

# Draft Memorandum for the Record

## Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

### September 6 Meeting

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Ned Codd and David Mohler, Chairs (in sequence), 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 Amendment Three of the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2012-15 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- approve the minutes of the meeting of August 16
- approve the following work programs:
  - *Bicycle Network Evaluation*
  - *MPO Freight Study, Phase 2*
  - *I-93 North and Southeast Expressway HOV Lane Monitoring: October 1 – December 31, 2012*

### Meeting Agenda

#### 1. Public Comments

Jim Cowdell, Executive Director, EDIC, City of Lynn, expressed support for the *Blossom Street Waterfront Facility, Phase 3* project in Lynn. Funding for the project is programmed in draft Amendment Three of the FFYs 2015-15 TIP. He provided an overview of this ferry project which he described as a critical component of the development of the Lynn waterfront.

The city received state funds through the Seaport Advisory Council for the first phase of this three phase project. Phase 1 was completed in 2008 and Phase 2 was completed in May 2012. The outcome of this project will be a commuter ferry service between Lynn and Rowes Wharf in Boston. The ferry will accommodate 149 passengers and provide a 30 minute trip between the two cities.

J. Cowdell noted that the project is universally supported in the City of Lynn, and is supported by the Lieutenant Governor, State Senator Thomas McGee, and State Representatives Steven Walsh and Robert Fennell.

Members then asked questions about the project.

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), asked whether the Lynn ferry service would contract with the Salem ferry. J. Cowdell explained that the Salem ferry is a tourist ferry that operates from April to October, while the Lynn ferry would be a commuter ferry operating year round. The two services would not be in competition.

Jim Gillooly, City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department), asked for a description of the first two phases of the project. J. Cowdell explained that the first phase involved paving and drainage work on previously undeveloped land, the second phase involved rebuilding a wall and constructing a ramp, and the third phase will involve dredging and the construction of a dock.

Lourenço Dantas, Massachusetts Port Authority, inquired about the travel time from Lynn to Boston by rail or car. J. Cowdell stated that the trip is 30 minutes by commuter rail. The time varies by car depending on traffic, but can take about 45 minutes. He added that the City of Lynn is interested in providing multi-modal options for commuters. He also remarked upon the positive impact that the commuter ferry in Hingham had on economic development in that town, and noted that the Lynn ferry could have a similar impact on the waterfront area in Lynn.

Marie Rose, MassDOT Highway Division, noted that MassDOT is working closely with the City of Lynn to ensure that funds for the project are obligated by the end of this fiscal year (September 30). J. Cowdell expressed gratitude for MassDOT's support.

Nedd Codd, MassDOT, added that these funds are the subject of today's action on Amendment Three of the TIP.

## **2. Chair's Report—Ned Codd, MassDOT**

N. Codd noted that the proposed Amendment Three to the TIP includes several new discretionary grants, including the *Blossom Street Waterfront Facility, Phase 3* project. (Amendment Three is addressed under Item 6.)

He also reported that the Obama Administration gave public notice of its plans to ensure that earmarks appropriated for projects in 2003-06 are advertised by the end of this calendar year. MassDOT has been in contact with proponents of those projects to determine which projects will be able to meet that deadline. Funds for projects that will

not be ready by that time will have to be repurposed or Massachusetts will lose those funds to other states. MassDOT must inform the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) of the list of projects that can meet the year-end deadline, or those that can be repurposed, by October 1.

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

L. Dantas reported that the Congestion Management Process Subcommittee will meet this afternoon, following the MPO meeting.

### **4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report**

In the absence of the Advisory Council chair, Pam Wolfe, Manager Certification Activities, MPO staff, reported that the Advisory Council will meet on September 12. The agenda will include a presentation on the Regional Household Travel Survey, a discussion regarding the revision of the Council's bylaws, and the annual Advisory Council election of officers.

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

K. Quackenbush reminded members that the next MPO meeting will be held on September 20 at the Newton Free Library in Newton. Staff will distribute information to members regarding transportation to that location.

He also noted that staff has begun distributing materials on revised letterhead. The letterhead has been revised as part of the MPO staff's ongoing process of providing materials in accessible formats. Larger print fonts are required in accessible formats. In consequence, there was insufficient space to include the list of member entities in the new letterhead.

### **6. FFYs 2012-15 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment Three—*Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff***

Members addressed draft Amendment Three of the FFYs 2012-15 TIP, which would program federal discretionary grants for the following projects:

- *Blossom Street Waterfront Facility, Phase 3*
- *Boston Inner Harbor Ferry Investment*
- *Fairmount Corridor Business Development and Ridership Initiative*
- *Essex Coastal Scenic Byway Information Kiosks*
- *Kendall Square Employer Transportation Benefit Pricing Trial*

The MPO held a 15-day public review period for draft Amendment Three. During that time, the MPO received seven comment letters. Copies of those comments were distributed as well as a matrix summarizing them.

The comments expressed the following:

A Better City expressed support for the five new projects in the Amendment as they will enhance economic vitality and competitiveness in the region.

The Essex National Heritage Commission expressed support for the *Essex Coastal Scenic Byway Information Kiosks* project and noted that the kiosk system is a high priority recommendation of the byway's federally funded corridor management plan.

The Fairmount/Indigo Line CDC Collaborative expressed support for the *Fairmount Corridor Business Development and Ridership Initiative* noting that the project will focus on two or more stops on the Fairmount commuter rail line and strengthen commercial activity near the line.

Several Arlington residents expressed opposition to the *Kendall Square Employer Transportation Benefit Pricing Trial* project. They expressed that the policies of the City of Cambridge have created difficult conditions for drivers and extended vehicle motor vehicle travel times by narrowing roadways to accommodate bicycle lanes.

State Senator Thomas McGee expressed support for the *Blossom Street Waterfront Facility, Phase 3* project. He noted that the ferry will provide an alternate mode of transportation for commuters and help stimulate economic development along Lynn's waterfront.

The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority requested that the MPO program the *Innovation Boulevard Streetscape and Pedestrian Improvements* project in Cambridge in the FFY 2013 element of the TIP. There is an earmark for this project; it is one of the projects that must be advertised by the end of this calendar year or repurposed. (See the Chair's Report).

Members discussed the Amendment and asked questions.

Laura Wiener, At-Large Town (Town of Arlington), asked for more details about the *Kendall Square Employer Transportation Benefit Pricing Trial* project. S. Pfalzer replied that the project would evaluate the effectiveness of a range of parking pricing policies in the Kendall Square area. L. Wiener then asked whose policies were being evaluated and D. Mohler said, those of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). D.

Mohler added that MassDOT would be working with MIT to evaluate whether employers in the Kendall Square area can have an impact on traffic by changing their policies .

David Koses, At-Large City (City of Newton), requested more information about the Kendall Square project and asked whether the results of the project would be made available to the MPO. D. Mohler replied that staff would provide members with the grant application and confirmed that the results would be made available.

J. Gillooly asked how the request from the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority would be handled. D. Mohler noted that this project has one of the earmarks that the Obama Administration is requiring to be obligated by December 31 or repurposed. By October 1, MassDOT must inform FHWA of which projects can meet that deadline and which earmarks would be repurposed. He stated that MassDOT would like to address the programming of this earmark along with the others at one time in a TIP amendment in October or November.

In response to a question from L. Wiener, D. Mohler confirmed that programming the five discretionary grants would have no impact on the TIP target funds and that the funds represent new money to the TIP. He added that it is not a given that FHWA will obligate all of the grant funds. MassDOT is working to make the projects ready.

A motion to approve Amendment Three of the FFYs 2012-15 TIP as presented was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the City of Boston (BTD) (J. Gillooly). The motion carried.

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

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 16 was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the At-Large Town of Arlington (L. Wiener). The motion carried. The following members abstained: Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) (Richard Reed); At-Large City of Everett (James Errickson); At-Large City of Newton (D. Koses); At-Large Town of Arlington (L. Wiener); Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Hayes Morrison); Massachusetts Port Authority (L. Dantas); and MBTA (Ron Morgan).

### **8. Work Programs—Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff**

Members were presented with three work programs. K. Quackenbush provided an overview of each work program and answered members' questions.

### ***Bicycle Network Evaluation***

The work program for the *Bicycle Network Evaluation* will examine the regional bicycle network and identify gaps in that network. The network includes facilities such as trails, cycle tracks, and on-road bicycle lanes. Gaps could include physical, operational, or perceptual gaps.

The MPO staff will be collaborating with MAPC on this project. MAPC will conduct outreach to municipalities to elicit involvement of interested individuals and groups. The MPO staff will also conduct outreach through its *TRANSREPORT* newsletter and other media outlets.

The products of the study will be a bicycle network map showing connectivity at a regional level, and recommendations for addressing or mitigating gaps in the network.

Members asked questions or commented:

Jim Fitzgerald, City of Boston (BRA), offered the City of Boston's assistance with the project. The city is in the process of updating a map of its bicycle facilities.

J. Gillooly asked if the project would involve outreach to bicycling groups, such as MassBike. K. Quackenbush replied yes.

R. Reed raised the issue of parking at bicycle facilities and suggested that the study address the parking needs of recreational users – who often drive to bicycle facilities – as well as bicycle commuters. K. Quackenbush replied that the study would focus more on identifying gaps in the network, rather than parking issues, given the limited funding for the study. He noted, however, that staff would not be blind to access issues.

D. Koses noted that improving the bicycle network is largely dependent upon how communities deal with their on-street parking (whether to remove it to accommodate bicycles, for example). He suggested that staff conduct outreach to municipalities that have gaps in the network. K. Quackenbush noted that municipalities will be asked to implement recommendations of the study.

J. Fitzgerald asked if cost estimates for proposed improvements would be included in the study recommendations. K. Quackenbush replied that staff could provide general cost estimates. He noted that improvements could range from smaller cost projects – such as signage to address perceptual gaps – to more substantial construction projects.

J. Errickson suggested studying ways to connect densely-settled areas or centers that are under-served by the bicycle network rather than only well-served areas where the

network already exists. E. Bourassa also expressed interest in adding an element to the project to address equity in densely-settled areas.

D. Mohler remarked that the scope of the project will depend upon how the term "gap" is defined – for example, whether the study will examine gaps on the existing and planned network or whether a gap would be considered to be an under-served area. K. Quackenbush explained that focus of the study would be on the former and on connecting nodes, but that staff would also be open to the latter.

D. Mohler noted that the work program states that both existing and planned facilities will be considered. He asked what staff would consider to be a "planned facility" and whether they would include planned facilities that have not yet been assigned funding. K. Quackenbush replied that staff will have to establish parameters for determining which planned facilities they will study. One possibility would be to consider projects that are included in Long-Range Transportation Plans. He said that attention will be paid to facilities that are farther along in the planning process.

Richard Canale, At-Large Town of Lexington, noted that people often categorize bicycling trips as either for the purpose of commuting or recreation, while trips can often be for other purposes, such as doing errands. He recommended that staff begin gathering information to reflect those other trip purposes for use in future studies. E. Bourassa noted that this study will examine land uses along the network corridors. K. Quackenbush then spoke about an NCHRP panel – of which he is a member – that is developing a manual for estimating bicycle and pedestrian usage of various facilities. The NCHRP's report will be released later this year. He also noted that the data gathered through the outreach process for this study will be added to a database for future use.

D. Koses asked whether the recommendations of the study would focus on small-scale improvements (such as adding sharrows to a road) or larger-scale improvements (such as building separated facilities). K. Quackenbush indicated that the recommendations would be dependent upon what staff finds during the course of the study.

### ***MPO Freight Study, Phase 2***

A series of freight studies are documented in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The *MPO Freight Study, Phase 1* was completed earlier this year. It provided information on truck traffic in the region – including data on volumes, crashes, and truck movements – which will serve as a base of information for future freight analyses. A second phase was also included in the UPWP, but the original concept has been

revised based on further consideration and conversations with various interested parties.

One task in the *MPO Freight Study, Phase 2* presented today, involves an assessment to determine what the MPO's freight-related program of activities should be, with particular reference to the need for those activities to be consistent with MassDOT's Rail and Freight Plan. The study will include research into the freight work being done by other MPOs, the guidance to MPOs in the new federal transportation legislation (MAP-21), and the state's freight plan. Staff will also work with the Regional Transportation Advisory Council's Freight Committee to develop a framework for going forward. The other task in the work program will focus on improving the MPO's methods for modeling truck flows because no matter how the MPO's freight program proceeds, there is a need to improve truck modeling capabilities.

***I-93 North and Southeast Expressway HOV Lane Monitoring: October 1-December 31, 2012***

The work program for the *I-93 North and Southeast Expressway HOV Lane Monitoring: October 1 – December 31, 2012* is another in a series of work programs that the MPO staff has been conducting since 1998 for MassDOT. Through these work programs, staff monitors travel times on the Interstate 93 North and Southeast Expressway HOV lanes and the general purpose lanes parallel to them. At issue is the number of minutes saved by users of the HOV lanes compared to users of the parallel general purpose lanes. In recent years, staff has also gathered occupancy counts on those facilities. All of these data are provided to MassDOT, which then reports to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Typically the work programs are for a one year period. This particular one will cover one quarter only – the period between October 1 and December 31, 2012. Staff will be consulting with MassDOT to reconsider how this work is conducted moving forward in 2013. Staff will be investigating other methods for collecting the travel time information, such as by subcontracting or by the use of other emerging data collection technologies.

Members asked questions:

R. Reed asked if staff has a comparison of the results of the data collection over time, and whether any trends in the data have been identified. K. Quackenbush replied that staff does produce that information; these data are available on the Mobility Monitoring section of the MPO's website.



M. Rose alerted staff that there will be construction on Interstate 93 next spring that could impact the monitoring work. The project involves the resurfacing of the roadway and the removal of the median.

J. Errickson asked how staff currently conducts the data collection. K. Quackenbush explained that temporary workers from CTPS's field data collection staff conduct the work. They use rental cars to drive the highway segments. Either a GPS monitor or a stopwatch is used to time each trip.

### **Votes**

A motion to approve the work program for the *Bicycle Network Evaluation* was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the At-Large Town of Lexington (R. Canale). The motion carried.

A motion to approve the work program for *MPO Freight Study, Phase 2* was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the At-Large Town of Lexington (R. Canale). The motion carried.

A motion to approve the work program for the *I-93 North and Southeast Expressway HOV Lane Monitoring: October 1 – December 31, 2012* was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa), and seconded by the At-Large Town of Lexington (R. Canale). The motion carried.

## **9. Members Items**

Tom O'Rourke, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC), noted that questions arose at the last TRIC meeting regarding whether the grant funding in Amendment Three of the TIP would be taking funds away from other TIP projects. He suggested that in the future, staff consider identifying project funding sources in public notices, if feasible.

T. O'Rourke also discussed TRIC's concern with a new policy that will re-route trucks that carry hazardous materials away from downtown Boston on to Route 128. Of particular concern is the interchange of Interstates 93 and 95 in Canton, which already is a dangerous location for truck traffic. The new policy will add a significant amount of truck traffic to the interchange. TRIC is suggesting that the MPO consider moving forward the *Canton – I-93/I-95 Interchange* project to address issues associated with the increase in traffic at that location. The project is currently programmed in the FFYs 2021-25 time band of the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

J. Errickson reported that the City of Everett is preparing a comprehensive master plan for the neighborhood surrounding the Route 99 corridor. A TIP-funded reconstruction

project is currently underway on Route 99 and this project has been the catalyst for the master plan. The second of three public meetings about the plan is tentatively scheduled for September 18. The plan will be completed by the end of this calendar year. The city is interested to hear from interested parties who may wish to partner with the city on future projects.

Hayes Morrison, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), expressed thanks for MassDOT's decision to approve \$50 million for the final design of the *Green Line Extension* project. She also thanked the MPO for supporting the project.

### **10. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the MBTA (R. Morgan). The motion carried.

## Attendance

<b>Members</b>	<b>Representatives and Alternates</b>
At-Large City (City of Everett)	James Errickson
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)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jim Gillooly
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Hayes Morrison
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	Ned Codd
MassDOT Highway Division	Callida Cenizal
	Marie Rose
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Ron Morgan
Massachusetts Port Authority	Lourenço Dantas
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
	Eric Halvorsen
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)	Richard Reed
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Monica Tibbits
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)	Tom O'Rourke

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### **Other Attendees Affiliation**

Jim Cowdell	City of Lynn, EDIC
Joe Onorato	MassDOT Highway Division
Chris Reilly	Town of Lincoln
Amanda Richard	Office of State Senator Thomas McGee

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**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Daniel Amstutz

David Fargen

Maureen Kelly

Robin Mannion

Anne McGahan

Elizabeth Moore

Scott Peterson

Sean Pfalzer

Pam Wolfe

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