

Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Unified Planning Work Program Committee Meeting

January 22, 2015 Meeting

9:05 AM to 10:00 AM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Sreelatha Allam, Chair, representing the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee agreed to the following:

- Approve the draft minutes of the November 6, 2014 UPWP Committee meeting

Materials

Materials for this meeting included:

- A copy of the meeting agenda
- Draft minutes for the November 6, 2014 UPWP Committee meeting
- The FFY 2015 UPWP First Quarter Spending Report and Schedule/Staff Assignment Table
- A document describing the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2016 UPWP development schedule and key dates
- A map showing anticipated mixed use, housing, and commercial developments in MPO communities near Boston, with communities in MBTA Commuter Rail Zone 1A highlighted

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Sreelatha Allam, Chair, Unified Planning Work Program Committee (Massachusetts Department of Transportation) called the meeting to order at approximately 9:05 AM. UPWP Committee members, MPO staff, and other attendees introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 11.)

2. Action Item: Approval of Minutes from November 6, 2014 UPWP Committee Meeting

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2014 UPWP Committee meeting was made by Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) and seconded by Tom O'Rourke, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC). The motion carried. Laura Wiener, At-Large Towns (Town of Arlington) abstained.

3. FFY 2015 UPWP First Quarter Status Reports

Spending Report

Michelle Scott, MPO staff, reviewed the structure of the report. It provides information on federal fiscal year (FFY) 2015 UPWP budgets and total budgets for projects that are in the FFY 2015 UPWP, as well as those that have been carried over from FFY 2014 or otherwise added during the federal fiscal year.

M. Scott reminded the members that some projects extend over multiple years. If UPWP Committee members see a project with FFY 2015 expenditures that are in excess of its FFY 2015 budget, she encouraged them to look to the far right columns of the table to see if the project is within its total budget, of which the FFY 2015 budget may be only a part. Also, there are a number of FFY 2015 projects that have not yet had their work scopes approved, or have only recently had them approved. This accounts for many of the projects which are listed as "not begun."

The bottom of the last page of the report includes the summary of spending over FFY 2015 through the end of December, 2014. Approximately 22 percent of MPO dollars have been spent, which is in line with the portion of the federal fiscal year that has passed.

Dennis Crowley, Southwest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) asked why the 3C Planning and MPO support budget was at 37 percent at this point in the year. Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director, explained that this project included a task for staff support of the 2014 federal recertification review of the MPO, which involved many CTPS groups. This work took place in the first quarter and staff work for the recertification process is essentially complete. He does not anticipate costs for the 3C Planning and MPO support program to exceed its budget at the end of federal fiscal year.

S. Allam asked when some of the "not begun" projects are scheduled to begin, and how MPO staff members anticipate their workload will be affected when these projects will start. M. Scott said that a number of the "not begun" projects are among those that staff

expects to begin in the second quarter, and offered to provide more detail during the discussion of the schedule and staff assignment table.

S. Allam asked why the MBTA Neighborhood Maps project is shown as “not begun.” Robin Mannion, MPO Deputy Executive Director, explained that the contract is in place, but MPO staff members are waiting for further direction from the MBTA before they begin.

T. O'Rourke asked for more details on the Cape Cod Canal Study: Misc. Modeling Assistance and Cape Cod Flyer Extension Study projects, as they address locations outside of the Boston region. Also, T. Bent asked how these studies are funded, and whether they are funded with MPO dollars. K. Quackenbush explained that these projects are funded with SPR funds from a contract with MassDOT, which makes up a portion of the agency (non-MPO funds) in the UPWP. These funds support MassDOT request for CTPS expertise on certain projects, some of which may happen near to, but outside of, the Boston region. The MPO reviews a number work scopes for SPR-funded projects each year. For the Cape Cod Canal Misc. Modeling Assistance project, CTPS is providing modeling assistance to the MassDOT consultants doing the study. K. Quackenbush added that for the Cape Cod Flyer Extension study, MPO staff are supporting an MBTA evaluation of whether to extend rail service, all of which emanates from the Boston region.

D. Crowley noted that at the last MPO meeting, MPO members discussed a UPWP project that may lack sufficient funding. He asked what the project was called. K. Quackenbush explained that the project was titled Core Capacity Constraints, and that the UPWP Committee would be discussing it as part of this meeting. He added that this project has not yet begun, and that the concern raised at the MPO meeting was that the study may not have enough funding to cover the area that some members wish to see studied.

Schedule/Staff Assignment Table

M. Scott reviewed the structure of the report, which describes projects that CTPS staff expects to work on between January and March 2015. For listed projects, it provides information on the project budget, expenditures to date, the project schedule for the next twelve months (including any recent adjustments), and the expected number of days of staff time that will be spent across CTPS groups. She mentioned several report highlights:

- Recently completed projects include several projects from the FFY 2014 UPWP, including the TIP Project Impacts Before/After Evaluation; the FFY 2014 Safety and Operations at Selected Intersections studies; the FFY 2014 Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment study; the FFY 2014 Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways study; and the Methodology for Evaluating the Potential for Limited-Stop Service on Transit Routes project.
- MPO-funded projects expected to have work scopes approved this quarter include Core Capacity Constraints, Household Survey-Based Profiles and Trends: Selected Policy Topics; Bicycle Network Gaps: Feasibility Evaluations; Fairmount Line Station Access Analysis; Safety Analysis at Intersections Near Magic Schools; and Title VI Service Equity Analysis: Methodology Development. These projects, and the projects with work scopes approved last quarter, make up all of the MPO-funded new discrete studies in the FFY 2015 UPWP.
- Agency funded projects expected to have work scopes approved this quarter include Massport Technical Assistance; Support to the MBTA's Program for Mass Transportation (PMT); the Kendall Square Transportation Study; and the Everett Transit Study.
- Recent and anticipated new hires are reflected in the Traffic Analysis and Design group. These include a general planner and a bicycle and pedestrian planner. The Transit Service Planning and Transportation System Analysis groups also have a new staff person each.

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC) asked for confirmation that there will be a new bicycle and pedestrian planner. K. Quackenbush explained that MPO staff has recently completed the recruitment process for the position M. Scott mentioned. All positions have been filled, but not all new hires have started work. The bicycle and pedestrian planner is expected to begin in early March.

4. FFY 2016 UPWP Development Process: Upcoming Steps

M. Scott described the content of the document titled Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016 Development Schedule and Key Dates. At past UPWP Committee meetings, MPO staff had provided an overview of the timeline for developing the FFY 2016 UPWP, using a schedule that described the timeline for all three MPO certification documents. This new document describes meetings and activities that are expected to take place on particular dates between January and June 2015. She asked UPWP Committee

members to ask any questions or raise any concerns they may have about the schedule.

S. Allam asked whether the February 19 UPWP Committee would take place after the MPO meeting on that day. M. Scott explained that it may be necessary to have the February 19 UPWP Committee meeting after the MPO meeting, because it may take the Committee more than an hour to review the main agenda item: the draft UPWP Universe of Proposed New Projects. There might not be enough sufficient time to cover this material prior to the MPO meeting. S. Allam noted that depending on their agendas, MPO meetings may go as late as 12:30 PM. If that it is the case on February 19, it may be problematic to ask Committee members to stay for another hour or two beyond that.

D. Crowley noted that last year, UPWP Committee members had the opportunity to fill out a survey of their priority projects, and asked if and when that would be happening again. M. Scott said that she did plan to conduct the survey again, as past surveys have been very helpful to staff. She said that, depending on how the February 19 meeting goes, she may distribute the survey shortly after February 19 or shortly after March 5, if Committee members request to have an additional meeting before they fill out the survey.

M. Scott said that she appreciates members raising the question of whether to hold UPWP Committee meetings before or after MPO meetings. MPO meetings can contain very full agendas, and UPWP Committee meetings before or after those MPO meetings can make for long days. She said that MPO staff will be attentive to the MPO agendas when scheduling UPWP Committee meetings, and will try to be flexible.

L. Weiner said that she preferred that the UPWP Committee meet prior to MPO meetings. Lara Mérida, City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority) agreed. K. Quackenbush asked whether UPWP Committee members would be open to coming at 8:30 AM for some meetings; MPO staff could make the CTPS conference room available if need be. L. Weiner said she could do this, although she acknowledged that there may be other Committee members unable to arrive for morning meetings even if they started at 9 AM. D. Crowley, T. Bent, S. Allam, and Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, said they would be amenable to this.

4. Core Capacity Constraints Study

This item, initially agenda item 4, was moved until later in the meeting when more UPWP Committee members were present. Members referenced the map of mixed use,

housing, and commercial developments within and near MBTA Commuter Rail Zone 1A. The map highlights the boundaries of MBTA Commuter Rail Zone 1A and also shows commuter rail and rapid transit lines.

K. Quackenbush explained this project was initiated by Senator Brownsberger and several other state senators and representatives, who were interested in having MPO staff analyze current and future probable conditions in the core area transportation system. They are concerned about how proposed developments will affect the future capacity of the systems in the area, especially if they are considered to be at capacity already. K. Quackenbush explained that, from his perspective, the core area includes Boston, parts of Cambridge and Somerville, Chelsea, and other areas, and that he believed that Senator Brownsberger and the other participating state senators and representatives to agree with this definition, although they did not discuss specific “core area” boundaries.

K. Quackenbush explained that the main task of the study is to estimate probable levels of congestion in the core area, with an emphasis on the transit system. MPO staff will create a “congestion snapshot” and then will analyze 20 or so of the largest proposed developments in the core area in order to link trips generated by the developments at a transportation analysis zone (TAZ) level to help identify specific chokepoints on the system. This will enable MPO staff to describe the degree to which these large developments would likely contribute to congestion levels in the future. Finally, MPO staff will research what existing mitigation requirements exist in the core area, and see if, based on the results of the congestion analysis, MPO staff can make any recommendations regarding transit mitigation processes.

K. Quackenbush emphasized that this study has components that are not specific to certain developments, and reiterated that MPO staff’s goal is to develop a good congestion snapshot for the core area. The study will be similar to the process staff follows when developing the Long-Range Transportation Plan Needs Assessment, although in this study, MPO staff will be looking at a specific area in more detail. The congestion snapshot will be a valuable tool to support policy and planning deliberations by the MPO and others. Regarding the study elements that focus on specific developments, when the workscope for this project was discussed at the last MPO meeting, MPO members wanted to discuss which developments should be considered for analysis, which in turn affects the study area. The MPO approved the work scope on the condition that MPO staff work with the UPWP Committee on defining the study area, and then report the results of the discussion to the MPO.

K. Quackenbush explained that Scott Peterson, MPO staff, has worked with E. Bourassa and Tim Reardon at MAPC to help gather data on developments, which is an input into the travel model. S. Peterson directed the Committee's attention to the map explained that the geographic area covered by MBTA Commuter rail Zone 1A (shown in green) represents over 90 percent of the major developments that affect the inner commuter rail or transit system. This proposed study area was selected because it accounts for the majority of developments that MPO staff might study in more detail. MPO staff will select 20 developments from this universe for further analysis. He said that MPO staff believes that by analyzing 20 developments, they would be able to gain a good perspective on how developments are affecting the system in general and on what types of mitigation strategies have been proposed for larger developments. This number of developments is also appropriate given the study's budget.

L. Wiener asked for a clarification on the term "mitigation", and asked whether this is associated with to projects proposed by the government or those being paid for by developers. S. Peterson explained that the study will look at what type of transit mitigation improvements, regardless of their funding source, have been proposed. L. Wiener asked if the study would just look at transit projects that have been proposed to mitigate the impacts of new developments, K. Quackenbush said that the focus of this project will be on the transit system. S. Peterson said that these mitigation projects may not need to be adjacent to the transit system. For example, some large developments may be a mile or more away from the transit system, but may have shuttle service to local commuter rail or transit stations.

E. Bourassa explained that the map reflects municipal information on projects that are planned, permitted, or under construction. For some developments there might not be proposals in place, but municipalities have done a significant amount of planning and can anticipate a certain level of buildout. The numbers (and various symbol sizes) on the map represent the estimated numbers of residents or employees at specific developments. Clusters of development exist in sections of Boston, near the Alewife MBTA station and Kendall Square in Cambridge, and in the Inner Belt and Assembly Row sections of Somerville. In some places, like Suffolk Downs in Revere, there are expectations of future development, but there aren't specific plans being developed. E. Bourassa acknowledged that David Koses, At-Large Cities (City of Newton), is interested in the Core Capacity Constraints study area because the City of Newton is looking to redevelop the Highland Avenue/ Needham Street corridor. He noted that there are very few proposals for that corridor right now, so the map does not show a lot of development information for that location in Newton.

L. Mérida asked if the goal is to inform what cities should ask developers to contribute to address transportation, or what cities should be asking of the state and federal government. K. Quackenbush that staff will have a better idea once they get deeper into the study. S. Peterson said that MPO staff initially planned to document the existing processes and their effects on the transportation system. More focus would be placed on the congestion analysis portion of the study. MPO staff does not anticipate that specific policy recommendations would come out of the study at this point, although it's possible that staff's research may uncover issues on which staff could comment.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham) noted that in outlying areas, traffic studies are conducted for proposed new developments. He asked whether transportation analyses for developments in the City of Boston include transit elements. L. Mérida said that the transportation impacts of proposed developments are studied, and that final permits are contingent on the results of the studies. Existing study processes are more geared towards studying vehicular traffic, which can provide information to determine the amount of parking space that may be needed, although the City of Boston asks developers to comment on impacts to the transit system as well. E. Bourassa noted that these studies will describe the portion of generated trips that will be served by specific modes. He added that for developments in a number of areas, it is assumed that a lot of trips will be served by transit, and that there is a need to look at how the transit system will accommodate those trips. He added that this study will hopefully identify the issues and clarify the extent of the problem to support discussion of solutions. There are a number of new developments with little to no off street parking, which is generally a good thing, but there is no designated funding going from the development to transit, even if the transit system is expected to inform a large number of trips. This could be a policy idea that the MBTA could be interested in the future.

E. Bourassa asked whether the study would investigate individual development projects or clusters of projects. S. Peterson that it may make sense to group developments into clusters, because the study will be using the traffic analysis zone (TAZ) as a unit of analysis, and one TAZ may contain multiple developments. He added that the study would likely exclude the South Boston Waterfront or Kendall Square areas, as studies are ongoing or upcoming for these areas. L. Mérida said that the area around North Station could be a good area to look at, as it has not recently had the same level of study as the other areas mentioned.

T. Bent noted that Assembly Square's transportation analysis was done based on basic total buildout of the new developments, but that analysis focused on traffic rather than

transit. He added that Somerville is working on a new zoning ordinance and is planning to reduce the amount of parking required for developments as part of that ordinance. It is expected that more people will be using transit because of the Green Line Extension. He said that he is not sure that existing development analysis processes account for impacts to the transit system, so he is supportive of this study, but he said that he wonders if developers would resist paying for transit mitigation. E. Bourassa noted that the studies for the development of the casino in Everett looked at impacts to transit, and that the casino developers will be providing money to the MBTA, which is unique.

K. Quackenbush reminded the group that staff proposed that the study cover Commuter Rail Zone 1A. The vast majority of anticipated developments are located in this area, and the area contains the peak load points for the transit lines that serve the area. He asked the UPWP Committee members whether they are comfortable with the MPO staff going forward with the study with Commuter Rail Zone 1A as the defined study area. At the last MPO meeting, members had identified Newton or Quincy as other possible areas of study. K. Quackenbush said that he was concerned that if the study area grew too large, it would inhibit MPO staff's ability to do the detailed, focused analysis that they are setting out to do.

L. Mérida asked if this study could be a pilot for a future study that would examine a larger geographic area. K. Quackenbush said that is a possibility. E. Bourassa indicated that this type of study, which coordinates land use and transportation, is exciting and hopes that similar work continues to be done in the future.

S. Allam expressed support for the defined area, and S. Olanoff agreed. S. Allam asked for the group to develop a consensus. D. Crowley agreed that the focus of the study should be on the Boston area, but he noted that there is a lot of development in Quincy and suggested that MPO staff consider studying that location as well. E. Bourassa agreed that study will be needed of the Quincy Center area as it is redeveloped. D. Giombetti suggested that MPO staff study Commuter Rail Zone 1A but that they acknowledge why significant development areas may be included or describe big projects outside of the study area that may affect growth in trips on the system. S. Peterson explained that the model's outputs will account for increases in travel generated by future development that occurs in other parts of the region.

S. Allam said that the Committee in general is comfortable with proceeding with Commuter rail Zone 1A for the study. She said that this consensus, and not a vote, should be sufficient because for MPO staff to relay to the full MPO board.

5. Member Items

There were none.

6. Next Meeting

The next UPWP Committee meeting will be on February 19, 2015. It will cover the draft FFY 2016 UPWP Universe of Proposed New Projects.

7. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by T. O'Rourke and seconded by D. Crowley. The motion carried.

Attendance

| Members | Representatives and Alternates |
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| At-Large Towns (Town of Arlington) | Laura Wiener |
| City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority) | Lara Mérida |
| Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) | Tom Bent |
| Massachusetts Department of Transportation | Sreelatha Allam |
| Metropolitan Area Planning Council | Eric Bourassa |
| MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham) | Dennis Giombetti |
| Southwest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) | Dennis Crowley |
| Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC) | Tom O'Rourke |

Other Attendees Affiliation

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| Tom Kadzis | City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department) |
| Steve Olanoff | Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC) |

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director
Elizabeth Moore
Scott Peterson
Michelle Scott
Pam Wolfe
