

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Summary of the December 8, 2010 Meeting

This meeting was held in Conference Room 4 of the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA.

1. Introductions – *Laura Wiener, Chair*

Laura Wiener, Chair and representative of Arlington, called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members, guests, visitors, and staff introduced themselves (see the attached attendance list).

2. Chair's Report – *Laura Wiener, Chair*

There was no Chair's Report.

3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes November 10, 2010 – *Laura Wiener, Chair*

A motion to approve the draft minutes of November 10, 2010 was made and seconded. The minutes were approved with Kurt Mullen, representative of Needham, abstaining.

4. Overview of TIP Funding and Spending, FFYs 2008-14 – *Hayes Morrison, TIP Manager, Boston Region MPO staff*

H. Morrison gave a presentation on Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) spending and funding for the period from federal fiscal year (FFY) 2008 to FFY 2014. The presentation was given in three sections:

1. The source of TIP funds and how much is available
2. How TIP funds are being spent
3. Next steps for the TIP

The TIP is a list of the projects expected to receive federal aid during the next four years. A project must be on the TIP to receive federal aid. Each June, the Federal Highway Administration tells MassDOT how much federal aid will be available during the next federal fiscal year. This figure, called obligation authority, was approximately \$560 million in FFY 2011. The state also typically receives redistributed funds from other states that do not spend all of their obligation authority. Massachusetts received approximately \$40 million in redistribution in FFY 2011.

Of the \$600 million of obligation authority in FFY 2011, approximately \$160 million went towards paying off debt associated with the Central Artery/Tunnel project. The remaining \$440 million in federal highway funds must be matched at either 20% or 10% by the state. The state's match in FFY 2011 is \$98 million. The grand total of highway funding available in FFY 2011 is approximately \$539 million.

Several statewide maintenance programs are funded from the \$539 million, such as interstate highway maintenance, bridge maintenance and preservation, and planning. The total regional target, which is the funds over which the state's MPOs have discretion, is \$139 million in FFY 2011. The Boston region accounts for approximately 43% of the state's population, and therefore the Boston Region MPO has discretion over approximately \$60 million in FFY 2011. These funds are referred to as "target funds."

Federal transit funds are handled differently. They are given to the MBTA and other regional transit authorities in the state, by formula. The MBTA receives approximately \$285 million per year from the Federal Transit Administration for capital investments.

H. Morrison explained what the Boston Region MPO did with its target funds between 2008 and 2010, and what it anticipates doing between 2011 and 2014. Her analysis did not account for on-network bicycle and pedestrian facility spending because it's not clear what portion of each project's cost is dedicated to these facilities. The Central Artery/Tunnel project and State Implementation Plan commitments, such as the Green Line Extension, were also not included.

H. Morrison discussed a chart displaying the programming of target funds by project type during the time period of analysis (FFY 2008-14). It showed that the Boston Region MPO is spending more on major highway projects that it has in the past. A chart displaying the programming of target funds by project purpose (Study/Design, Operations, Clean Air and Mobility, Multimodal Facilities, Roadway Expansion, Roadway Maintenance/Modernization) showed that the vast majority of target funds during the time period of analysis were spent, or are expected to be spent, on either roadway expansion, or roadway maintenance and modernization.

If all federal transportation funds programmed for the Boston region are considered, rather than just target funds, a different picture emerges. In all but one of the years between 2008 and 2014, more than 50% of federal transportation funds coming into the region were spent, or are expected to be spent, on transit projects.

H. Morrison also studied TIP spending for each of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's eight subregions. Spending across subregions is fairly equitable if each subregion's share of the region's population and employment is considered.

H. Morrison then described the next steps. The MPO is currently developing the next Regional Transportation Plan, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*. The Plan will detail major capital investments in the region's transportation system over the next 25 years. It must be constrained by the funding the region can reasonably expect during this time period. The current Plan, *JOURNEY TO 2030*, anticipated about \$7 billion for highways and \$13.2 billion for transit between 2010 and 2030. Staff is currently assuming federal transportation funding will be level. However, Congress has yet to approve a new surface transportation bill that could change the amount of funds available.

Member Questions

In response to members' questions, H. Morrison made the following additional comments:

- Approximately 25% of the federal highway funds coming into the state each year are spent on Central Artery/Tunnel debt.
- The percentage of statewide regional target funds available to the Boston Region MPO does not change annually.
- Accelerated Bridge Program funding was catalogued and presented in the charts.
- There is a movement towards investing more in operational strategies. The Boston Region MPO's Clean Air and Mobility Program is a good example of this.
- Projects must go through the MassDOT project review process to be eligible for federal aid.
- The East Boston Haul Road is the only freight-specific project in the current TIP.
- Project bids have been lower than normal during the recession.
- The closing of Beacon Park Yards will be considered during the development of the Plan. Its movement is accounted for in the region's truck model.
- Projects on the Massachusetts Turnpike can receive federal aid. There is no Turnpike project in the current TIP.

Member Comments

- The region's transportation needs will far outweigh the funds available. (Schuyler Larrabee, Boston Society of Architects)

5. 2011 Clean Air and Mobility Program Project Solicitation – Hayes Morrison, Boston Region MPO staff

Two million dollars of the approximately \$60 million in target funds available each year in the Boston region are reserved for the Clean Air and Mobility Program. Regional transit authorities (RTAs), municipalities, transportation management associations, chambers of commerce, and nonprofit transportation advocacy groups are among the entities invited to apply. All projects must have a RTA, municipality, or transportation agency as the fiduciary agent.

All projects must be initiated through the MassDOT Project Development and Design Guide. Projects must demonstrate air quality benefits and be eligible for federal aid. The program does not pay for project design.

Applications must be submitted online at www.bostonmpo.org/cleanair. Proposals are due February 1.

Member Questions

In response to members' questions, H. Morrison made the following additional comments:

- The Metropolitan Area Planning Council is the Chair of the Clean Air and Mobility Subcommittee.

- MPO staff does not estimate the cost per pound of pollutants eliminated by each project. Staff will consider using this measure of cost effectiveness in the future.
- The Subcommittee has not set a maximum dollar amount for the projects it will consider. The Subcommittee would like to spread the available funds to several worthy projects.
- Diesel retrofits and signage are eligible to receive funding through this program.

6. Committee Reports

Walter Bonin, Co-Chair of the Freight Committee, said they will put together a list of the most important freight needs for the region. It will consider economic development.

Schuyler Larrabee, Chair of the Plan Committee, said the Committee would likely meet in January to discuss the needs assessment being developed by staff.

7. Announcements

- Louis Elisa, of the Seaport Advisory Council, would like someone from the MBTA to address the issue of snow removal at bus stops. L. Wiener suggested L. Elisa be in touch with Joe Cosgrove at the MBTA. Marilyn McNab, resident of Boston, said the MBTA has a list on its website of who is responsible for snow removal at each stop. Jo Hart, resident of Worcester, said the MBTA should post on each shelter the party responsible for removing snow.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 PM.

Attachments:

1. Attendance List for December 8, 2010

ATTACHMENT 1: Attendance List for December 8, 2010

Cities and Towns

Laura Wiener, Arlington
Tom Kadzis, Boston
William Friel, Canton
Walter Bonin, Marlborough
Dom D'Eramo, Millis
Kurt Mullen, Needham
Frank DeMasi, Wellesley
Steve Olanoff, Westwood

Agencies

Tad Read, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Karen Pearson, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Steven Rawding, MassDOT – Aeronautics Division
Jennifer Solomon, MassRIDES
Louis Elisa, Seaport Advisory Council
Chan Rogers, Southwest Advisory Planning Committee (SWAP)

Citizen Groups

Richard Flynn & Jenna Venturini, Eastern Massachusetts Freight Rail Coalition
Schuyler Larrabee, Boston Society of Architects
Malek Al-Khatib, Boston Society of Civil Engineers
Chris Porter, MassBike
Tom Yardley, MASCO
Jon Seward, MoveMassachusetts
Tom O'Rourke, Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce
Marilyn Wellns, Riverside Neighborhood Association
Patrick Sullivan, Route 128 Business Council
John McQueen, WalkBoston

Guests and Visitors

Jo Hart, Worcester resident
Romin Koebel, Fenway Community Development Corporation
Doug Low, Massachusetts Railroad Association
Ed Lowney, Malden resident
Marilyn McNab, Boston resident

MPO Staff

Walter Bennett, Mike Callahan, and Hayes Morrison