

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

October 9, 2013 Meeting

3:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

Meeting Summary

Introductions

Steve Olanoff, Chair (Westwood) called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 6)

Chair's Report—*Steve Olanoff, Chair*

The MPO approved a work scope, the Long-Range Transportation Plan Priority Corridors study at the October 3, 2013, meeting of the MPO. The LRTP work scope was approved at the October 17, 2013 meeting. The MPO also heard a presentation by MassDOT on the upcoming Callahan Tunnel renovation and rehabilitation project and a Livable Community Workshop (LCW) update by MPO staff. The goal of the LCW program is to help communities become more walkable. A presentation on the SWAP Regional Public Transit Feasibility study examined the distribution and coordination of shuttle bus services in the region and reported on recommendations for possible improvements.

Approval of Meeting Minutes of September 11, 2013 - *Steve Olanoff, Chair*

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes to the September 11, 2013, meeting with one revision. The September 11, 2013, meeting minutes were approved as revised.

Election of Officers- *Laura Wiener, Chair:*

David Montgomery, representing Needham was nominated for Chair and Mike Gowing representing Acton was nominated for Vice Chair. Each candidate gave a brief statement.

Over the past year, D. Montgomery became more interested in how the metropolitan planning process in the greater Boston area fits together and the Advisory Council's role within that framework. He seeks to foster collaboration among all members and encourages them to stay involved and make their voices heard in the coming year.

Mike Gowing became interested in transportation as a result of working with planners in the MAGIC subregion. He is interested in seeing what can be done about making the Advisory Council more viable and exciting. He wants to see the Advisory Council as a voice of reason at the MPO.

A motion to elect David Montgomery to Advisory Council Chair, and Mike Gowing to Vice Chair was made and seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

The new officers will hold office from November 1, 2013 through October 31, 2014 (and will preside over the next Advisory Council meeting to be held on November 13, 2013).

Freight Planning Action Plan for the Boston Region MPO – *Bill Kuttner, MPO Staff*

Bill Kuttner, MPO staff, presented the draft Freight Planning Action Plan for the Boston Region MPO and explained that the goals of the draft Freight Planning Action Plan are to begin addressing the MPO's freight planning needs. In addition, the draft Freight Planning Action Plan will work within the context of planning efforts managed by the state and other agencies. The planning goals will be to gather useful freight data, conduct analysis, enhance MPO technical planning capabilities, and identify possible recommendations.

Federal regulations give the MPOs wide latitude concerning freight planning. The relevant geography for freight movement is more extensive than for passenger trips. Much planning is done on a multi-MPO or statewide basis. Few MPOs develop a specific freight plan. Travel demand models typically estimate truck movements, including both freight and other heavy vehicles.

The Boston Region MPO has included both trucks and intermodal connections in approximating regional freight activity. Trucks are by far the largest regional mode. Statewide, 87% of long-distance freight uses trucks. Within the Boston MPO, the number is higher. Rail, ship, and air freight modes can be analyzed by observing trucks at key terminals, thereby using truck traffic as a lens to understand freight transportation in general.

Freight planning covers many topics and must be divided into manageable groups. Truck issues cover infrastructure investment, urban and regional policy, rail and port issues, and land use, for example.

Several issues that are aligned with the strengths of the MPO are the analysis of substandard highway interchanges, major freight corridors, hazardous cargo, dedicated truck and commercial vehicle routes, intermodal terminals, and the northwest arc of I-495.

Technical capabilities will improve the MPO's overall planning by contributing to federal MAP-21 performance measures, integrating freight planning with other analyses and planning, and improving analytical capabilities through the use of new truck data and an improved statewide model.

The draft Freight Planning Action Plan focuses on the most pertinent issues, transportation needs, and on the development of useful data. This plan integrates freight into all the MPO's various planning activities.

Questions and Answers:

B. Kuttner continued with responses to questions and comments from members:

In response to a question from D. Ernst on the impact of truck traffic on vulnerable road users, B. Kuttner agreed that safety is an important part of the Freight Plan and will be addressed as studies progress.

J. McQueen felt that attempting to get a full measure of the fleet of trucks currently on the roads, combined with nationally counted trucks, is essential for investment and understanding of roadway degradation and air quality effects.

M. Gowing asked how truck trip data is captured. B. Kuttner explained that a regional model predicts passenger travel based on data that is obtained from the household survey. Trucks are estimated as they move through various employment zones, with three classes of trucks (commercial vans, big trucks, and hazardous cargos) delineated. Default truck flows are based on employment. Newly acquired data can be used to re-estimate the truck trip tables which comprise a portion of the traffic assigned by the regional model. This enhanced trip modeling improves knowledge of the truck component of the model projections.

J. Businger asked if truck data was being collected consistently over time. B. Kuttner stated that data being collected currently is rather limited. He pointed out that trends in overall travel are relatively stable over time.

In response to a question by M. Wellons, B. Kuttner said that performance measures will be addressing greenhouse gas issues. The performance measures are a whole set of measurements of which trucks are only a small portion. As a follow-up question, M. Wellons asked if metrics are or will be available to measure noise data that is generated by trucks. B. Kuttner stated that an estimate of the exposure to noise could be undertaken using geographic information system technology. He stated that without relevant truck data, this would be difficult.

P. Wolfe suggested that noise mitigation analysis is sometimes part of an environmental review process conducted by an entity seeking environmental permits, while K. Johnson

and M. Murray described the noise pollution monitoring and enforcement used in several municipal settings.

R. McGaw asked what freight analysis has been done that would support planning for specific issues. B. Kuttner described various uses of data and modeling in presenting recommendations. Some might entail using existing facilities more efficiently, while others could encourage infrastructure investment.

P. Wolfe added that staff considers freight and economic factors as part of the criteria used to evaluate projects that are candidates for funding in the Transportation Improvement Program. These issues are also considered in development of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, in which long-term investment plans are presented.

F. Osman asked about the use of existing data that is currently being collected, either remotely or passively, including Registry of Motor Vehicle data, and whether this could be incorporated into the truck data base. B. Kuttner explained that the activity of the vehicle is as important as the actual count, which ties into origin and destination studies.

Chair Olanoff asked for comments from the Advisory Council Freight Committee:

W. Bonin explained that the Freight Committee strongly endorsed the plan and the expanded development of useful data. Bonin stated that the region needs data to solve freight-related problems and that the Freight Planning Action Plan would allow the Council to work with the MPO seriously about freight.

He further stressed that issues frequently cross MPO lines and must therefore be addressed at a statewide level. Committee members made it clear that this work should be considered an initial phase mainly for the purposes of identification of problems. Members expressed a need for the MPO to engage in dialog to develop real options that will address specific problems. W. Bonin said that the committee was most interested in the process of development of plans to address specific problems.

D. D'Eramo commented that freight has been neglected for a long time and that the development of this new freight plan process is a significant milestone.

W. Bonin commented that the public needs to understand the implications of increased freight traffic and that this is an opportunity for the MPO to address freight issues from costs to quality of life—including air quality and safety.

S. Olanoff suggested that a range of proposed solutions be included in the presentation chart. These would include projects that may show up in the TIP, or may be undertaken by MassDOT, Massport or private ventures. He added that the data could be used by the business community as well.

J. McQueen felt the plan was a good first step, but expressed concern about the counting of truck types; this is a significant part of the understanding of the problems and solutions. W. Bonin felt that some data, including diesel sales could be collected now, while other data is indirect and can be acquired in a roundabout way.

R. McGaw and W. Bonin commented that the MPO is committing to an ongoing process of collection and analysis, including problems to be solved, not just a report. This is a plan for going forward.

S. Olanoff noted the Council's long-time advocacy to establish freight studies and freight planning on an ongoing basis. He indicated that he will inform all members when the plan is presented to the MPO for a vote so that they may attend if they want. He also stated that the Advisory Council will be submitting comments on the freight plan to the MPO prior to that meeting.

New Business and Member Announcements:

F. DeMasi announced that the Environmental Impact Statement for the South Coast Rail will conduct its next public meeting on October 17, 2013 at the Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth.

F. DeMasi also announced the grand opening for the new MetroWest RTA hub facility on Blandin Avenue in Framingham will occur at 3:00 PM on October 10. Wellesley will also have a Job Access and Reverse Commute bus route inauguration on October 21.

C. Anzuoni commended Chair Steve Olanoff and Vice Chair Monica Tibbits-Nutt for their dedicated leadership of the Advisory Council for the last two years.

Committee Reports:

There were none.

Old Business:

F. DeMasi suggested that the Program Committee consider transit oriented development as a program topic, specifically at locations like Riverside Station. He also suggested that Worcester Line schedule improvements be considered as a topic for a future meeting.

Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded at 4:40 PM. The motion passed, unanimously.

Attendance:

Agencies (* MPO & other non-voting)

MAGIC*

Agencies (Voting)

EOHHS

MassRides

Municipalities (Voting)

Acton

Cambridge

Marlborough

Millis

Needham

Quincy

Wellesley

Westwood

Municipalities (Non-voting MPO Members)

Arlington

Bedford

Boston

Citizen Groups

AACT

Association for Public Transportation

Boston Society of Architects

Massachusetts Bus Association

MassBike

MoveMassachusetts

National Corridors Initiative

Riverside Neighborhood Association

Route 128 Business Council

WalkBoston

Guests

Ed Lowney, Resident

CTPS Staff

Pam Wolfe, Manager, Certification Activities

David Fargen

Attendee

Franny Osman

Theodora Fisher

Catherine Paquette

Mike Gowing

Cleo Stoughton

Walter Bonin

Dom D'Eramo

David Montgomery

Kristina Johnson

Frank DeMasi

Steve Olanoff

Laura Wiener

Patrick M Young

Tom Kadzis

Mary Ann Murray

Barry M Steinberg

Schuyler Larrabee

Chris Anzuoni

David Ernst

Jon Seward

John Businger

Marilyn Wellons

Monica Tibbits-Nutt

John McQueen

Bill Kuttner

Matt Archer