

MBTA 2008 PMT Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting April 27, 2007

The second meeting of the PMT Stakeholder Advisory Committee was held in the MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150, on April 27, 2007 from 12 – 2 PM.

Attendees:

John Attanucci, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Anna M. Barry, MBTA Subway Operations
Phil Beaulieu, Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA
Clinton Bench, Central Transportation Planning Staff / Boston Region MPO
Kay Carson, MassRIDES
Joe Cosgrove, MBTA
Lauren Coughlin, MBTA Ferry
Robert H. Doyle, MBTA Subway Operations
Vineet Gupta, City of Boston
T. J. Hellmaan, Chelsea Collaborative
Maureen Kelly, Central Transportation Planning Staff / Boston Region MPO
Gail Latimore, Codman Square Neighborhood Development Association
Elizabeth Moore, Central Transportation Planning Staff / Boston Region MPO
Ron Morgan, MBTA Planning
Steven Mudge, MBTA
Thomas Nally, A Better City
Richard Page, Blue Cross
Victor Rivas, MBTA Capital Programs
Jeff Rosenblum, Livable Streets Alliance
Steve Woelfel, Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works
Sue Wolfson, University of Massachusetts at Boston

Meeting Highlights:

- **Outreach:** The PMT newsletter, which announces the dates for the public meeting in May and June, has been distributed. The PMT Web site will be operational in about a week.
- **Capital Investment Program (CIP):** The CIP is a 5-year fiscally constrained document. Over time projects from the 25-year PMT are implemented through the CIP. The PMT is the “visioning” document while the CIP is the “implementing” document.
 - This year the MBTA has received 569 project applications totaling \$4.7 billion; the MBTA is recommending programming 66 projects totaling \$400 million.
 - The MBTA has a \$2.7 billion backlog of maintenance projects.
 - The Greenbush commuter rail line and Silver Line Phase 3 are the only expansion projects included in the CIP with MBTA funds; the MBTA will be spending more than 90% of capital dollars in preservation of the current system.

- Vehicles Needs and Priorities: Revenue vehicles (vehicles that carry passengers) constitute the largest portion of the MBTA's funding, representing about 1/3 of the capital program.
 - Buses: The MBTA implemented a program last fall to improve 15 of the bus routes with the highest ridership. In 2008, 155 additional buses will be delivered after which the average age of the fleet will be 5 years.
 - Rapid Transit: Projects are underway to increase capacity on the Blue and Orange Lines by adding subway cars. Green Line Type 7 and Red Line Type 2 cars are scheduled for mid-life overhauls. Air conditioning will be added to Green Line PPC cars on the Mattapan Line. Service improvements to the Green Line will expand peak service by increasing the number of vehicle runs.
 - Commuter Rail: All future coach procurements will be bi-level coaches. An RFP has been issued for the procurement of new locomotives; new locomotives will meet or exceed EPA emission requirements. The MBTA has an ongoing rehabilitation/safety program for coaches. So far, 37 coaches have been overhauled. Twelve locomotives have been overhauled and upgraded to comply with EPA emission requirements; 25 more will have a top deck overhaul.
 - Water Transportation: The MBTA's 3 water routes are privately operated. The MBTA owns two vessels and two docks. The engines of both vessels have been replaced to meet EPA emission requirements. The Quincy dock is ADA accessible and a model in the nation.
- PMT Vision, Goals, and Objectives: Suggestions for the 2008 PMT's vision, goals, and objectives included: increasing off-peak ridership; using clean technology; investing in the existing infrastructure, including current expansion projects; improving the customer experience by making operations more reliable, and improving customer service and comfort; optimizing available resources for investment; and connecting the MBTA's goals to those of other transportation planning agencies and state and municipal development agencies.
- Mobility Gaps and Challenges: The following suggestions arose out of a discussion on regional mobility problems: the MBTA should consider the potential effects of a major paradigm shift, such as could result from global warming; fare systems should be integrated to provide easier transfer between modes; the MBTA should focus in providing services with high-frequency headways while private sector shuttle services could focus on services with longer headways; and a survey could be aimed at people, such as real estate agents, who through their dealings with customers, may have identified mobility gaps. Mobility issues that should be addressed include: improving travel time and headways; improving bicycle and pedestrian access to transit stations; improving confidence in the system's schedules; improving connections between modes; and improving hours of service.

Meeting Notes

Joe Cosgrove, MBTA, announced that the first PMT newsletter has been distributed. The newsletter contains the times and locations of the upcoming public workshops. The PMT Web site will be operational in about a week.

Charlie Passanisi, MBTA, provided an overview of the Capital Investment Program (CIP) and its relationship to the PMT. Key points from the presentation are included below. (Please see attached PowerPoint for details.)

- The CIP is a 5-year fiscally constrained document that is approved by the MBTA board each year. Over time projects from the 25-year PMT are implemented through the CIP. The PMT is the “visioning” document while the CIP is the “implementing” document.
- If all of the MBTA’s assets were to be replaced, the cost would be \$12 billion.
- The MBTA has a \$2.7 billion backlog of maintenance projects.
- The CIP is funded by federal grants, revenue bonds, state funds, and pay-as-you-go capital. Alternative financing includes Grant Application Notes (GANS). GANS has been used to fund the acquisition of MBTA buses and improvements to the Fairmount commuter rail line.
- CIP annual timeline:
 - July and August – MBTA departments submit “needs requests”
 - September and October – Project evaluations
 - November – Public process and release of draft CIP
 - December – Public comments reviewed
 - January and February – Adjustments are made to the CIP
 - March – MBTA board reviews CIP
 - May 1 – Deadline for submittal to the Legislature
- This year the MBTA has received 569 project applications totaling \$4.7 billion; the MBTA is recommending programming 66 projects totaling \$400 million.
- There are five criteria for prioritizing CIP projects:
 - Safety, Health, and Environment
 - State of Good Repair
 - Cost/benefit
 - Operational Impact (number of riders affected)
 - Legal Commitments (such as ADA requirements)
- The FY 2008-2012 CIP is 83% financed by the MBTA (?)
- The Greenbush commuter rail line and Silver Line Phase 3 are the only expansion projects included in the CIP; the MBTA will be investing in preservation of the current system after these projects are built.

C. Passanisi also provided an overview of the MBTA’s vehicle needs and priorities:

- The MBTA investment by mode is as follows: subway (54%); commuter rail (20%); bus and The RIDE (12%); Silver Line (3%); and systemwide (11%)
- Revenue vehicles (vehicles that carry passengers) constitute the largest portion of the MBTA’s funding.
- Bus, Trackless Trolley, and Bus Rapid Transit:

- 180 routes
- The MBTA board has determined that the average age of the bus fleet should not exceed 7.5 years. In 2008, 155 additional buses will be procured after which the average age of the fleet will be 5 years.
- 125 buses have had mid-life overhauls, extending the life of the buses by an average of six years.
- The MBTA implemented a program last fall to target improvements on 15 key routes (mostly in the urban core), which together carry 41% of the MBTA's bus system ridership.
- Metrics used to evaluate bus performance include: number of dropped trips (when a scheduled trip does not run); and mean miles between failures (the MBTA has improved in this category since last year).
- Rapid Transit
 - (see Powerpoint for details on the operating characteristics of the rapid transit system, i.e. headways, trips per day, peak vehicle pullout, car crush capacity, and load.)
 - Jeff Rosenblum commented that the demographic projections for 2030 should be reflected in the peak hour load statistics for planning purposes.
 - J. Rosenblum asked about how the crush capacity of the MBTA vehicles compares to those in other U.S. cities. The Orange Line is probably comparable to some rail lines in Chicago. Washington, D.C.'s system is facing similar capacity constraints as the MBTA.
 - Clinton Bench, CTPS/Boston Region MPO, noted that quality of service has not been quantified in CTPS's model. Comfort expectations differ on each mode.
 - The life of vehicles also differ across modes. Buses have a shorter lifespan than subway cars. A portion of the Red Line fleet, for example, began running in 1969 and those cars will be used until 2014.
 - The Blue Line fleet, now 28 years old, will be replaced in the coming years; this will be an air quality improvement project. Capacity will be increased as train sets increase from four to six cars. One new train set is being tested on an Orange Line test track.
 - A project is underway to increase the Orange Line fleet; longer trains will increase capacity.
 - Cars of the Green Line's Type 7 fleet that went online in the mid-1980s are included in the CIP for a mid-life overhaul.
 - The Red Line Type 2 fleet will have a mid-life overhaul in 18-24 months
 - Ten Green Line PPC cars on the Mattapan Line will have air conditioning installed by next summer.
 - Service improvements to the Green Line will expand peak service by increasing the number of vehicle runs. From June 23 to Labor Day the D Line will be shut down for power upgrades.
- Commuter Rail
 - All future coach procurements will be bi-level coaches. Currently, bi-level coaches are only operating on the south side of the city.
 - 33 new ADA compliant, bi-level, coaches have been put into service.

- The MBTA has an ongoing rehabilitation/safety program for coaches. So far, 37 coaches have been overhauled.
- Coaches are overhauled after 15 years.
- Locomotive engines are overhauled after seven years.
- 12 locomotives have been overhauled and upgraded to comply with EPA emission requirements; 25 more will have a top deck overhaul
- An RFP has been issued for the procurement of new locomotives; new locomotives will meet or exceed EPA emission requirements.
- The MBTA's Coach Reliability and Safety Program has been underway since 2005 to repair/replace train equipment.
- The MBTA also has a program to replace windows on single level coaches.
- Water Transportation
 - The MBTA's 3 water routes are privately operated: Hingham to Boston; Quincy and Hull to Boston and Logan Airport; and Boston to Charlestown Navy Yard.
 - The MBTA owns two vessels and two docks. In 2007, maintenance overhauls were performed on the two ferries and engines replaced to meet EPA emission requirements.
 - There has been a steady increase in the use of the service, especially on the Quincy and Hull to Boston and Logan Airport route.
 - The Quincy dock is ADA accessible and a model in the nation.

Elizabeth Moore, CTPS/Boston Region MPO, discussed the PMT vision, goals, and objectives. She provided the vision statement that was used in the 2003 PMT and asked members of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee and agency representatives to consider how to prepare the new vision, goals, and objectives. She also noted that a list-serve will be set up for members to exchange ideas. Suggestions included the following:

- Efforts to draw more off-peak riders should be explored.
- Increasing ridership should be a goal, but there should also be a recognition that gaining more riders will not necessarily enable the MBTA to improve operations.
- An emphasis should be put on using clean technology as an objective.
- An emphasis should be put on investing in the existing infrastructure, including current expansion projects.
- The steps that the MBTA has taken to improve its environmental management system should be recognized.
- A goal should be to improve the customer experience by making operations more reliable, and improving customer service and comfort.
- Technology improvements should be included under the objectives of "efficiency, reliability, and customer service."
- The energy technology the MBTA employs will have to adapt to changes to energy policy at the state and federal level.
- Goals should include fiscal soundness or optimizing available resources for investment.
- The MBTA's goals should be connected to those of other transportation planning agencies and state and municipal development agencies.

Clinton Bench, CTPS/Boston Region MPO, stated that an internal process is underway at the MBTA to identify regional mobility problems. CTPS is using its transportation model to determine if there are capacity constraints on the transit system and if there is latent demand in the system (currently and projected to 2030) by looking at trip flows between Traffic Analysis Zones. Problem statements will be developed and used at the upcoming public meetings to get the conversation started about where mobility problems are and could be in the future.

Members brainstormed about regional mobility problems:

- A challenge will be to anticipate the effects of a major paradigm shift, such as could result from global warming.
- Mobility issues that should be addressed include: improving travel time and headways; improving bicycle and pedestrian access to transit stations; improving confidence in the system's schedules; improving connections between modes; and improving hours of service.
- Fare systems should be integrated to provide easier transfer between modes. Fare integration outside of the MBTA's service area can be problematic if Regional Transit Authorities are not coordinating with the MBTA.
- The MBTA should focus in providing services with high-frequency headways while private sector shuttle services could focus on services with longer headways.
- A suggestion was made to survey people, such as real estate agents, who through their dealings with customers may have identified mobility gaps.

The next Stakeholder Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, May 31, 2007 from 12:00 - 2:00 PM in the MPO/CTPS conference room, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150.