



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

August 14, 2019, Meeting Minutes

3:00 PM-4:30 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4,
10 Park Plaza, Boston

Tegin Teich, Chair, representing the City of Cambridge

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Tegin Teich called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 6.)

2. Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)—*Anne McGahan, LRTP Manager, MPO Staff*

A. McGahan provided an overview of the Needs Assessment for the draft LRTP, *Destination 2040*. The Needs Assessment includes all data used to identify transportation needs in the Boston region. These needs form the basis of the recommendations included in the LRTP. Developed over two years, the Needs Assessment includes existing land use, the existing transportation system, the process used to project demographics to 2040, and key demographic trends. In addition, the Needs Assessment includes travel patterns identified by the Travel Demand Model (TDM) for the 2016 base year and 2040 No Build conditions. The transportation needs of the Boston region are organized by MPO goal areas: Safety, System Preservation and Modernization, Capacity Management and Mobility, Clean Air and Sustainable Communities, Transportation Equity, and Economic Vitality.

The MPO has discretion over approximately \$2.9 billion in regional target funds over the next 20 years. Historically, target funds have been allocated toward highway projects and programs, though the Green Line Extension and Assembly Square station projects have received highway funds flexed to transit.

A. McGahan described the funding goals set by the MPO. The Major Infrastructure program goal is 30 percent of regional target funds, reduced from 50 percent in the current LRTP. Projects classified as Major Infrastructure projects either add capacity to the roadway network or cost over \$20 million. The Complete Streets program goal is 47 percent, which includes two percent of LRTP funds for dedicated bus lanes. The Intersection Improvement program funding goal is 13 percent, and the Community Connections goal is five percent. In addition,

the MPO added a new investment program, Transit Modernization, which will account for five percent of regional target funds.

A. McGahan stated that *Destination 2040* includes all Major Infrastructure projects in the current LRTP. Two of these projects, the Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue in Boston and the New Boston Street Bridge Replacement in Woburn, are included in the FFYs 2020-24 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The LRTP includes two new Major Infrastructure projects due to their inclusion in the TIP: the Sumner Tunnel Reconstruction projects and the Reconstruction of Route 1A in Walpole. The Reconstruction of Western Avenue in Lynn, which is included in the TIP Universe of Projects, was also added to the LRTP.

The LRTP includes a transportation equity report, which includes federally required Title VI and Environmental Justice analyses. The analyses use the TDM to study the aggregate impacts of projects in the LRTP on low income and minority populations. The report found that the selected projects did not create disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens.

The document also includes federally required greenhouse gas conformity determinations

Discussion

John Businger requested that references to “transit” within the LRTP document explicitly include rail as a transit mode. A. McGahan stated that Chapter 2 of the Needs Assessment describes the existing transit system, which includes rail. She stated that specifying rail would exclude bus as a transit mode.

J. Businger asked if the Northeast Corridor is included in the LRTP. A. McGahan stated that the Northeast Corridor is included in the Needs Assessment.

J. Businger requested prioritization of intercity passenger rail projects and the North-South Rail Link. A. McGahan stated that RailVision includes the North-South Rail Link as an alternative, adding that MPO staff worked with MassDOT to develop the LRTP.

David Montgomery stated that transportation plans generally have a “polite” and optimistic tone, which stands in contrast to frequent reports and discussions which indicate that resources for transportation are limited. He asked if the LRTP could directly address potential programming scenarios with reduced funding. A. McGahan stated that staff will consider this during the development of the next LRTP. Lenard Diggins expressed support for the tone of the document.

L. Diggins, noting its role in project selection for the LRTP, requested that future documents include additional information on the TDM, including its inputs and outputs. He stated that public discussion of the TDM will highlight and allow for the correction of discrepancies. He added that increasing confidence in the TDM will increase confidence in the selected

projects. A. McGahan stated that the TDM is not the final determining factor in deciding which projects to include in the LRTP. She noted majority of funding in the LRTP investment programs account for projects which cannot be modeled.

3. Advisory Council Comment Letter on the LRTP—Chris Porter, Chair, 3C Documents Committee

C. Porter provided an overview of the draft public comment letter on the LRTP, as discussed by the 3C Documents Committee. The letter is available on the [MPO website](#).

Discussion

Laura Wiener asked if the 3C Documents Committee discussed specific projects included in the LRTP. T. Teich suggested that rather than focusing on specific projects, a more beneficial discussion could focus on which types of projects the Advisory Council either supports or opposes, or how specific project types help the MPO achieve its goals.

L. Wiener noted that there are no transit projects included in the LRTP, adding that transit projects are the most effective at removing vehicles from the roadway network. T. Teich suggested revising the letter to include support for increased funding for transit projects in the LRTP. C. Porter noted that the Transit Modernization program includes \$50 million in funding. A. McGahan noted that inclusion of transit projects in the LRTP requires coordination with the MBTA. The MBTA did not request the inclusion of specific transit projects in the LRTP.

L. Wiener noted that the Transit Modernization program received far less funding than the Complete Streets Program. T. Teich stated that the MPO can elect to flex highway funding to transit projects outside of the Transit Modernization or Complete Streets investment programs. Citing the Green Line Extension as an example, she noted that recipient transit projects of flexed highway funding are of larger scale than projects which will receive funding under the Transit Modernization program. She suggested revising the letter to state that the Advisory Council supports flexing highway funds to transit projects outside of the Transit Modernization program.

Franny Osmond stated that relying on MBTA for the inclusion of transit projects in the LRTP excludes communities outside of the MBTA service area. A. McGahan stated that the Community Connections program will allow for every community in the Boston region to apply for funding. T. Teich stated that any transit agency could receive regional target funds, noting that flexed highway funds are not exclusively tied to the MBTA.

L. Diggins requested clarification on the specific amount of funding available per year in the LRTP. A. McGahan stated that there is approximately \$100 million available per year in the TIP and LRTP, adding that the \$2.9 billion included in the LRTP includes inflation.

L. Diggins suggested that Complete Streets projects which cost over \$20 million should not be included in the Major Infrastructure program. T. Teich noted that the Major Infrastructure program includes sub-categories, and the Advisory Council could advocate for the allocation of a higher dollar amount to the Complete Street sub-category. A. McGahan stated that the MPO plans to discuss the \$20 million threshold for the Major Infrastructure program.

L. Diggins, acknowledging that the LRTP is fiscally constrained, stated that the LRTP could explore theoretical programming scenarios in which funding levels are increased. He suggested that, during scenario planning, the MPO consider the benefits of groups of projects rather than the benefits of specific project on an individual level. C. Porter stated that the draft comment letter includes the suggestion that the LRTP has the potential to include more visionary scenarios.

John McQueen stated that the funding levels included in the LRTP suggest a consistent stream of funds during the document's 20-year timeframe. He stated that the proliferation of electric vehicles will decrease revenue from the gas tax, and suggested that the LRTP explore alternate funding sources. C. Porter noted that the Federal Highway Administration has stated that transportation agencies should expect funds to increase by two percent per year.

J. McQueen suggested that future LRTPs include metrics regarding the impact of vehicle emissions on public health, such as asthma rates. He added that the document could include analyses of the health impacts of each LRTP investment program, and link projects to the Healthy Transportation Compact.

D. Montgomery suggested the removal of a sentence from the comment letter which implied that the MPO could be "locked into" specific projects. He stated that although he agreed with the sentiment of the sentence, he expressed that it did not reflect how the MPO has traditionally operated.

Schuyler Larrabee suggested adding language to the letter which advocates examining combinations of programs.

C. Porter summarized the proposed edits to the letter. L. Diggins made motion to approve letter as amended. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

4. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

T. Teich announced that the Advisory Council election will occur in October. She requested that members volunteer to participate in the Election Committee, which will propose candidates for the Chair and Vice Chair positions of the Advisory Council. She noted that any member can run for these positions outside of the candidates proposed by the Election

Committee. L. Diggins, S. Larrabee, and D. Montgomery agreed to participate on the committee.

5. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by S. Larrabee. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Attendees

Member Municipalities

Cambridge
Needham
Watertown

Representatives and Alternates

Tegin Teich
David Montgomery; Rhain Hoyland
Laura Wiener

Citizen Advocacy Groups

American Council of Engineering Companies
Association for Public Transportation
Boston Society of Architects
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)
CrosstownConnect
MassBike
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)
MoveMassachusetts
National Corridors Initiative
WalkBoston

Attendees

Fred Moseley
Barry M Steinberg
Schuyler Larrabee
AnaCristina Fragoso
Scott Zadakis
Chris Porter
Lenard Diggins
Jon Seward
John Businger
John McQueen

Other Attendees

Ed Lowney
Dee Whittlesey

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Anne McGahan
Betsy Harvey
Matt Archer
