

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

April 30, 2015 Meeting

2:10 PM to 2:40 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

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

Materials

Materials for this meeting included:

- The meeting agenda
- Draft minutes from the January 22 UPWP Committee meeting
- A spreadsheet and email from the Fresh Pond Residents Alliance, documenting current and anticipated development in the Fresh Pond/Alewife area
- An updated draft CTPS FFY 2016 UPWP budget
- An updated draft MAPC FFY 2016 UPWP budget
- An updated MPO-staff recommended list of proposed new projects
- Draft FFY 2016 UPWP descriptions for ongoing and continuing 3C-funded projects and agency-funded projects
- The FFY 2015 Second Quarter Status Reports (spending report and schedule/staff assignment table)

Decisions

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

- Approve the minutes from the January 22, 2015 meeting
- Adopt the MPO staff and MAPC recommendation for the budget and new projects for the FFY 2016 UPWP as the UPWP Committee recommendation to the MPO for the FFY 2016 UPWP

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Sreelatha Allam, Chair, Unified Planning Work Program Committee (Massachusetts Department of Transportation) called the meeting to order at approximately 2:10 PM. UPWP Committee members, MPO staff, and other attendees introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 8.)

2. Action Item: Approval of Minutes from the January 22, 2015 UPWP Committee Meeting

A motion to approve the January 22, 2015 UPWP Committee meeting minutes was made by Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) and seconded by Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council. The motion carried.

3. Updates to Draft FFY 2016 UPWP Universe of Proposed New Projects

M. Scott explained that the UPWP Universe had been updated to reflect estimated costs for proposed projects, staff evaluation ratings (which reflect the staff priorities discussed at earlier UPWP Committee meetings), and public comments that have been submitted for projects over the past several months.

M. Scott said that one new proposed project—F-7, Transit Options to Reduce Congestion on Tolled Facilities—has been added to the Transit section of the UPWP Universe of Proposed New Projects. This project was based on a public comment received from Joel Weber II, a Somerville resident. This project would look at the transit improvements that would most effectively reduce the number of single occupant vehicles on tolled highways during peak travel times.

M. Scott also presented a spreadsheet from Doug Brown, vice president of the Fresh Pond Residents Alliance (FPRA) in Cambridge, which describes current and anticipated development in what the Alliance refers to as the Alewife-Fresh Pond Transportation Corridor. The Alliance submitted this information for the UPWP Committee to use in the consideration of various projects.

4. Action Item: Decision on UPWP Committee Recommendation for FFY 2016 UPWP Budget and New Projects CTPS Recommended Projects

Budget and Recommendation Updates

M. Scott described updates that have been made to the proposed FFY 2016 CTPS and MAPC budgets and the list of MPO-staff-recommended new projects since the last UPWP Committee meeting. She explained that MPO staff has received an updated estimate for its Federal Highway Administration PL (metropolitan planning) funds. Last week, MassDOT notified MPOs that an error had been made in the initial estimates of funds for the Commonwealth's MPOs and RPAs. To correct the error, some funds had to be redistributed. Because of this, the CTPS budget has been reduced by approximately \$11,000, and the MAPC budget has been reduced by approximately \$2,500. She added that MPO staff still does not know what their FFY 2016 FTA Section 5303 funding allocation will be and does not know when they might receive that information. She said that MPO staff requests that the Committee finalize their recommendation on the FFY 2016 UPWP at this meeting, using existing information, so that it will be possible to stay on schedule. She added that the UPWP Committee will need to determine how to respond to finalized funding information when it becomes available.

M. Scott described changes to the budget made in response to this decrease of PL funds, and to address funds not programmed as of the last UPWP Committee meeting. The balance of available funding after the PL decrease—\$19,340—has been assigned to the Data Resources Management program, an ongoing UPWP program. MPO staff wanted to ensure there is sufficient funding for this program, which supports much of the MPO's work.

Other updates to the CTPS budget include:

- A transfer of approximately \$9,700 from the General Graphics budget to the Provision of Materials in Accessible Formats budget
- The incorporation of the Integrated Land Use for Regional Transportation Models, and its associated budget, into the Regional Model Enhancement Program
- An update to the MassDOT Transit Planning Assistance contract amount, to reflect new contract information

The list of MPO-staff-recommended projects has not changed since the April 16 UPWP Committee meeting, although some proposed project ratings have been updated in response to public comments. These are highlighted on the staff recommendation document.

Laura Wiener, At-Large Towns (Town of Arlington), asked whether the projects that do not get selected for this upcoming UPWP go away completely after the process concludes. M. Scott explained that those projects are on file for staff and the UPWP Committee to revisit when the next UPWP development process starts. She added that if a project does not get selected for a given year, there are opportunities during the next development cycle to make refinements that could make it a better project for the future. The Core Capacity Constraints project in the FFY 2015 is a good example of a project that had that outcome.

L. Wiener asked how MPO staff sorts through projects in the UPWP Universe to decide which ones should be kept in and which ones should be pulled out. M. Scott explained that the projects that fall out of the UPWP Universe are typically those that came from staff. At the beginning of the UPWP development cycle, staff determines whether it makes sense to consider staff-proposed projects for another year or to take them out of the Universe. Project ideas that get suggested by the public get brought back for UPWP Committee consideration in future years [if appropriate]. Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director, added that some project ideas are funded by transportation agencies, such as MassDOT and MBTA, because it may be more appropriate for those agencies to pay for that work.

L. Wiener asked what MPO staff's opinion is regarding project E-11, Alewife Transportation Community Study. M. Scott noted that there is a lot of planning and other activity happening in that area right now. Staff could monitor how these activities develop and to see if there would be a better way to involve the MPO in the future when some of this activity has settled.

E. Bourassa said he was still unsure what the FPRA was looking for through project E-11. M. Scott said that she talked with Arthur Strang of the FPRA after the last UPWP Committee meeting, and that he had said that while the Alliance had appreciated MPO staff's time and the Committee's time in working on the project concept, they may need to do more work internally to determine what kind of project they want. E. Bourassa said that the City of Cambridge needs to figure out what they want for the area. There is a lot of redevelopment happening in near Alewife station, but the reality is that there are a lot of connectivity issues in that same area. He said that he looks to the City to take the

lead on determining what the MPO's role is in the area, and that the MPO doing a study on its own might not be a good use of funds. He added that one developer has proposed to build a commuter rail station Alewife station.

L. Wiener said that she also didn't understand what the FPRA was looking for through proposed project E-11.

K. Quackenbush said that he agreed with E. Bourassa's observation that the City of Cambridge needs to clarify what exactly the MPO can do in the Alewife area.

T. Bent added that there is a lot of controversy in the area regarding development and the City of Cambridge needs to give better direction of what they might want the MPO to examine.

M. Scott reminded the group that Tegin Teich Bennett, a planner for the City of Cambridge, was at the last UPWP Committee meeting. She added that the City, per a letter they had submitted, was interested in making further improvements to the jug-handle approach near Alewife, an issue which is different from some of the issues that the Fresh Pond Residents Alliance wanted to explore. E. Bourassa added that the jug-handle approach is a regional roadway/bus-connectivity issue, and not necessarily something that relates to the transportation options, such as walking and biking, for people moving into new housing developments near Alewife.

L. Wiener added that there may be a 40B development on a piece of property in Arlington that is walkable to Alewife, although potential residents may still choose to drive to the station. She said that the issues around Alewife do not affect Cambridge only, but also Arlington and Belmont, and to some extent Somerville. She said that said there is no question that there are a lot of concerns about what is going to happen in the Alewife area, but proposed project E-11 may not be the best way to address them.

Pam Wolfe, MPO staff, noted that at the last UPWP Committee meeting, Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood, NVCC) had asked about the proposed Regional Transportation Advisory Council's budget for FFY 2016, which is lower than what has allocated for FFY 2015. She said that she had an opportunity to review that amount since the last UPWP Committee meeting and was comfortable with it. She said that MPO staff is making an effort to better align spending projections with the amounts that ultimately are spent.

E. Bourassa said that MAPC has removed approximately \$2,500 from the Land Use Data for Transportation Modeling project to account for the reduction in PL funds

discussed earlier in the meeting. He said he spoke with MAPC staff working on this project, and they were comfortable with the reduction.

Motion

A motion to adopt the MPO staff and MAPC recommendation for the budget and new projects for the FFY 2016 UPWP as the UPWP Committee recommendation to the MPO was made by T. Bent and seconded by E. Bourassa. The motion carried.

5. Report on Ongoing and Continuing Projects and Programs for FFY 2016 UPWP

M. Scott distributed draft chapters describing the ongoing and continuing work planned for the FFY 2016. Many projects are the same from year to year, but there is some new detail on agency-funded projects that have started since the FFY 2015 UPWP was endorsed. She asked Committee members to contact her from now until mid-May if they have any questions about the content of these draft chapters. She also offered to make these chapters available electronically.

6. FFY 2016 UPWP Development Process: Upcoming Steps and Next Meeting

M. Scott said that she will make a presentation of the UPWP Committee's recommendation on the budget and new projects at an MPO meeting in the near future. This may be on May 7 or May 21, depending on the schedule. If MPO staff receives information about the FFY 2016 FTA Section 5303 funding amount, the Committee may need to reconvene to modify the budget if changes to funding levels are significant, although such a meeting should not take a lot of time. She added that the amount of FTA Section 5303 funds that the MPO receives tends not to fluctuate much from year to year.

7. FFY 2015 Second Quarter Status Reports

The FFY 2015 Second Quarter spending reports and schedule/staff assignment table were included in the meeting packets. M. Scott said that any questions about these reports could be addressed at the next UPWP Committee meeting.

8. Work Program for Safety Analysis of Intersections near MAGIC Schools (Possible Action Item: Decision on UPWP Committee Recommendation on Proposed FFY 2015 UPWP Amendment 1)

This agenda item was deferred to a future UPWP Committee meeting.

9. Member Items

There were none.

10. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by E. Bourassa and seconded by T. Bent.
The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
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
Southwest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Dennis Crowley
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees Affiliation

Brad Rawson	City of Somerville
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MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

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