

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

June 23, 2016 Meeting

10:05 AM – 11:25 AM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

Trey Wadsworth, Chair, representing Stephanie Pollack, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreed to the following:

- approve revisions to Draft Amendment Five to the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2016-20 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to incorporate documentation of Community Transit Grant awards, and release the document for a 30-day public review period
- release the Draft FFYs 2017-21 TIP, as presented today, for a 30-day public review period

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

David Knowlton, City Engineer for Salem, representing Mayor Kim Driscoll, provided an update on the *Canal Street Rail Trail Construction, Phase 2 (Salem)* project. This project will construct a rail trail segment connecting the northern segment of the Canal Street Rail Trail, now under construction, to the existing Marblehead-Salem Rail Trail. The Phase 2 project is estimated to cost \$2.4 million. The city is requesting that the MPO program those funds in the FFYs 2017 element of the TIP, so that construction can begin in the spring of 2017 and the new segment of the rail trail can be completed on schedule with a roadway project, the *Canal Street Improvement* project.

MPO member Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), asked about the design status of the project. D. Knowlton reported that the 25% design plans have been submitted to MassDOT. The rail trail project was originally designed as part of the *Canal Street Improvement* project, but it was separated from the roadway project because of right-of-way issues (involving the relocation of a railroad spur and movement of communication cables) that need to be resolved. Assigning funds to the rail trail project will allow the city to request accelerated reviews of the project design by the reviewing agencies.

2. Chair's Report—*Trey Wadsworth, MassDOT*

T. Wadsworth reported that the MassDOT Board of Directors adopted the Capital Investment Plan (CIP) on June 20.

3. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were no reports.

4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Tegin Bennett, Advisory Council Chair*

T. Bennett reported that the Advisory Council will be submitting its comment letters on the TIP and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to the MPO.

5. Executive Director's Report—*Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director*

There was no report.

6. Revised Draft Federal Fiscal Years 2016-20 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment Five—*Lourenço Dantas, Manager of Certification Activities Group, MPO Staff*

Since the MPO approved the release of Draft Amendment Five to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP for public review on June 16, staff received financials on the Community Transit Grant awards for FFY 2016. Staff presented members with revised TIP tables showing the additions and proposed to release the revised document for public review.

Discussion

E. Bourassa asked for an explanation of why some of the descriptions of projects that are receiving Community Transit Grant awards indicate that they will receive “up to 50% federal share” of funding. L. Dantas replied that not all of the awards have the typical split of 80% federal funding and 20% local match. Jillian Linnell, MassDOT, added that some projects that received awards are operating projects, which receive a 50% federal share and 50% local match. The federal Section 5310 Program, from which the grants are awarded, supports projects that serve elders and people with disabilities.

In response to other questions from E. Bourassa, she explained that those grants are for one year of operating assistance and that they may provide seed money or support existing service. In general, the grants are not intended to be an ongoing source of support. Nearly \$9 million (federal and local match) was distributed statewide under federal Section 5310 and 5339 funding programs, the state's Mobility Assistance Program.

Vote

A motion to approve revisions to Draft Amendment Five to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP to incorporate documentation of Community Transit Grant awards, and to release the document for a 30-day public review period, was made by The City of Boston (Jim Gillooly), and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

7. Federal Fiscal Years 2017-21 Transportation Improvement Program—*Lourenço Dantas, Manager of Certification Activities Group, MPO Staff*

On June 16, members voted to approve the staff recommendation for programming MPO discretionary funding for the highway and transit programs of the Draft FFYs 2017-21 TIP for an upcoming public release. They tabled a vote to release the full TIP for public review until today when information would be available on state-funded highway projects and specific MBTA line items that will be documented in the TIP. (This information is available following the approval of the Massachusetts CIP on June 20.)

For today's discussion, members were provided with tables listing projects and costs for bridge, interstate maintenance, resurfacing, safety, and air quality improvement projects, and a list of earmarks for projects in the region.

Discussion

J. Gillooly asked staff to follow-up after the meeting to provide information about the three bridges in Boston and Randolph that will be listed under project # 608234.

T. Bennett asked that, in the future, MassDOT provide the state-funded project information to members in advance of the MPO's discussions. She expressed interest in getting more information about how MassDOT selected bridge projects for funding.

T. Wadsworth noted that a presentation by MassDOT's Bridge Section staff could be arranged.

E. Bourassa also expressed that it is important for the MPO to see MassDOT's project lists in advance. He expressed concern that the MPO has insufficient time to review the lists (given that the TIP is scheduled to be released for public review today). He stated that the MPO's review of the state's project list should be built into the TIP development process. He credited MassDOT for the new project selection process that the agency adopted during this year's CIP development process.

Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), agreed and expressed frustration that the MPO is expected to "rubber stamp" the state's project list without having sufficient review time.

Tom O'Rourke, South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway), agreed with the previous comments and raised a point of discussion regarding the MPO's input into state's project selection decisions. E. Bourassa then discussed instances of when it would have been useful for the MPO to be involved in conversations about the mix of state- and MPO-funded projects.

T. O'Rourke observed that funding for the *Pedestrian Improvements along Elm Street and Rustcraft Road Corridors (Dedham)* is included on the list of state-funded projects that will receive funding through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ). He asked if it is the same project that was being considered for TIP discretionary funding. L. Dantas replied yes.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham), asked why the *Cochituate Rail Trail and Pedestrian Bridge (Framingham, Natick)* project, also on the CMAQ list, has been delayed from FFY 2018 to FFY 2020. T. Wadsworth replied that the reason was to maintain fiscal constraint.

D. Giombetti expressed frustration that the MPO members were not involved in the discussion about the delay to the *Cochituate Rail Trail* project and delays to other projects, and that members are left with no options now for working out solutions to prevent such delays if they are to keep to the TIP public release deadline. T. Wadsworth suggested that the MPO and MassDOT engage during the public review period for the TIP to determine if there are other programming alternatives.

E. Bourassa questioned the \$16.5 million cost estimate for the *Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 3 (Marshfield, Pembroke, Norwell, Hanover, Rockland, Hingham)* project and noted that the cost seems high for a resurfacing project. Tim Kochan, MassDOT District 5, confirmed that the project is for pavement rehabilitation with no right-of-way acquisitions required. The cost is reflective of the length of the project.

T. Wadsworth noted that the funding source for the Safe Routes to School projects on the CMAQ list is statewide capital funds.

T. Bennett suggested that the MPO members have a conversation about how they can receive more detailed information on projects in advance of their discussions.

E. Bourassa suggested that it would be helpful to members to have the materials a week in advance of their meetings so that members who have questions would have time to contact project management staff to request other information.

T. Wadsworth apologized for MassDOT's delay in distributing today's information and noted that this year was an anomaly as typically the information is provided in a more timely way.

J. Gillooly recommended that MassDOT have a session in the fall, in advance of the start of next year's TIP process, to review how the TIP and CIP processes could be better interlaced now that MassDOT has completed the first year of implementing the new CIP development process.

David Koses, At-Large City of Newton, asked for the reason why the *Cochituate Rail Trail and Pedestrian Bridge (Framingham, Natick)* project was delayed while the *Pavement Preservation on Route 2 (Lexington, Belmont, Arlington, Cambridge)* project was moved to an earlier fiscal element, and whether consideration could be given to moving the *Cochituate Rail Trail* project to an earlier fiscal element during the TIP public review period. T. Wadsworth explained that the two projects have different funding sources and he indicated that the delay on the *Cochituate Rail Trail* project is a result of competition for funding in the popular CMAQ funding category.

E. Bourassa expressed the MPO's appreciation that MassDOT identified state funding for the bridge portion of the *Reconstruction and Widening on Route 18 (Weymouth, Abington)* project.

Vote

A motion to release the Draft FFYs 2017-21 TIP, as presented today, for a 30-day public review period was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (John Romano), and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa).

Prior to the vote, Thom Dugan, MBTA, reported that the detailed breakdown of project information from the recently approved CIP has not yet been translated fully into the Draft TIP. He suggested that members consider approving the TIP for public review today and, during the public review period, the MBTA would present the CIP materials to the MPO. He apologized for the delay.

Members then discussed options for making the MBTA's project information available to the public during the TIP public review period. Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, suggested a friendly amendment to the motion to state that the TIP document would include a link to the CIP document. The motion makers accepted the friendly amendment. T. Dugan suggested linking specifically to the webpage of the MBTA's Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB), which contains the CIP document and other background materials concerning the CIP development.

Members then voted on the motion to release the Draft FFYs 2017-21 TIP, as presented today with a link to the CIP materials on the FMCB's webpage, for a 30-day public review period. The motion carried.

A motion to include on the meeting agenda for the MPO's July 7 meeting a detailed presentation by MassDOT and MBTA staff about state-funded highway projects and transit projects was made by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham) (D. Giombetti), and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa).

During a discussion of the motion, J. Gillooly expressed concern about setting a precedent of making motions in order to request information from staff. T. Wadsworth confirmed that MassDOT would provide the requested presentation to the MPO on July 7. The motion makers subsequently withdrew their motion.

Schedule

The MPO will meet next on July 7 to vote on the release of Draft Amendment One of the LRTP for public review and to hear presentations on the state-funded highway and transit funding items. The MPO is scheduled to meet on July 28 to vote to endorse the Amendment Five to the FFYs 2016-20 TIP and the FFYs 2017-21 TIP, and on August 18 to endorse Amendment One of the LRTP.

8. Priority Corridors for Long-Range Transportation Plan Needs Assessment: Route 1A/Lynnway/Carroll Parkway in Lynn—Seth Asante, MPO Staff

S. Asante reported on the *Route 1A/Lynnway/Carroll Parkway Study* in Lynn. The study location was identified as a corridor in need of improvement through the Needs Assessment of the LRTP. The study was funded through the *Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment* project in the UPWP.

The study explored ways to open up access to the Lynn waterfront to foot and bicycle traffic by redesigning a two-mile section of the Lynnway (Route 1A) and Carroll Parkway. This six-lane arterial corridor is seen as intimidating to pedestrians and bicyclists, and as a barrier between the waterfront and Lynn neighborhoods. The City of Lynn wants to address this problem because it has plans to redevelop its waterfront real estate to revitalize the underutilized shoreline of Lynn Harbor with residential and commercial developments, marinas, a seaside boardwalk, and public greenspace.

The MPO staff, working with stakeholders on an advisory task force, identified a number of safety and traffic operations issues in the corridor. Problems were associated with the width of the roadway, lack of streetscaping, and poor access to businesses near the

Blossom Street intersection and to the ferry terminal on Blossom Street. Challenges for pedestrians include long crosswalks across the wide roadway, inadequate median refuge areas, and obstructed crosswalks. Bicyclists face unsafe conditions as there are no roadway shoulders or bicycle lanes.

Traffic operation issues that were identified include outdated signal-timing plans, substandard signal equipment, lack of an emergency-response system, and a lack of transit priority signals for buses. The corridor experiences a high number of vehicular crashes. There were 241 crashes between 2010 and 2012; 61 involved injuries and two resulted in fatalities. There were other fatalities in the corridor after 2012.

The study recommended several short-term measures to improve safety, access to the waterfront, and traffic operations (described in Alternative 1 in the study report). These include retiming and coordinating signals, opening the roadway median to provide pedestrian access to the ferry terminal on Blossom Street, creating shared-use lanes, and making improvements for the safety of pedestrians with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Five alternative designs were also presented as long-term solutions. They include a “complete street” design that would reduce auto lanes to make way for a separated bicycle lane (Alternative 2); a boulevard-style design that would incorporate a wide median (Alternative 3); a plan for pedestrian bridges at several locations over the roadway, which would provide access to the waterfront from residential areas (Alternative 4); and a design that would incorporate bus rapid transit (BRT) in the median (Alternative 5). The concept of altering the traffic circulation on the Carroll Parkway to separate northbound and southbound traffic was also explored; however, doing so would have severe impacts on traffic flow.

Discussion

E. Bourassa asked if staff recommended a particular design alternative. S. Asante replied no, but noted that Alternatives 2 and 4 appear to be the favored designs.

E. Bourassa discussed that the study concept originated when the City of Lynn approached MAPC about the idea for a study of pedestrian bridges over the Lynnway. MAPC conducted a site visit and recommended a traffic analysis of the roadway. He noted that typically pedestrians prefer at-grade crossings and suggested that a road diet may be a better alternative to address the issues that result because of the width of the roadway. While there are concerns about reducing the capacity on the roadway, the traffic analysis shows that it would be possible to reduce the roadway capacity.

S. Asante added that a lane reduction would be expected to increase traffic delays during peak travel periods by ten percent. The added delay would be a trade-off to making the roadway pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly, and could possibly be offset if people react to the roadway changes by choosing to take transit.

E. Bourassa stated that the redesign of the roadway has the potential to be a transformative project for the City of Lynn. The redevelopment of the waterfront area is the city's central focus for economic development and the Lynnway is currently a barrier to accessing that area from downtown. He noted that there are challenges to going forward because of ownership of the roadway (by MassDOT and the Department of Conservation and Recreation), and because of the desire at the local level to maintain roadway capacity. He suggested that the next step could be to reach consensus on the vision for the redesign. This study could be the starting point for that conversation.

Jay Monty, At-Large City of Everett, inquired about the usage of the existing transit services on the corridor and how that service might be augmented in the future.

S. Asante reported that there are six bus routes on the corridor serving the North Shore communities and the Wonderland Station on the Blue Line. Usage is high on some of the routes and the services do not meet on-time performance requirements, so the services will have to be made more reliable. The study did not include a survey of transit usage.

T. Bennett expressed hope that transit and MBTA stakeholders are present during discussions about consensus building on the roadway redesign to make the case for the importance of transit service on the corridor. She asked if those stakeholders were involved in the study and whether the study explored other transit options in addition to BRT. S. Asante replied that the study initially examined the option of rapid bus transit in the rightmost lane. Then staff, working with the transit staff at MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning, explored the option of BRT operations in the median.

9. Members Items

There were none.

10. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan), and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members

Representatives and Alternates

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|---|--------------------|
| At-Large City (City of Everett) | Jay Monty |
| At-Large City (City of Newton) | David Koses |
| At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) | Laura Wiener |
| At-Large Town (Town of Lexington) | Aaron Henry |
| City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department) | Jim Gillooly |
| | Tom Kadzis |
| Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) | Tom Bent |
| Massachusetts Department of Transportation | Trey Wadsworth |
| MassDOT Highway Division | John Romano |
| Massachusetts Port Authority | Laura Gilmore |
| | O'Connor |
| MBTA | Thom Dugan |
| MBTA Advisory Board | Paul Regan |
| Metropolitan Area Planning Council | Eric Bourassa |
| MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Town of Framingham) | Dennis Giombetti |
| Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) | Richard Reed |
| North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly) | Aaron Clausen |
| North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) | Tina Cassidy |
| Regional Transportation Advisory Council | Tegin Bennett |
| South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree) | Christine Stickney |
| South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) | David D'Amico |
| Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce) | Tom O'Rourke |

Other Attendees

Affiliation

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| David Knowlton | City of Salem |
| Timothy Kochan | MassDOT District 5 |
| Jillian Linnell | MassDOT |
| Steve Olanoff | Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood) |
| Constance Raphael | MassDOT District 4 |
| Bill Smith | Town of Brookline, Engineering |

Elli Spring

Office of State Representative Denise Garlick

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director

Elizabeth Moore, Director of Policy and Planning

Scott Peterson, Director of Technical Services

Lourenço Dantas

David Fargen

Maureen Kelly

Alexandra Kleyman

Anne McGahan

Jennifer Rowe
