

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

July 10, 2013 Meeting

3:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

Meeting Summary

Introductions

Steve Olanoff, Chair (Westwood) called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 9)

Chair's Report—*Steve Olanoff, Chair*

The MPO has received the Advisory Council's comment letter on the FFY 2014 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the FFYs 2014–17 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Advisory Council has also prepared a draft comment letter on the Revision to Draft Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2014–17 Transportation Improvement Program and Proposed Long Range Transportation Plan Amendment Two. Sean Pfalzer, TIP Manager for the MPO Staff, will discuss this amendment later in this meeting. The Advisory Council comment letter on this subject will be discussed later in this meeting.

Approval of Meeting Minutes of June 12, 2013 - *Steve Olanoff, Chair*

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes to the June 12, 2013, meeting. The June 12, 2013, meeting minutes were approved.

Massachusetts Port Authority – *Thomas P. Glynn, CEO and Executive Director, Massachusetts Port Authority*

After a brief introduction by Advisory Council Chair S. Olanoff, Massport CEO and Executive Director, Thomas Glynn, addressed the Council. Executive Director Glynn stated that even though Massport is proceeding with the Strategic Plan adopted in 1999, a new strategic plan is currently being prepared for the Board of Directors. The new plan will focus on two major themes: transportation and economic development.

Massport oversees three different divisions organized primarily by function. The Aviation Division operates Hanscom Field and Worcester Airports in addition to Logan International Airport in Boston. The Maritime Division of Massport concerns itself with

essentially four types of businesses: container and freight services; cruise support services; auto shipment services; and seafood processing services.

The Real Estate Division handles property in East Boston, the Seaport and World Trade Center in South Boston and the Harbor Islands.

The goals and activities of the Aviation Division continue to enhance travel options for the international traveler. The Japan Airline flight schedule makes flights available seven days a week. Copa Airlines inaugurates its service in Boston today, opening flight service to Central America, the Caribbean and South America. Expansion of airline service to the Mediterranean, the Middle East, China, and other major financial centers abroad that are currently not being served will augment the position of the business community.

One major planning and policy question concerns the overall growth of Logan Airport. The airport is located on 1,700 acres of land. This compares with the 54,000 acre footprint of the new Denver International Airport. While there has been a 4 percent reduction in number of flights at the airport, there has been a 2 percent increase in the annual number of passengers.

While the Blue Line is a main HOV service to the airport, other services including the Silver Line and Logan Express help to put Logan in the top tier of airports in the U.S. using HOV for access to the airport. It is estimated that 40% of all passenger trips to the airport are from HOV's. The planning goal is to continue to expand this trend by encouraging tourist travelers to use public transit.

A second broad planning question addresses the future growth of Maritime Division concerns; what will be the appropriate size of all facilities. The current expansion of the Panama Canal to serve much larger ships will impact seaports in the U.S. Massport and the community must decide if a complicated and expensive dredging operation required to facilitate larger ships is the appropriate step. Currently, about a third of the container shipment goods to New England enter through the Port of Boston, with the balance coming through New York.

The third major planning question concerns the development and future of the South Boston Seaport real estate development. Massport owns much of the land in this area and it has worked with developers there. This area has generated over 9,000 jobs in that part of the City. On the other side are the container and car port facilities and the fish processing site that make many blue-collar jobs available. The goal is to balance jobs and economic development with real estate development activities in the area to the benefit of the neighborhood.

Some milestone projects that have been completed recently that have improved the transportation-related elements of Logan Airport in light of the strategic plan include:

- The Consolidated Rental Car Facility will reduce the demand on shuttle-bus service to the terminals. Currently, there are 130 shuttle-busses per hour serving the airport terminals. The new facility will reduce that number to 30 shuttle-busses per hour. This will have positive air quality payoff and will benefit the local neighborhoods.
- In South Boston, the 1st Street Bypass Road will divert nearly 600 trucks a day that are currently using the residential street.
- In East Boston, truck and employee traffic to the airport will be diverted from East Boston neighborhoods along a bypass road to Chelsea.

These projects reflect economic and neighborhood environment issues which must be faced and ongoing public outreach activities will address some of these big issues. All of these concerns will be reflected in the update to the Massport Strategic Plan which is scheduled to be completed next year.

Questions and Answers:

In response to members' comments and questions, Executive Director Glynn had the following comments:

- There have been many proposed uses for the Massport lands in the South Boston Seaport. Rail tracks do exist there, but the cost of making them available for freight service to Conley Terminal has been the major obstacle to proceeding with most of the proposals that have been advanced. Double-stacking is the only way to make the facility economical, but this poses problems with low-overhead bridges along the routes inland. (S. Olanoff, F. DeMasi)
- The cost of pursuing enhanced freight activity at Conley Terminal and the North Jetty (former Subaru Pier) to facilitate expanded shipping activity resulting from the Panama Canal widening project (Panamax) will be measured against the likely increase in economic activity. A major impediment to making some of the investments needed to undertake potential opportunities is available funding. Proposals like converting Widett Circle into a layover facility for an expanded South Station facility, or double-tracking freight from Conley Terminal to Worcester would take away funds currently dedicated to running non-revenue generating activities of Massport.

There has been 20 percent erosion in the state revenue (1991-2007) as a result of 117 different tax cuts. Despite the desire for better infrastructure there is less revenue. Money has to come from some place to subsidize the losses that are experienced in other areas operation. (F. DeMasi, W. Bonin)

- Profits from the airport are already channeled into areas that do not make money. As an example, street design of the Boston Innovation District helped to make possible the 9000 jobs there. Not all operations will generate profit; with economic development activities, much like a university system, the benefits will accrue in some other time. Some are directly traceable, others are not. Logan Airport and the South Boston Development activities help to subsidize cost associated with the Conley Terminal, Cruiseport, Seafood Processing Center, Hanscom and Worcester. In addition, there is a net annual revenue loss to Massport of \$15 million due to the operation of the Chelsea Bridge by another agency. Paying for growth and expansion now becomes more challenging. (W. Bonin)
- Some fifteen years ago, Logan handled 1500 flights a day as opposed to today where there are 1000. The important question is whether the airlines come to an airport. Massport has emphasized that the critical demographic measurement is the travelling population of an area, not necessarily the resident population. The business traveler is the primary money maker for the airlines, so they are most concerned about the level of business flight generation. (R. Flynn)
- Programs to encourage better rail-to-airport connections at Logan will encourage rapid transit use, especially among travelers who are more likely to use transit. Foreign travelers are more open to using transit than many other airport users. A variety of planning concepts to increase rail to the airport involve both the Blue and Silver Lines. Any costs of improvements will be expensive and must be considered in a tight economic environment. Shifting rail use patterns by passengers will have an impact on investment strategies. (R. Flynn)
- Massport will do a better job of discussing maritime issues. In order to protect the competitive edge of Massachusetts businesses and industries, there will be more attention to address the issues in maritime activities, maritime industries and their economic impacts. (R. Arena)
- Massport enjoys good working relations with the private bus carriers. There are many security operations that contribute to the overall safety and security of the airport facility. A background check and safety exam is conducted for all drivers with access to Logan. The private passenger bus industry will have to follow the same procedures that all workers and service providers follow. (C. Anzuoni)

- Planning activities for the new Massport Strategic Plan are underway and are scheduled for completion next summer. There is coordination in compiling this plan between Massport, MassDOT, and the City of Boston. (S. Olanoff)

Revision to Draft FFYs 2014-17 Transportation Improvement Program and Proposed Long Range Transportation Plan Amendment Two – Anne McGahan and Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff

The MPO approved the release of a proposed Second Amendment to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for public comment from June 24 through July 23, 2013. The main item of the Amendment considers a request from MassDOT asking to move the scheduling of the I-95/I-93 Interchange in Canton from the 2021-25 time band forward to the 2013-2020 time bands.

There are four areas of change in the LRTP that result from this proposed amendment:

Changes in Funding Time bands:

In the proposed Amendment Two, tables indicate the timebands for funding the Long Range Transportation Plan. The Canton Interchange Project is divided into two projects: one is the actual interchange, while the other is the addition of a northbound ramp and widening of Dedham Street. This project will be a state-funded project.

The proposed Amendment Two specifies that the two projects go through the environmental review and design process as one project. This project will be constructed under 3 phases:

1. Reconstructing I-95 southbound / Blue Hill Drive off-ramp and the reconstruction of University Avenue / Canton Street intersection. This will be constructed in the 2013-15 time band.
2. Construction of an off-ramp from I-95 northbound to Dedham Street and widening Dedham Street is also in the 2013-15 timeband for construction.
3. The actual intersection improvements involving several elements. This phase includes adding two travel lanes to I-95 in both directions. This will be constructed in the 2016-20 time bands.

In order to maintain consistency with the TIP, the Route 128 Add-a-Lane project will be added to the 2013-2017 time band, and the Route 18 Capacity Improvement project in Weymouth will be completed in the 2016-2020 time band. In addition, other project costs and updated project revenues were included.

Changes in Financial Information:

A table was presented demonstrating the projected federal funds for capital projects involving highway funds for the first two time periods consistent with the TIP.

Changes air quality conformity information:

- As of last year, the MPO has achieved the level of “attainment” in ozone standards. The MPO is classified as a “maintenance area” for carbon monoxide (CO) and as a result, must update the air quality conformity determination analysis.
- New conformity determination was conducted on the 2014-17 Draft TIP using new emission factors.
- Moving the time band of the Canton Interchange project does not trigger conformity determination as Canton is outside the CO maintenance area.
- The 2020-2035 build/no-build analysis reviews all projects in the state to calibrate carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels coming from all projects in the LRTP and all MPO planned projects.
- A table was presented showing long range CO₂ emissions reduction values in 2020. The table showed a small increase in CO₂ by 2035.
- Climate change analysis considers the projects included in the travel demand model which measures LRTP’s regionally significant projects. Projects like bicycle and pedestrian facilities, shuttle services, intersection improvements are not accounted for in the model. The CO₂ reductions associated with these types of projects are calculated through the Congestion Management Program (CMP). These projects are funded in the Boston MPO’s TIP.

Questions and Answers:

In response to members’ comments and questions, the following comments were made:

- Funding for the Route 128 Add-a-Lane project was broken up into sections beginning in the south and working north. Incremental delays over time have added to the final completion date of the project. The money for completing the project is available and is programmed in the TIP. (D. D’Eramo. F. DeMasi)
- K. Johnson noted that the Route 128 Add-a-Lane project is being funded with Target Funds.
- S. Olanoff noted that the Canton Interchange Project will be financed with state funds and that when the Route 128 Add-a-Lane project is completed, there will be more MPO funds available.
- A. McGahan pointed out that the Canton Interchange Project had been scheduled in the 2021-25 time band. The State is interested in seeing this project completed sooner and will pursue the project with State funding and not federal funding. In order to qualify for federal funding, the project would have to be completed in the next five years. (T. Daley)
- S. Olanoff explained the geometric design of the existing intersection and its historical references to the once-planned Southwest Corridor. (L. Weiner)

Sean Pfalzer pointed out that two projects in the Draft 2014-17 TIP required changes in scheduling. These projects are the Randolph to Wellesley Route 128 Add-a-Lane project and the Route 18 Widening Project in Weymouth.

The Draft FFY 2014-17 TIP includes the projects related to the Canton Interchange project. He also stated that several other changes are proposed as well as the addition of a pedestrian bridge in Brookline and bridge work in Wakefield. The timetable for public review of the Draft TIP is the same as the LRTP, and action will be taken by the MPO on July 25.

Election Committee:

In accordance with the Advisory Council Bylaws, an Election Committee will be formed and will meet and encourage people to run for Chair and Vice-Chair. The nominations for Officers will close at end of September meeting. An election of Officers will be held at the October meeting and new Officers take over in November. There will be no August meeting.

The last Chair of Advisory Council heads the Election Committee. L. Weiner will chair the Election Committee meeting which will meet before the end of July. Members were encouraged to participate on the Committee. Members who volunteered to serve on the committee include: S. Olanoff, RTAC Chair, M. Tibbits-Nutt, RTAC Vice Chair, D. Montgomery (Needham).

Committee Reports:

The Freight Committee is scheduled to meet in September.

Old Business:

There was none.

New Business and Member Announcements:

S. Olanoff entertained a motion to approve a comment letter to the MPO on the subject of the Canton Interchange which was distributed prior to the meeting. The motion was made and seconded. The motion to send the comment letter to the MPO passed unanimously.

F. DeMasi announced that there will be a South Coast Rail status meeting in Westport on July 17, 2013.

R. Arena gave a brief biographical sketch of the new US Secretary of Transportation, Mr. Anthony Fox. He also presented a brief review of High Speed Rail (HSR) planning activities nationally, with special emphasis on the East Coast. He made comparison of

the activities engaged by major metropolitan areas along the proposed HSR Corridors. Mr. Arena noted critical infrastructure investment to bring the HSR project to Boston must be undertaken immediately if Boston wishes to remain competitive.

Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded at 4:45 PM. The motion carried.

Attendance

Agencies (* MPO & other non-voting)

MassDOT*

MBTA Advisory Board*

MassDOT - Aeronautics Division*

MassPort*

Attendee

Sheri Warrington, OTP

Steve Rawding

Thomas P. Glynn, Speaker

Municipalities (Voting) *MPO Member

Arlington*

Boston*

Cambridge

Marlborough

Millis

Needham

Quincy

Wellesley

Westwood

Laura Wiener

Tom Kadzis

Juan P. Avendono

Walter Bonin

Dom D'Eramo

David Montgomery

Kristina Johnson

Frank DeMasi

Steve Olanoff

Citizen Groups

American Council of Engineering Companies

Association for Public Transportation

Boston Society of Civil Engineers

Eastern Massachusetts Freight Rail Coalition

Massachusetts Bus Association

MoveMassachusetts

WalkBoston

Tom Daley

Richard Arena, Barry M
Steinberg

Topher Smith

Richard Flynn

Chris Anzuoni

Jon Seward

John McQueen

Guests

STEP, MVTF

Wig Zamore

Staff

CTPS

CTPS

CTPS

Pam Wolfe, Manager,
Certification Activities
David Fargen, Bill Kuttner
Anne McGahan, Sean Pfalzer