

# Memorandum for the Record

## Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

### March 7, 2019 Meeting

10:00 AM–12:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

David Mohler, 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 the minutes of the January 17, 2019, meeting
- Approve the work program for *Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Transit Service Data Collection*
- Approve the work program for the *Future of the Curb Study*

### Meeting Agenda

#### 1. Introductions

See attendance on page 11.

#### 2. Public Comments

Christine Corr (Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail) advocated for and provided an update on Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project #608164 (Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2D in Sudbury). This project is currently programmed in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2022. C. Corr stated that the Town of Sudbury is supportive of the project and has approved 100 percent design funding. Sudbury has requested that MassDOT become the proponent for this project, and MassDOT has agreed to do so. Sudbury has contracted with Jacobs Engineering Group to complete 25 percent design submittals in the next month. Sudbury is drafting the request for proposals for completion of 100 percent design plans.

Kristen Guichard (Senior Planner, Town of Acton) advocated for and provided an update on TIP project #608229 (Intersection Improvements at Massachusetts Avenue [Route 111] and Main Street [Route 27] [Kelley's Corner] in Acton). This project is currently programmed in FFY 2022. K. Guichard reported that the MassDOT 25 percent design hearing was held on March 5, 2019. K. Guichard stated that the hearing was well

attended and positive and Acton is proud of the work it has done to establish consensus on this project in advance of the town meeting April 1, 2019.

Mark Ryan (Director of Public Works, Town of Norwood) advocated for and provided an update on two currently programmed TIP projects. TIP project #606130 (Intersection Improvements at Route 1A and Upland Road/Washington Street and Prospect Street/Fulton Street in Norwood) is currently programmed in FFY 2021. M. Ryan stated that this project is on schedule and has total support of the Town of Norwood. The 25 percent design plans for this project have been approved, and work has begun on 75 percent designs. M. Ryan stated that this is an important safety project, adding that Norwood was able to pay for the design using development mitigation funds and other local funding. TIP project #605857 (Intersection Improvements at Route 1 and University Avenue/Everett Street) is currently programmed in FFY 2022. M. Ryan stated that this project is on schedule. M. Ryan thanked the MPO for its support and asked that both projects stay programmed in their current FFYs.

### **3. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT***

There was none.

### **4. Committee Chairs' Reports**

There were none.

### **5. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*AnaCristina Fragoso, Vice-Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council)***

A. Fragoso reported that the Advisory Council's 3C Committee met on February 27, 2019, and will convene again soon.

### **6. Executive Director's Report—*Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff***

K. Quackenbush announced that there will be an additional MPO meeting in March, on March 28, 2019.

This was K. Quackenbush's final meeting before retiring on March 15, 2019. K. Quackenbush thanked the MPO board for its support of him and MPO staff. K. Quackenbush specifically thanked D. Mohler for a mutually respectful working relationship. K. Quackenbush also thanked Marc Draisen and Eric Bourassa (who was not in attendance) (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) for working to improve the collaborative relationship between MPO and MAPC staff. K. Quackenbush thanked Paul Regan for his work as chair of the Administration and Finance Committee. K.

Quackenbush encouraged MPO members to engage fully in the MPO process. K. Quackenbush stressed that change is positive and encouraged MPO members to be open to new ideas during the transition to a new Executive Director. K. Quackenbush encouraged more interaction with other MPOs. M. Draisen noted that MAPC is hosting an upcoming exchange for the directors of MPOs in Miami, Houston, and elsewhere. K. Quackenbush encouraged MPO members to take advantage of this opportunity for coordination with other MPOs. K. Quackenbush praised the talent of MPO staff. K. Quackenbush expressed his disappointment in the lack of racial diversity on both MPO staff and on the board, but stressed that two-thirds of managers on MPO staff are women and that every effort is made to ensure gender equity in pay structures. K. Quackenbush stated his hope that the next Executive Director would make every effort to appreciate the staff and pointed out the strengths of both external and internal candidates. K. Quackenbush in particular noted that all previous Executive Directors have been white men.

#### **7. Approval of February 7, 2019, Meeting Minutes—*Róisín Foley, MPO Staff***

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 7, 2019, was made by the North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) (Tina Cassidy) and seconded by At-Large Town (Town of Lexington) (Richard Canale). The North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly) (Aaron Clausen), Regional Transportation Advisory Council (A. Fragoso), and Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) (Richard Reed) abstained. The motion carried.

#### **8. Work Program for MBTA Transit Service Data Collection—*Jonathan Belcher, MPO Staff***

Over the past 20 years, MPO staff has assisted the MBTA Service Planning Department with data collection and analysis for interpreting ridership and schedule adherence data. MPO staff monitors ridership on selected routes as requested by the MBTA, participates in the MBTA Service Committee's quarterly review process, and provides ongoing technical assistance to address service planning needs.

#### ***Vote***

A motion to approve the work program for MBTA Transit Service Data Collection was made by At-Large Town (Town of Lexington) (R. Canale) and seconded by the South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (Glenn Trindade). The motion carried.

## **9. Work Program for the Future of the Curb Study—Andrew Clark, MPO Staff**

The curbside lane in urban areas has traditionally been used for parking. The popularity of ride-hailing, an increasing reliance on e-commerce, the rise of dedicated bus lanes, and the increased demand for bike lanes have changed demands on the curbside lane. This study will explore current demands on the curbside lane, the ways other regions are repurposing the lane, and potential considerations for the curbside lane in the future. Staff will review current literature, and determine whether strategies used to solve problems in the curbside lane in other regions might be appropriate for the Boston region. Staff will use the results of the *Transportation Access Studies of Central Business Districts (CBDs)* study to help understand existing demands on the curbside lane, and will synthesize these needs with the best practices of other regions. Staff will document findings in a final report. This is a Unified Planning Work Program funded study with a budget of \$35,000.

### ***Discussion***

Tom Kadzis (City of Boston) (Boston Transportation Department) asked whether staff will consider strategies for better implementation of existing curb usages, such as accessible parking or commercial loading. A. Clark replied that MPO staff will consider these. M. Draisen echoed T. Kadzis' request.

Daniel Amstutz (At-Large Town) (Town of Arlington) expressed support for this study but raised concerns related to the *Transportation Access Studies of CBDs* study. D. Amstutz stated that Arlington was uncomfortable with the framing of a survey that was sent to municipalities earlier in the week. Given a recent contentious process around instituting bus priority lanes, D. Amstutz did not feel comfortable distributing the survey to local businesses in Arlington. D. Amstutz stated that survey questions must be asked strategically, and Arlington is not comfortable sending out the survey in its current form. K. Quackenbush asked D. Amstutz to speak with staff following the meeting.

M. Draisen stated that asking uncomfortable questions is important for solving complex problems, but acknowledged the difficulty in asking municipalities to distribute potentially controversial surveys. M. Draisen stated that MAPC is willing to assist with this if necessary.

Tom O'Rourke (Three Rivers Interlocal Council) (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce) stated that he distributed the survey to the members of the Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce, and while he had no objections to the questions, he felt the language was too technical and planning-specific. He suggested using plainer language.

Alison Felix (MAPC) suggested that staff look for before and after studies from other regions.

David Koses (At-Large City) (City of Newton) asked whether staff will think about the issues inherent in parking removal. A. Clark replied that staff will consider this. D. Mohler noted that the study has a relatively small budget but that there could be follow-up work. Annette Demchur (MPO Staff) agreed, stating that this effort will mainly focus on the literature review, and the specific issues addressed will depend on the findings in the literature with more in-depth analysis in future studies.

### **Vote**

A motion to approve the work program for the Future of the Curb study was made by the South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (G. Trindade) and seconded by MAPC (M. Draisen). The motion carried.

## **10.FFY 2020-24 TIP: Project Readiness Updates and Baseline Programming—Matt Genova, MPO Staff**

### ***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

1. [FFYs 2020–24 TIP: Update on Currently Programmed Projects, Readiness, and Cost](#)
2. [TIP: Distribution of Regional Target Funding](#)

Programming discussions for the FFYs 2020–24 TIP will begin at the MPO meeting on March 21, 2019. In advance of these discussions, M. Genova provided an update on readiness and cost for projects currently programmed in the FFYs 2019–23 TIP. This information came from the annual TIP Readiness Day, which took place on February 13, 2019. TIP Readiness Day brings together MassDOT’s Highway Division, Office of Transportation Planning, MPO staff, MassDOT project managers, and MassDOT Highway District contacts to discuss the status of currently programmed projects. At this meeting, issues with permitting, design, and right-of-way (ROW) acquisition are outlined, as are changes in project cost and scope.

The [Update on Currently Programmed Projects, Readiness, and Cost](#) spreadsheet reflects this input. Cost changes of \$500,000 or more are highlighted in yellow. Projects flagged as being at high risk for moving into a later year of the TIP are in red. Projects highlighted in purple were recommended to be moved to a later programming year. Projects highlighted in green have the potential to move into an earlier programming year, but this funding has not actually been moved to an earlier year in the spreadsheet. Beginning in FFY 2021, project costs are inflated at four percent annually.

Significant cost increases occurred in several projects because of advanced design, and five projects were recommended to be moved to a later year. These recommendations are subject to change pending ongoing discussions between project proponents and MassDOT. Most projects listed as high risk are listed because of ROW issues or a lack of design progress. Some are listed as high-risk projects because they need Town Meeting approval. These proposed changes create budget deficits in 2019 and 2023, and significant increases in remaining funds in 2020 and 2022.

The Distribution of Regional Target Funding handout presents several ways to consider the distribution of target funding. On the first page, the top table shows the allocation of target funding across investment categories for the FFYs 2019–23 TIP. The bottom table highlights the distribution of project costs across investment categories for projects currently being evaluated for programming this year. This information provides context for ongoing discussion of new LRTP investment categories.

The second page of the handout outlines the geographic distribution of TIP funding across MAPC subregions. The top chart is a long-range funding picture, taking into account target funding programmed between FFYs 2008 and 2023. Both tables on this page compare the percent of target funding received to other subregional metrics, including population, employment, and roadway miles. The second table presents the same information for the most recent TIP. There are three subregions that are underrepresented in long-term funding based on at least two of the three metrics, which are the Inner Core Committee (ICC), North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC), and the South Shore Coalition (SSC). M. Genova encouraged board members to suggest additional metrics for visualizing the distribution of target funds that would be helpful during programming discussions.

### ***Discussion***

M. Draisen asked about the primary reasons for project cost increases. M. Genova replied that most cost increases are the result of updated designs. M. Genova added a project flagged as high risk this year will not necessarily move. Being listed as high risk can serve as a warning to proponents and catalyze design progress. M. Draisen stated his concern that accepting cost increases at face value incentivizes low initial estimates.

Glenn Trindade (South West Advisory Planning Committee) (Town of Medway) asked why project #605034 (Reconstruction of Route 27 [North Main Street] in Natick) increased by \$7 million. D. Mohler stated that MassDOT will bring specific answers to questions like this at a future meeting.

D. Koses asked how large a project must be for funding to be split over several FFYs using advanced construction. D. Mohler stated that the guidance is \$25 million and whether it makes sense to split construction over more than one season.

D. Amstutz asked about cost inflation and projects in later years of the TIP that have been flagged as high risk. M. Genova replied that flagging a project in a later year as high risk is usually because of large scopes and the volume of ROW involved in a project. D. Mohler stated that these are MassDOT's determinations, adding that it is imperative that communities make progress on MPO-funded projects. D. Mohler clarified that projects are inflated by four percent when they are programmed in a future year and then deflated if no cost change materializes. D. Mohler added that other MPOs in the Commonwealth regularly leave money unprogrammed in each FFY in order to account for inflation and cost increases.

T. Kadzis asked why project #606226 (Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue in Boston) has been recommended to move to later years of the TIP. D. Mohler replied that this is an incredibly complex project with extensive ROW that is at 25 percent design but is missing pavement reports or bridge documents.

Dennis Giombetti (MetroWest Regional Collaborative) (City of Framingham) asked D. Mohler to clarify that these recommendations are from MassDOT and municipalities may not necessarily agree with its assessment. D. Mohler agreed, stating that there is always disagreement between MassDOT and municipalities regarding readiness and the MPO must ask the right questions to make the correct programming decisions.

Aaron Clausen (North Shore Task Force) (City of Beverly) noted that project #608347 (Intersection Improvements at Three Locations in Beverly) has been flagged as high risk, and stated that Beverly is working closely with its consultant and MassDOT to ensure that it stays programmed in the current year.

## **11. Traffic Congestion in the Boston Region: Beyond the Daily Commute—Ryan Hicks, MPO Staff**

### ***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

1. [Traffic Congestion in the Boston Region: Beyond the Daily Commute](#)
2. [Presentation: Traffic Congestion in the Boston Region](#)

Traffic conditions in the Boston region are monitored through the MPO's Congestion Management Process (CMP). While most of the CMP's traffic monitoring focuses on recurring congestion caused by the daily commute, this study examined congestion during times other than traditional commuting hours or due to travel associated with

special events or holidays. MPO staff selected events from 2015 based on data availability and the perceived impact of the event. The topics of the case studies are as follows:

- New England Patriots regular season games held at 1:00 PM on Sundays
- Red Sox weekday games held at 7:00 PM
- Saturdays
- New England Patriots' Super Bowl parade
- Wednesday before Thanksgiving
- Fridays
- Black Friday

To monitor congested conditions resulting from nonrecurring events, MPO staff used highway, safety, and transit performance measures. For highway measures, MPO staff used INRIX data. For safety measures, MPO staff used the MassDOT Crash Database. For transit performance measures, MPO staff used the MBTA Back on Track dataset. Freight data came from the NPMRDS Freight Dataset.

#### ***Case Study: Patriots Game Days***

Congestion mostly occurred northbound on Interstate 95 and Route 1 after the Patriots games, between 4:45 PM and 5:45 PM. However, there were no drastic congestion patterns on the southbound lanes before the games. Travel time on Route 1 southbound, leading to Gillette Stadium, began to spike at 9:30 AM before the games. The spike in traffic congestion during the worst hour, 4:45 PM to 5:45 PM, indicated that there is a sudden increase in travel demand on the northbound roadways, particularly Route 1 and Interstate 95 at that time. The crash rate on game days was higher than a typical day. According to the MBTA website and online reviews, there have been issues with crowding and delays on the MBTA's Foxborough train service on game day.

#### ***Case Study: Saturdays***

For this study, the 2015 INRIX dataset was used to compare Saturdays that correspond with CMP monitoring dates for two time periods: 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM and 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The major causes of traffic congestion on Saturdays are non-work trips, including trips to vacation destinations, shopping areas, restaurants, and special events in the Boston region. Overall, there was less congestion on Saturdays than during the AM and PM weekday peak periods, but there were some extreme spikes in congestion at certain locations on Saturdays. The crashes per day were considerably less on Saturdays on expressways than on weekdays. However, the crash rates for arterials on Saturday afternoons and Saturday evenings were higher than the crash rates during the



AM weekday peak period. On-time performance for buses was three percent higher on Saturdays than on weekdays.

### ***Conclusions***

Events that cause nonrecurring congestion are unique, and each has a variable effect on congestion levels. Many roadways examined in this study have congestion during nonrecurring events that is worse than peak period congestion. The availability of big datasets, such as INRIX, has made it possible to study the Boston region's congestion beyond the typical weekday peak travel periods. These data have allowed the Boston Region MPO staff to potentially expand the CMP monitoring beyond the traditional peak periods. Going forward, MPO could create an online dashboard to profile each of these case studies.

### ***Discussion***

D. Amstutz asked why Friday was listed as a nontraditional day for congestion and whether transit data included subway and commuter rail. R. Hicks replied that the CMP generally considers typical recurring congestion as congestion occurring at peak hours on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Mondays and Fridays are not as consistent. R. Hicks added that because of the availability of data, staff only reviewed bus data for transit measures.

R. Canale asked how many Saturdays were analyzed and whether there was significant variability between them. R. Hicks replied that MPO staff looked at 18 different Saturdays, conducting a combined analysis of conditions across all 18. R. Hicks added that looking at a specific Saturday, like college move-in day, could be done by querying a single day.

## **12.2020-24 Capital Investment Plan (CIP) Update—*Michelle Ho, MassDOT***

### ***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

#### **1. [Presentation: 2019–23 CIP Update Process](#)**

Like the MPO's TIP, the CIP process is an annual update to the five-year plan. The 2020–24 CIP is the fourth rollover of the combined MassDOT/MBTA five-year capital plan. Funding in the CIP covers all MassDOT and MBTA capital assets, including roadways, bridges, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transit vehicles and stations, aeronautics, rail, and the Registry of Motor Vehicles. The process is focused on adjusting program sizes, proposing changes to projects within programs, and aligning the CIP schedule with the State TIP (STIP) schedule.

Since 2017, the key priorities for the CIP have been to improve reliability and modernize the system. The CIP includes federally aided projects and projects funded with other sources, such as Chapter 90. This year's process includes a new storyboard format for a fully accessible CIP document; further integration with various asset management plans and performance based planning processes at the MBTA and other agencies; more education on the CIP process for underrepresented groups; an improved methodology for a year-over-year and multi-year comparisons; consistent metrics based on analysis of past equity determinations; proposed new economic impact methodology for project scoring; and the development of an online STIP for potential use in the 2021–25 STIP/CIP. The 2020–24 CIP will implement the first set of next priorities from the MBTA's Focus40 long-range plan.

State and regional modal plans feed into regional transportation plans and help MassDOT prioritize projects for inclusion in the CIP. The public can weigh in at the local level, the MPO level, during project-specific planning efforts, and at public meetings concerning the CIP. In March, MassDOT staff will conduct a fiscal constraints analysis, finalize program sizes and draft project lists, and draft the CIP document. The draft CIP update will be released for public comment in May and the approval vote will take place in June. Outreach during the public comment period will include an online commenting tool and 12 public meetings across the Commonwealth, consistent with past years. Comments will be analyzed using qualitative data analysis software, and relevant comments will be distributed to divisions and project managers. Major themes will be documented and published as part of a final draft. Letters and comments will be responded to directly, as appropriate.

### **13.Members Items**

R. Canale introduced Sheila Page (Assistant Planning Director) (Town of Lexington), who will serve as the alternate designee to the MPO board for Lexington.

### **14.Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham) (D. Giombetti) and seconded by MAPC (M. Draisen). The motion carried.

## Attendance

---

### Members

### Representatives and Alternates

---

At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Daniel Amstutz
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	Richard Canale
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Cassie Ostrander
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
MassDOT Highway Division	John Bechard
	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Samantha Silverberg
Massachusetts Port Authority	
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Marc Draisen
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City 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	AnaCristina Frago
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)	
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Glenn Trindade
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke

---

---

<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
M. Christine Corr	Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
Paul Alunni	Town of Wilmington
Valerie Gingrich	Town of Wilmington
Julia Wallace	ITDP
Kristen Guichard	Town of Acton
Matthew Skelley	Fuss & O'Neill
Mark Ryan	Norwood
Sara Scully	MWRTA
Frank Tramontozzi	City of Quincy
Lenard Diggins	MBTA ROC
Steve Olanoff	TRIC Alternate
Jim Malloy	Lexington
Sheila Page	Lexington

---

---

**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

---

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director  
Mark Abbott  
Jonathan Belcher  
Andrew Clark  
Meghan Connolly  
Annette Demchur  
Róisín Foley  
Hiral Gandhi  
Matt Genova  
Sandy Johnston  
Alexandra (Ali) Kleyman  
Anne McGahan  
Scott Peterson  
Katie Pincus-Stetner  
Michelle Scott

---