

Memorandum for the Record
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting

March 1, 2012 Meeting

10:00 AM – 11:15 AM, Barnet Gallery, Beverly Public Library, 32 Essex Street, Beverly

David Mohler, Chair, representing Richard Davey, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization agreed to the following:

- approve the work program for *MBTA 2012 Title VI Program Monitoring*
- approve Amendment One to the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2012 – 15 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as amended today to add an earmark for the *Quincy – Adams Green* project
- approve the study, *FFY 2011 Safety and Operations Analysis for Intersections in Hudson, Framingham, Newton, Malden, Milton, and Arlington*

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

Kristina Johnson, City of Quincy, spoke about two projects that the City of Quincy is advancing. She requested that the MPO consider programming funding for the *East/West Squantum Street and Hancock Street Intersection Improvement* project, in the FFYs 2013 – 16 TIP. This location was the subject of a Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) study in 2007; the project would implement many of the of the study recommendations. The project costs approximately \$3 million. The 75% design plans were approved last September and the 100% design plans are now being prepared. The city is responsible for right of way acquisitions. All appraisals have been received. The City Council will file a taking order within the next month.

K. Johnson also requested that the MPO program an earmark for the transportation infrastructure improvement portion of the *Adams Green* project in Amendment One to the FFYs 2012 – 15 TIP. The *Adams Green* project will be the centerpiece of the redevelopment of Quincy Center with a public park connecting the MBTA station, City Hall, and the United First Parish Church. The 25% design plans have been submitted to MassDOT. The city is asking the MPO to program \$296,000 of design funds in the FFY 2012 element of the TIP and the balance of the earmark for construction in the FFY 2013 element of the FFYs 2013 – 16 TIP. The full cost of the construction portion of the project is not known at this time. No right of way takings are expected. City staff are meeting with MassDOT program management staff on March 20 to discuss the 25% design submittal.

Dennis Crowley, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), asked if the programming of the \$296,000 in design funds for the *Adams Green* project would enable the city to complete the 100% design plans. K. Johnson replied yes. She explained

that originally the design portion of the project cost \$800,000; however, after reviewing the design agreement, FHWA determined that the full amount could not be obligated because the city had not yet completed the NEPA process. The project was split for that reason.

Briefing papers on both Quincy projects were distributed.

2. Chair's Report – David Mohler, MassDOT

There was none.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports

An update on the activities of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee was provided by Mary Ellen Sullivan, UPWP Manager. The committee met on February 2 to discuss the quarterly report for the first quarter of FFY 2012, a budget modification, and project ideas for the FFY 2013 UPWP. Minutes of that meeting were distributed to members. MPO staff will meet with the staff of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) on March 9 to discuss integrating their work into the UPWP. The UPWP Committee will meet next on March 15.

D. Mohler noted that minor changes were made to the committee assignments. The City of Boston is now a voting member of the UPWP Committee. The MBTA is no longer on the UPWP Committee. The Massachusetts Port Authority is now a voting member of the Administration and Finance Committee. The City of Boston is no longer on the Administration and Finance Committee.

**4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report – Steve Olanoff, Chair,
Regional Transportation Advisory Council**

On behalf of S. Olanoff, P. Wolfe reported that the Advisory Council is requesting that the MPO forward a letter to the MBTA regarding the Advisory Council's position on the MBTA's fare increase/service reduction proposal. Members agreed to forward the letter as the official comment of the Advisory Council.

**5. Executive Director's Report – Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central
Transportation Planning Staff**

K. Quackenbush drew members' attention to the MPO calendar for March. Three committee meetings are scheduled. The UPWP Committee will meet on March 15 and 29. The Congestion Management Program (CMP) Committee will meet on March 29. Also, staff will post the staff recommendations for projects in the FFYs 2013 – 16 TIP on March 22.

D. Mohler added that MassDOT will be providing preliminary funding targets for the TIP on March 9. Those targets will be considered preliminary until they are finalized at the meeting of the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) meeting on March 26.

6. Welcome from Host Municipality – Mayor William F. Scanlon, Jr., City of Beverly
Mayor Scanlon welcomed members and attendees to the City of Beverly. He talked about the history and features of Beverly and some of the development projects that have improved the city. These projects include major improvements to the storm water drainage system and the redevelopment of the site that is now the Cummings Center.

He also spoke about plans for future development, including a 500-space parking garage at one of the city's five train stops, and two other transportation projects the city hopes to advance: the *Route 1A (Rantoul Street)* project and the *Brimbal Avenue* project. He discussed both projects in terms of smart growth. Regarding the *Brimbal Avenue* project, he remarked on the safety and congestion problems at the location and the potential for smart growth development there. He stated that it is a regional project and noted that the North Shore Alliance for Economic Development has identified the project as its top transportation priority.

7. Work Program for MBTA 2012 Title VI Program Monitoring – Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff

The work program for *MBTA 2012 Title VI Program Monitoring* was presented at the meeting of February 16. Approval of this work program will allow the MPO staff to continue its work to assist the MBTA in its compliance with FTA's Title VI requirements.

A motion to approve the work program for *MBTA 2012 Title VI Program Monitoring* was made by Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, and seconded by Ed Tarallo, North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn). The motion carried.

8. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment One – Sean Pfalzer, Acting TIP Manager, MPO Staff

S. Pfalzer summarized draft Amendment One to the FFYs 2012 – 15 TIP, which was released a month ago for public review. The amendment includes the following changes:

- the programming of funds available for Transportation Enhancements
- the programming of discretionary grants for ferry improvements
- the programming of the Massachusetts Port Authority's Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan
- cost changes to three bridge projects
- revisions to the Central Tunnel/Artery payments
- reorganization of the transit element of the TIP to be consistent with the MBTA's Capital Investment Program (CIP)
- the addition of carry-over Section 5307 and 5309 transit funds
- the addition of carry-over transit earmarks
- the programming of a TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant

On February 2, the following changes were made to the document, while it was out for public review:

- the programming of a grant for a *Pay-As-You-Drive Insurance Pilot Program*

- the addition of the *Danvers – Route 35 (Water Street) over Waters River* bridge project

The MPO received two public comments regarding the TIP amendment from the City of Quincy and from State Senator Thomas McGee.

As noted during the public comment period of this meeting, the City of Quincy requested that the MPO program \$296,000 of an earmark to complete design of the transportation infrastructure improvement portion of the *Adams Green* project in the FFY 2012 element, and to program the remaining balance of the earmark for construction in the FFY 2013 element of the TIP.

Senator McGee wrote to express his support for three projects currently programmed: the *Lynn – Route 129 (Broadway)*, *Lynn/Saugus – Route 107 (Fox Hill Bridge)*, and *Swampscott – Stanley School Safe Routes to School* projects.

Both comment letters were distributed.

A motion to program \$296,000 of an earmark for design of the transportation infrastructure improvement portion of the *Adams Green* project in the FFY 2012 element of Amendment One to the FFYs 2012 – 15 TIP, and to program the remaining balance of the earmark for construction in the FFY 2013 element of the TIP, was made by Jim Gillooly, City of Boston (Transportation Department), and seconded by P. Regan. The motion carried.

By consensus members determined that this change did not warrant the MPO releasing the amendment for additional public review because the earmark can be applied only to the Quincy project and because this addition to the TIP was discussed at a previous meeting.

A motion to approve Amendment One to the FFYs 2012 – 15 TIP as amended was made by Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), and seconded by P. Regan. The motion carried.

9. Meeting Minutes – Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 16 was made by T. Bent, and seconded by E. Tarallo. The motion carried. MAPC abstained.

10. Work Program for Access to Transit – Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff, and Efi Pagitsas, Manager, Traffic Analysis Group, MPO Staff

K. Quackenbush introduced the work program for *Safe Access to Transit for Pedestrians and Bicyclists, FFY 2012*, which is included in the FFY 2012 UPWP. This study will identify transit stations that may be in need of improvements to bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and make recommendations for improvements. These would be

locations where people may be discouraged from accessing transit by non-motorized means, or where many people access transit despite poor accommodations.

Staff would first identify about ten locations for potential study, and then narrow that list to about four locations. Locations will be selected based on information from the Needs Assessment of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the density around the stations, the location of bicycle racks, future development potential and crashes that involved bicyclists and pedestrians.

Staff would observe and analyze conditions around the selected stations, and make recommendations for improvements based on contemporary design standards and Complete Streets standards. Potential recommendations might include adding bicycle lanes, signage, sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle parking, or lighting, as well as traffic calming, or making sight distance improvements or traffic signal modifications.

This study would be paid for with MPO 3C planning funds.

Members discussed the work program.

J. Gillooly suggested adding accessible pedestrian signals to the list of potential recommendations. K. Quackenbush concurred.

P. Regan cautioned that due to the MBTA's backlog of projects, any recommendations for improvements on MBTA-owned property might not be implemented in a timely fashion. K. Quackenbush noted that the study would probably generate more recommendations for the non-MBTA-owned areas around the stations, though any recommendations for improvements to MBTA property would certainly be brought forward as well. Joe Cosgrove, MBTA, pointed to the importance of improving bicycle and pedestrian access to stations given that, except for in a few locations, the MBTA will not be expanding parking for motor vehicles.

Laure Wiener, At-Large Town (Town of Arlington), asked for more information about choosing stations for study. K. Quackenbush replied that both commuter rail and urban rail stations would likely be selected.

T. Bent asked if staff would be reaching out to municipalities for this project. K. Quackenbush replied that, yes, staff would be interacting with local officials.

D. Mohler noted that staff would not be focusing on locations that are already undergoing a station planning process.

Eric Halvorsen, MAPC, suggested that the MPO staff coordinate with MAPC on the station selection process. MAPC has developed a Transit Oriented Development financing tool and is involved with land use and economic development work. K. Quackenbush welcomed the suggestion.

D. Crowley asked if the MPO would have input into the station selection process. K. Quackenbush offered to bring the locations staff has suggested before the board for their input.

D. Mohler asked if staff would be examining pedestrian accessibility issues, including those for people with disabilities. K. Quackenbush replied yes.

11. Technical Memoranda: FFY 2011 Safety and Operations Analysis for Intersections in Hudson, Framingham, Newton, Malden, Milton, and Arlington
– Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff, and Efi Pagitsas, Manager, Traffic Analysis Group, MPO Staff

K. Quackenbush introduced the study, *FFY 2011 Safety and Operations Analysis for Intersections in Hudson, Framingham, Newton, Malden, Milton, and Arlington*, which is the fourth in a series of studies the MPO staff have been conducting to examine intersections for safety improvements. The MPO authorized the MPO staff to begin work on this study last spring. (Recently the MPO approved a fifth study.)

E. Pagitsas then discussed the results of the study, which were distributed. The aim of the study was to address priority areas in need of management and operations improvements. Consideration was given to Complete Streets policies and the concept of livability. The premise of the study was that by addressing management and operations improvements, higher cost solutions, such as lane additions, could be avoided. Many recommendations from previous studies have already been implemented in the region. Often MassDOT can address recommendations through its maintenance program.

Eight locations were selected for this study:

- Massachusetts Avenue at Appleton Street and Appleton Place, Arlington
- Union Avenue at Mt. Wayte Avenue, Framingham
- Lincoln Street at Cox Street and Packard Street, Hudson
- Main Street at Mountain Avenue, Malden
- Neponset Valley Parkway at Brush Hill Road and Milton Street, Milton
- Crafts Street at Albemarle Road and North Street, Newton

The selection process gave consideration to safety concerns, whether a location is already being addressed through the TIP, CMP survey data, and municipal interest in implementing recommendations. Staff avoided selecting locations that involve large, complicated intersections that may require study of a corridor segment.

Typical issues associated with the intersections had to do with pedestrian safety, intersection geometry, outdated signal equipment, congestion, and confusing signage. Typical recommendations for short term improvements included adding signs, pavement markings, and signal retiming. Typical recommendations for long term improvements include modifications to intersection geometry.

Staff sent the recommendations of the study to the staff of the six municipalities. The studies were well-received with most reporting that they will pursue implementing the

short term recommendations and the long term recommendations to various degrees. Only the City of Malden has not returned comments.

Members then discussed the study.

L. Wiener thanked staff for their high level of professionalism on the Arlington study. She noted that the cost to implement some of the recommendations would be more than the amount of money the town has available for the work. E. Pagitsas pointed out lower cost improvements from the study, such as pavement restriping, and noted that the location is a prime spot for better urban design. Some recommendations, such as bulb outs, are more expensive than one might think due to ADA compliance needs.

David Koses, At-Large City (City of Newton), also thanked staff for their work in Newton. He noted that the city is working to implement the short term recommendations, including signal retiming at North Street. The city is also finalizing its bicycle plan, which may include a bicycle lane at Albermarle Road.

J. Gillooly noted that the Milton study includes recommendations for intersection geometry changes that would be on private property. He asked if the cost estimate for improvements includes construction costs only. E. Pagitsas responded that the costs are for construction only, and do not include estimates for right of way acquisition.

S. Olanoff inquired about implementation of the Milton project. E. Pagitsas reported that the Town of Milton is interested in implementing the recommendations. A permit from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) would be required to implement some recommendations. Staff expects that the town will coordinate with DCR.

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, raised questions about fully actuated traffic signals and about how many locations in the region have this Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technology. E. Pagitsas noted the benefits of these signals, which reduce traffic idling on side streets and improve traffic flow, and noted that both the MPO and MassDOT Highway Division support the technology. She stated that the majority of signals in the region are not fully actuated. Signals are generally upgraded during construction projects.

E. Tarallo suggested that the MPO staff contact the City of Malden's staff again given the city's recent administrative changes.

T. Bent asked if staff has a mechanism for determining if the implementation of short term recommendations actually result in crash reductions. E. Pagitsas replied that staff has not yet done such an analysis on short term recommendations, but staff does have a work program for evaluating the effects of TIP projects.

A motion to approve the study, *FFY 2011 Safety and Operations Analysis for Intersections in Hudson, Framingham, Newton, Malden, Milton, and Arlington*, was made by T. Bent, and seconded by J. Gillooly. The motion carried.

12. Members Items

D. Mohler encouraged involvement in the MBTA Fare Proposal meetings, which are still underway.

D. Mohler also reported that MassDOT has submitted three pre-applications for federal TIGER IV grants for the following projects: the *I-93/I-95 Interchange* in Canton and Westwood, the *Neponset River Greenway* (with DCR), and *Union Station* in Springfield. DCR has also submitted pre-applications for improvements to the *Gloucester Drawbridge* and freight bridges. J. Gillooly added that the City of Boston has applied to TIGER IV for the *Commonwealth Avenue, Phase 3* project. D. Mohler stated that the TIGER IV program offers about \$500 million in grants nationwide. The individual grants range from about \$10 million to \$20 million.

13. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by E. Tarallo, and seconded by T. Bent. The motion carried.

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting Attendance
Thursday, March 1, 2012, 10:00 AM

Members

At-Large City (City of Everett)
At-Large City (City of Newton)
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)
City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)

Federal Highway Administration
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
MassDOT Highway Division
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
Massachusetts Port Authority
MBTA Advisory Board
Metropolitan Area Planning Council
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)

North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)
Regional Transportation Advisory Council
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)

Representatives and Alternates

Marzie Galazka
David Koses
Laura Wiener
Richard Canale
Lara Mérida
Jim Gillooly
Tom Kadzis
Michael Chong
Tom Bent
David Mohler
David Anderson
Joe Cosgrove
Lourenço Dantas
Paul Regan
Eric Halvorsen
Mayor William Scanlon, Jr.
Tina Cassidy
Denise Deschamps
Ed Tarallo
Steve Olanoff
Dennis Crowley
Tom O'Rourke

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Michael Callahan

Maureen Kelly

Efi Pagitsas

Sean Pfalzer

Mary Ellen Sullivan

Pam Wolfe

Other Attendees

Callida Cenizal

Kate Day

Dennis Harrington

Kristina Johnson

Anthony Losordo

Rafael Mares

Mary Ann Murray

Joe Onorato

Rinus Oosthoek

Amanda Richard

Mike Sosnowski

MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning

Town of Danvers

City of Quincy

City of Quincy

City of Quincy

Conservation Law Foundation

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA / Regional

Transportation Advisory Council

MassDOT Highway

Salem Chamber of Commerce

Office of State Senator McGee

Salem City Council