

**Draft Memorandum for the Record
Transportation Planning and Programming Committee of the
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

July 7, 2011 Meeting

10:00 AM – 12:45 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 & 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Clinton Bench and David Mohler, Chairs, representing Jeffrey Mullan, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee agreed to the following:

- adopt the Version 2 of the MPO's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), with additional revisions approved at the meeting
- accept a proposal put forth by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the MBTA Advisory Board for transition to a new MPO membership structure (defined in the MOU)
- approve the work programs for the *Milford/Hopedale Commuter Rail Extension Feasibility Study* and *Low-Cost Improvements to Bottleneck Locations Study*

Meeting Agenda

C. Bench chaired the meeting through the first five agenda items then D. Mohler chaired the remainder of the meeting.

1. Public Comments

Elin Reisner, Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership (STEP), expressed concern about the proposed changes to the MPO's Memorandum of Understanding, noting that the changes would result in the Inner Core communities and environmental justice communities being under-represented on the MPO. STEP recommends that the MPO have three seats for the City of Boston, four for the rest of the Inner Core, and one for each of the subregions. (STEP has submitted a comment letter in this regard.)

Mary Pratt, Town of Hopkinton, stated that MPO members should represent the entire MPO region. If the MPO does institute changes that would allow there to be elected representatives from each subregion, then the MPO should record the votes of individual members, she said.

Later in the meeting, Wig Zamore, STEP/Mystic View Task Force, added to Ms. Reisner's comments. He also expressed concern that the proposed changes to the MPO structure would reduce the representation of Inner Core communities, which have a higher percentage of minority and immigrant residents than other subregions. He noted that STEP's concerns are relevant under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

2. Chair's Report – Clinton Bench, MassDOT

There was none.

3. Subcommittee Chairs' Reports – Pam Wolfe, Manager of Certification Activities, MPO Staff

Staff will be posting the draft FFY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for public review this weekend. Staff is also planning to hold an MPO Open House and workshops to discuss the three certification documents that will be released for public review this summer: The UPWP, the draft FFYs 2012-15 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report – Laura Wiener, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council

The Advisory Council met on June 30 and its LRTP Subcommittee prepared comments regarding the LRTP for the MPO. The Advisory Council is concerned that the *Community Path* project is not included in the LRTP. The group supports bicycle paths and believes that paths should be prioritized based on those most likely to be used by commuters and to take cars off the road. They also support including Illustrative Projects in the LRTP as those projects present a vision for the region.

5. Director's Report – Karl Quackenbush, Acting Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)

K. Quackenbush reported that the MPO's website has a new section on the topic of Livability. This was created by CTPS and MAPC in collaboration, and involved Sean Pfalzer and Michael Callahan, MPO Staff, and Eric Bourassa, MAPC. Members are invited to send staff feedback about the new webpage.

C. Bench added that the state is starting a smart transportation initiative, which involves a pilot study on transportation demand management as it relates to the development of land along state highways.

6. MPO Memorandum of Understanding – D. Mohler, MassDOT, David Mohler, MassDOT, and Pam Wolfe, Manager of Certification Activities, MPO Staff

C. Bench introduced the topic of revisions to the MPO's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and P. Wolfe summarized the proposed changes to the document and described the outreach that staff conducted to invite public comment.

After the announcement of a formal public review period for the MOU, staff held public workshops in Boston, Braintree, and Waltham. At the workshops, attendees asked questions about the proposal to change the MOU. One attendee stated that implementing agencies should not be voting members of the MPO. Others expressed concern about the possible diminished representation of Inner Core communities resulting from the changes.

Staff also received written comments, which were provided to the members. (See the attached summary of comments.) P. Wolfe summarized the themes of those comments. The primary concern voiced had to do with the under-representation of the Inner Core communities; commenters pointed to the Inner Core's high population and employment,

large environmental justice population, and the amount of transportation infrastructure in the area as reasons to increase the Inner Core's representation. Another theme focused on the idea that subregional representation would not promote regionalism on the MPO. Others expressed support for the expansion to subregional members, and support for holding MPO meetings around the region.

Other materials that were distributed to members for their discussion include: the MOU document with red-lines showing changes to the text; a map of the subregions of the MPO area; public comments and a matrix summarizing those comments; and an e-mail from MAPC suggesting text changes for the MOU. (See attached.)

A motion to adopt the revised MOU as presented was made by John Westerling, Town of Hopkinton, and seconded by Christine Stickney, Town of Braintree.

A motion to amend the previous motion and revise the MOU to add another Inner Core representative (so that there are two Inner Core representatives) and remove one at-large seat (while designating that the three remaining at-large seats would be filled by one city, one town, and one that may be either a city or a town) was made by L. Wiener, and seconded by Jim Gillooly, City of Boston.

During a discussion of the amended motion, L. Wiener advocated for her motion by noting that the Inner Core communities would be under-represented if the MOU passes as is, given that the Inner Core contains a large percentage of the region's population and built infrastructure, and that the changes would result in the Inner Core having only 21% of the voting power in the MPO.

Other members also voiced support for the amended motion. J. Gillooly added that it is a fair and modest request that will give more equitable representation (from a demographic point of view) to the Inner Core. David Koses, City of Newton, also voiced concern about under-representation of the Inner Core and about having subregional representatives.

Marc Draisen, MAPC, drew attention to letters that the MPO has received from Inner Core mayors and city and town managers, Congressman Michael Capuano, and members of the General Court, expressing concern about the proposed changes to the MOU. He added that the Inner Core (excluding Boston) contains 32% of the region's population and the majority of the region's transportation infrastructure, while other subregions have less than nine percent of the region's population. He expressed support for allowing the Inner Core to have two permanent seats (as the City of Boston, with 20% of the region's population, will have under the proposed new rules).

Tom Bent, City of Somerville, also voiced support for the amended motion and agreement with the members who spoke previously. He also read from the letter submitted by Congressman Capuano, in which the Congressman noted that 1.6 million people reside in the Inner Core (according to the 2010 census), more than in the other seven subregions combined. The Congressman stated that as the MPO allocates taxpayer

dollars, it is unjust to give the Inner Core residents one vote while the residents of the other subregions get seven votes.

Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, also voiced support for the amended motion citing the almost unanimous reaction from the Inner Core communities that found fault with the proposed changes to the MOU.

Two members expressed opposition to the amended motion. J. Westerling and Dennis Giombetti, Town of Framingham, noted that the MPO can revisit the MOU on an annual basis and make changes next year if the Inner Core is not adequately represented. D. Giombetti also noted that historically the MPO has made decisions from a regional perspective, and that the MPO can maintain its regional perspective with the proposed changes.

J. Gillooly argued that, much like representation in Congress, the representation of the MPO should reflect the demographics of the region.

Members then voted on the motion to revise the MOU to add another Inner Core representative (so there are two Inner Core representatives) and remove one at-large seat (while designating that the three remaining at-large seats would be filled by one city, one town, and one that may be either a city or a town). The motion did not carry. Seven members voted against the motion: MassDOT Chair; MassDOT Highway Division; MassDOT; Massachusetts Port Authority; MBTA; Town of Hopkinton; and Town of Framingham. Seven voted for it: City of Boston; City of Newton; City of Somerville; MBTA Advisory Board; MAPC; Town of Braintree; and Regional Transportation Advisory Council.

A motion to amend the original motion and revise the MOU to require that all of the at-large seats must be filled by representatives from municipalities within the Route 128 corridor was made by P. Regan, and seconded by L. Weiner.

During a discussion of the motion, P. Regan explained his reasoning for this motion noting that the municipalities within the Route 128 corridor are the economic engine of the region, and that representatives from those municipalities could bring a new perspective to the MPO by serving as spokespersons for business interests in the region. He said this change would be fair from a demographic, environmental justice, and infrastructure perspective. He noted that all the subregions except SWAP have municipalities within this Route 128.

Members then voted on the motion to revise the MOU to require that all of the at-large seats must be filled by representatives from municipalities within the Route 128 corridor. The motion did not carry. Eight members voted against the motion: MassDOT, Chair; MassDOT Highway Division; MassDOT; Massachusetts Port Authority; MBTA; MAPC; Town of Hopkinton; and Town of Framingham. Six voted for it: City of Boston; City of Newton; City of Somerville; Town of Braintree; MBTA Advisory Board; and Regional Transportation Advisory Council.

In response to a question from L. Wiener, D. Mohler explained MassDOT's reason for voting against the amendments. He remarked on the need to get to closure on the MOU issues, and pointed out that the new proposed structure would guarantee an increase in seats to three seats for Inner Core municipalities (as opposed to one under the existing structure). MassDOT believes the proposed new structure strikes the proper balance between subregional representation and regional representation. He noted that the MPO will have the opportunity to revisit the MOU next year.

MAPC had presented the MPO with a list of suggested changes to the text of the MOU. (See attached e-mail from E. Bourassa to P. Wolfe.) M. Draisen explained the changes.

A motion to accept proposed text changes to the MOU as recommended by MAPC was made by M. Draisen, and seconded by P. Regan. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

A motion to add language in Section 3A of the MOU (in two places) to state that the MPO will consider demographics in its decision-making was made by J. Gillooly, and seconded by David Anderson, MassDOT Highway. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

A motion to make the approved changes to the MOU effective as of November 1, 2011 was made by D. Mohler, and seconded by T. Bent. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

A motion to have the MPO begin its annual review of the MOU each year in April was made by M. Draisen, and seconded by T. Bent. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

A motion to have staff update text in the MOU to be consistent with the changes voted in today, to update terms in the document to be consistent with the new transportation statute, and to add text regarding the LRPT, was made by M. Draisen and seconded by T. Bent. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Steve Olanoff, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, raised a question about whether all MPO members must sign the MOU for it to be effective. M. Draisen recommended that it be required that two-thirds of the members sign for the MOU to be effective. Members who choose not to sign, may still serve on the MPO. S. Olanoff also recommended that text be added saying that all municipal members represent all the 101 municipalities in the region.

A motion to strike a paragraph from the MOU that discusses municipal signatories was made by D. Mohler, and seconded by D. Giombetti. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

In discussion of this motion D. Mohler stated that the vote of the MPO gives effect to the revised MOU, not the signing of the document.

E. Bourassa recommended changing language in the MOU to state that “municipalities representatives shall be elected by their chief elected official” rather than by “chief elected officials.” He explained that this change to the singular tense would resolve the need for municipalities to get approval from all their chief elected officials or boards of selectmen. M. Draisen added that some municipalities have had questions regarding whether they can run, and who from the municipality would serve if elected. D. Mohler clarified that it is the chief elected official who is the representative of the municipality and that he or she then makes the decision about who should serve. Municipalities can make their own decisions regarding those matters, but once elected the MPO will recognize either the municipality’s chief elected official or a person designated by that official.

A motion to adopt the revised MOU incorporating the changes approved at the meeting, was made by J. Westerling, and seconded by C. Stickney. The motion carried. Eleven members voted for the motion: MassDOT; MassDOT Highway Division (2 votes); Massachusetts Port Authority; MBTA; MAPC; Town of Hopkinton; Town of Framingham; Town of Braintree; MBTA Advisory Board; and Regional Transportation Advisory Council. Three voted against it: City of Boston; City of Newton; and City of Somerville.

Members then discussed the new MPO election process. Members were provided with a memorandum from E. Bourassa and P. Regan outlining their proposal for transitioning to the new MPO membership structure in the fall. (See attached.)

E. Bourassa described the proposal noting that in the October MPO election the open seats would be for two at-large cities, two at-large towns, and the following subregions: North Shore Task Force, North Suburban Planning Council, South West Advisory Planning Committee, and Three Rivers Interlocal Council. (See attached subregion map.) Four seats would be open each year with members serving three-year terms. (A schedule through 2019 is provided in the memorandum.) Due to the fact that there are existing members who will be serving out their terms, the complete transition to the new election procedures would take until 2016. In this proposal, six municipalities would serve four four-year terms.

S. Olanoff proposed an alternative that would allow for a shorter transition period. He recommended having shorter terms for newly elected members early on. Several members expressed that it would be better to have some members temporarily serving extended terms rather than institute shorter terms given the time it takes for new members to become familiar with the MPO processes, and because it may be difficult to find people who would want to run for a one-year term.

A motion to accept the proposal put forth by MAPC and the MBTA Advisory Council for transition to the new MPO membership structure was made by J. Westerling, and seconded by D. Giombetti. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

7. Work Programs – *Karl Quackenbush, Acting Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)*

Members were presented with the work programs for the *Milford/Hopedale Commuter Rail Extension Feasibility Study* and *Low-Cost Improvements to Bottleneck Locations* at the meeting of June 30. (See attached.) Members had no further questions about the work programs and proceeded to vote.

A motion to approve the work program for the *Milford/Hopedale Commuter Rail Extension Feasibility Study* was made by T. Bent, and seconded by J. Gillooly. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

A motion to approve the work program for the *Low-Cost Improvements to Bottleneck Locations* was made by T. Bent, and seconded by E. Bourassa. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

8. Long-Range Transportation Plan – *Pam Wolfe, Manager of Certification Activities, MPO Staff*

Members were provided with draft Chapters 1, 3, and 5 of the LRTP.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Plan Development Process

P. Wolfe noted changes made to Chapter 1 since the members first reviewed the document at the meeting of June 30.

Members then heard comments from members of the public.

Jim Gallagher commented that the LRTP is a public document and as such it should be written for the public. He stated that the document too long, too technical, and too jargon filled for the public to understand. He suggested putting much of the material in the LRTP in an appendix. He noted the importance of getting public support for transportation funding and of the need for having a readable LRTP. P. Wolfe reported that staff is preparing an executive summary of the LRTP.

Robert McGaw made a suggestion to include information in the LRTP regarding plans for high-speed rail. He remarked on the proposed high-speed rail route from Hartford to Boston and suggested adding text to the LRTP about that route, which would pass through the MPO area.

Chapter 3: A Summary of the Region's Transportation Needs

P. Wolfe summarized the contents of Chapter 3, which includes the following: a description of the Needs Assessment; a summary of the region's transportation needs; details about the region's transportation corridors; information about data resources used for the Needs Assessment; the needs for improving the region's highway, transit, freight, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure; the needs identified for environmental justice communities; and a summary of large developments proposed for the Boston region. (See attached summary sheet.)

J. Westerling pointed out a typographical error on page 3-12.

Chapter 5: Livability and the Environment

P. Wolfe summarized the contents of Chapter 5, which includes a discussion of the MPO's vision for three topics, climate change, environment, and livability. The section on climate change includes information on impacts from greenhouse gas emissions and describes the MPO's actions to achieve its climate change vision. The section on environment also describes the MPO's actions to achieve its vision, and shows the locations of LRTP projects in relation to environmental resources (such as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, flood zones, wetlands, etc.) The section on livability identifies challenges and gaps in livability in the region and the potential to improve livability. (See attached summary sheet.)

In response to a question from P. Regan, P. Wolfe and K. Quackenbush confirmed that air quality impacts of LRTP projects are being evaluated on a regionwide basis, not based on impacts from the individual projects.

D. Koses noted that the map in Figure 5-16 provides good information and suggested that staff add city and town boundaries to the map so that the public can get a better sense of which cities and towns have good transit coverage.

R. McGaw noted that there are no maps of freight rail routes and little data on shipping and airport usage in the LRTP.

J. Gallagher noted that the chapters have a lot of background information but not enough information on projects to implement the MPO's visions.

In response to these comments, P. Wolfe noted that information regarding the topics just raised is addressed in other chapters of the LRTP.

9. Members Items

There were none.

10. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn and to convene the MPO meeting was made by T. Bent, and seconded by P. Regan. The motion carried.

Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Meeting Attendance
Thursday, July 7, 2011, 10:00 AM

Member Agencies

MassDOT

MassDOT Highway

City of Boston

City of Newton
City of Somerville
Federal Highway
Administration
MAPC

Massachusetts Port
Authority
MBTA Advisory Board
Regional Transportation
Advisory Council
Town of Braintree
Town of Framingham
Town of Hopkinton

Representatives and Alternates

Clinton Bench
David Mohler
David Anderson
John Romano
Jim Gillooly
Tom Kadzis
David Koses
Tom Bent
Michael Chong

Marc Draisen
Eric Bourassa
Paul Christner

Paul Regan
Laura Wiener
Steve Olanoff
Christine Stickney
Dennis Giombetti
Mary Pratt
John Westerling

MPO Staff/CTPS

Michael Callahan
Maureen Kelly
Hayes Morrison
Sean Pfalzer
Karl Quackenbush
Pam Wolfe

Other Attendees

Jim Gallagher
Michael Lambert
Robert McGaw
Joe Onorato
Tom O'Rourke

Mary Anne Padien

Karen Pearson

Chris Reilly
Elin Reisner

Sheri Warrington
Wig Zamore

City of Somerville
Town of Belmont
MassDOT District 4
Neponset Valley Chamber of
Commerce
Office of State Senator Karen
Spilka
MassDOT Office of
Transportation Planning
Town of Lincoln
Somerville Transportation Equity
Partnership
Office of State Senator McGee
Somerville Transportation Equity
Partnership / Mystic View Task
Force