FFY 2018 element. The motion carried.

D. Mohler advised the representative from the Town of Brookline that the project will be treated, in MassDOT Highway Division's review process, as a FFY 2017 project internally, though it will be programmed in the FFY 2018 element of the TIP. Town staff should work with M. Rose directly.

Ken Miller, FHWA, inquired about the Statewide Infrastructure funding source for the *Middlesex Turnpike Improvements, Phase 3* project. D. Mohler explained that this statewide federal aid is among the funds the state is directing to MPOs to address project cost overruns.

D. Mohler proposed another change to the TIP to reflect a change in funding source for the *Reconstruction of Interstate 90/495 Interchange (Hopkinton, Westborough)* project. MassDOT proposes to change the reference to the project being fully funded by non-federal aid (NFA) in FFYs 2020 and 2021 to reflect that it will be 80% funded by statewide federal aid from the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP). The overall project cost and schedule would not be affected by this change.

A motion to change the funding source for the *Reconstruction of Interstate 90/495 Interchange* project from 100% NFA in FFYs 2020 and 2021 to 80% statewide federal aid from the NHPP program was made by MassDOT (D. Mohler), and seconded by MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham) (D. Giombetti).

During the discussion of this motion, K. Miller recollected that 40% of the project funding would come from toll revenues and 60% from NFA. D. Mohler explained that MassDOT

is committing statewide federal aid to this project and a project on Route 79 in Fall River.

Richard Canale, At-Large Town of Lexington, asked about what percentage of the *Reconstruction of Interstate 90/495 Interchange* project would be funded with toll revenue. D. Mohler replied that about 40% of the project—the portion on Interstate 90—is eligible for toll revenue funding.

In response to a question from J. Gillooly, D. Mohler clarified the funding amounts to be programmed for the *Reconstruction of Interstate 90/495 Interchange* project. In FFY 2020, \$1 million would be programmed (\$800,000 of federal aid and \$200,000 of NFA). In FFY 2021, \$37.5 million would be programmed (\$30 million of federal aid and \$7.5 million of NFA).

D. Crowley asked staff to provide an updated report showing the distribution of the allocation of TIP funds by subregion. L. Dantas reported that the final version of the TIP will include an appendix showing the distribution of TIP target funds by subregion and community type (as defined by MAPC). D. Mohler suggested that another report showing the distribution of all highway funds reported in the TIP would provide a more whole picture of the distribution of funds. L. Dantas stated that staff could prepare both reports. D. Crowley requested that during the next TIP development process, staff provide the information about the geographic distribution of funds prior to members' votes on TIP.

Members voted on the motion to change the funding sources and funding amounts for the *Reconstruction of Interstate 90/495 Interchange* project in the FFYs 2020 and 2021 fiscal elements of the TIP. The motion carried.

Members then voted on the motion to endorse the FFYs 2017-2021 TIP, as amended by motions detailed above. The motion carried.

## **11. Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on MPO Coordination—*Elizabeth Moore, MPO Staff***

K. Quackenbush introduced the discussion of the US Department of Transportation's (USDOT's) proposed rule on MPO coordination. He noted that the proposed rule could have a significant impact on MPOs. The rule would require MPOs in urbanized areas (UZAs, as defined in the Census) to either merge or to coordinate on the development of LRTPs and TIPs. The deadline for submitting comments to USDOT is August 26, 2016. Staff is seeking input from the MPO members regarding issues to raise in a comment letter.

E. Moore then gave a presentation in which she discussed the regulatory background; purpose of the rulemaking; proposed changes that would occur under the rule; potential impacts to the MPO structure in the Boston UZA; anticipated benefits that would result from the rule; and the schedule for implementation of the rule. She also posed questions for members' discussion.

The intent of the proposed rule is to realign the regulatory definition of a Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA)—as the UZA plus the surrounding area expected to become urbanized over the next 20 years—to existing statute, strengthen the role of MPOs in regional planning, and improve their coordination with state DOTs. Under the proposed rule, there would be one LRTP and TIP for an MPA. The rule would allow for state governors and MPOs to determine that, based on the size and complexity of an MPA, there could be multiple MPOs in a single MPA; however, those MPOs would have to coordinate to produce LRTPs and TIPs.

A map of the Boston UZA and surrounding UZAs and urban clusters was provided to members. There are multiple MPOs in the Boston UZA, which extends across state borders to New Hampshire and Rhode Island. Therefore, the governor and MPOs would have to consider whether to re-designate MPO boundaries—based on how the urbanized area will change over the next 20-years—or to keep existing MPO boundaries and have better coordination between them.

USDOT anticipates that the benefits of the rule will include making transportation planning easier for the public to understand; helping MPOs to respond to urbanization over time; supporting performance-based planning at a regional level; and creating economies of scale.

As noted previously, the deadline for submitting public comments to USDOT is August 26. The final rule would be published in the fall of 2016. MPOs would need to comply within two years of the passage of the rule. MPOs and states would have to determine the new MPA boundaries within 180 days after new UZA boundaries are established based on the 2020 Census; the new UZA boundaries are expected to be designated in 2022.

E. Moore proposed a number of questions for the members to consider regarding, for example, merging with other MPOs (including those in neighboring states); changing existing MPO boundaries; the impact a restructuring would have on the understanding of transportation needs, and regional and performance-based planning; the effect on MPOs' relations and coordination with the state; and the effect on funding levels and distribution.

***Discussion***

J. Gillooly asked for clarification regarding the geography of the MPA and UZA.

E. Moore explained that, under the current regulatory definition, the MPA for the Boston Region MPO area is the 101-municipalities, but this is not in keeping with the statutory language which states that the MPA should be the UZA plus the surrounding area that will urbanize over the next 20 years. The UZA is determined by the Census Bureau and is based on population density. With each new Census the federal rules for defining UZAs may change.

Laura Gilmore O'Connor, Massachusetts Port Authority, suggested that if consideration is given to merging the Boston Region MPO with other MPOs in the Boston UZA that a distinction is made between those MPOs that have a significant portion within the UZA and those with a small portion in the UZA.

R. Canale remarked on the short time frame for submitting comments to USDOT and suggested that what is needed is a two-step process that allows for the submission of questions about the rulemaking and then more substantive comments. Other members discussed, however, that USDOT is not expected to extend the public review period.

Laura Wiener, At-Large Town of Arlington, raised the question of whether this ruling would make sense from a planning perspective. D. Crowley expressed concern that it would be disadvantageous to smaller, suburban or rural towns, if the MPOs merged into a larger entity. D. Mohler reported that he has heard the same concern from smaller MPOs in the Boston UZA.

T. O'Rourke remarked on the unique geography of the Boston UZA (which crosses state lines) and raised the question of how the proposed rule is being received in other parts of the country. E. Moore noted that this ruling would affect 142 of the 409 MPOs in the country. Some UZAs in other parts of the country also span state lines, however, others are unaffected because they already cover their entire MPAs. D. Mohler remarked on comments heard on webinars about the rulemaking that indicated the rulemaking is not well received in some other areas.

R. Reed commented that the Boston Region MPO should not be expanded to include areas in neighboring states, and he remarked on the difficulty that would come from having three states coordinating on funding issues.

D. Mohler suggested that the fundamental question that members must consider now is whether the existing MPOs in the Boston UZA should merge (whether the MPA and MPO boundaries should be conterminous). Following further discussion, he noted that,

as Chair, he would be willing to sign comment letters addressed to USDOT on behalf of the MPOs.

E. Bourassa made suggestions of ideas to include in a comment letter from the Boston Region MPO to USDOT. He recommended that the letter express concern about a merger of MPOs as the Boston Region MPO already has a good planning process that aims to equitably balance the distribution of resources across the region. Also, he would note that a larger geographic area could exacerbate issues regarding the distribution of resources and that public engagement could deteriorate.

R. Canale remarked about the sense among MPOs that are contiguous to the Boston Region, that they have their own distinct identities and economic engines.

R. Reed suggested that the MPO also send a letter to the US senators and representatives for this region expressing concern about the lack of time provided for public comment. D. Mohler cautioned that the MPO is not allowed to use federal planning funds (to pay staff to draft a letter) to lobby Congress. Individual members may write to their representatives, however.

Members further discussed the need for the MPO to go on record to USDOT to express their views about whether it is a good idea for the MPO and MPA boundaries to be conterminous. K. Miller also pointed out that another issue to address is the development of unified planning documents.

J. Gillooly noted that it would be useful to have a map of the UZAs in the country to illustrate that the blanket approach suggested by USDOT should not apply to certain areas, such as Boston, where the borders overlap multiple states. He noted that while the rule may have little impact in certain parts of the country, it would create an unmanageable situation for transportation planning in areas with overlapping state jurisdictions because of states' differing approaches to funding projects.

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council, stated that the MPO should be expressing strong opposition to the proposed rule. He discussed how the rule would go against the MPO's efforts (and national trends) to bring more local representation to the MPO board. He noted that the MPO reorganized several years ago for the purpose of enhancing local representation. He also shares the concern, expressed by D. Crowley, that smaller communities would be disadvantaged if the MPO area was expanded.

Members agreed to direct staff to draft a letter from the MPO to USDOT expressing objections and clarifications to the proposed rule. Members will review the draft letter in advance of their next meeting on August 18.

## **12. Members Items**

E. Bourassa announced that the MPO's election will be held this October at MAPC's Fall Council meeting. Four MPO seats are open this year: Inner Core Committee; MetroWest Regional Collaborative; South Shore Coalition; and Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination. Nominations of candidates will be due at the end of September.

D. Crowley inquired about the success of a MassDOT policy that provides incentives for utility companies when relocating utility structures for highway construction projects. M. Rose indicated that the policy is having mixed success.

T. Bent inquired about when the MPO will be discussing the issue of local contributions to transportation projects. After a brief discussion, members agreed that the topic would be on the MPO's agenda in September.

## **13. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the At-Large Town of Lexington (R. Canale). The motion carried.



## Attendance

<b>Members</b>	<b>Representatives and Alternates</b>
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Laura Wiener
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	Richard Canale
City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)	Lara Mérida
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jim Gillooly
	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Ken 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 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 Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Tegin Bennett
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

<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Kent Carlson	Concord resident
Ron Darzen	Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
Senator James Eldridge	State Senator
Andrea Green	Ashland Redevelopment Authority
Yolanda Greaves	Ashland Board of Selectmen
Representative Kate Hogan	State Representative
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation

Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council
Barbara Pike	Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
Bryan Pounds	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Marcia Rasmussen	Town of Concord
Ellie Spring	Office of State Representative Denise Garlick
Joe Viola	Town of Brookline
Bill Wrigley	Town of Stow

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**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director  
Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director  
Elizabeth Moore, Director of Policy and Planning  
Scott Peterson, Director of Technical Services

Lourenço Dantas, Manager, MPO Certification  
Activities Group

David Fargen  
Maureen Kelly  
Alexandra Kleyman  
Anne McGahan  
Jennifer Rowe  
Michelle Scott

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