

MBTA 2008 PMT Stakeholder Advisory Committee

April 2, 2007

The first meeting of the PMT Stakeholder Advisory Committee was held in the MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150, on April 2, 2007.

Attending:

Name:	Agency/Organization
Christi Apicella	MASCO
John Attanucci	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Philip Beaulieu	Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT)
Kay Carson	MassRIDES
Joe Cosgrove	MBTA
Vineet Gupta	Boston Transportation Department
T.J. Hellmann	Chelsea Collaborative
Gail Latimore	Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation
Barbara Lucas	Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Liz Moore	Central Transportation Planning Staff
Steve Martinson	University of Massachusetts, Boston
Ron Morgan	MBTA
Thomas Nally	A Better City
Steve Olanoff	Regional Transportation Advisory Committee
Richard Page	Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Paul Regan	Executive Director
Victor Rivas	MBTA
Mark Siegenthaler	Department of Housing & Community Development
Karen Wepsic	MBTA Rider Oversight Committee
Steve Woelfel	Executive Office of Transportation
Susan Wolfson	University of Massachusetts, Boston

Presentation:

Clinton Bench, CTPS, provided an overview of the MBTA system's services and capital assets.

- The MBTA is the fifth largest transit system in the U.S. serving 175 cities/towns (within a 3,200 square mile area).
- The system serves approximately 345 million riders per year. About 800,000 customers are accommodated on an average weekday.
- The system is operated out of a centralized control center.
- The system includes heavy rail (Red, Orange, and Blue Lines) and light rail (Green Line and Mattapan High Speed Line).
- The commuter rail extends up to 60 miles out from the urban core (to Fitchburg). Some of the track on the Worcester Line is owned by CSX; the MBTA owns the rest of the tracks upon which the commuter rail operates.

- There are two Silver Line bus rapid transit routes: Washington Street (surface route) and Waterfront (surface and underground).
- There are 180 bus and trackless trolley routes; these routes serve 65 cities/towns.
- MBTA contracts with private operators to provide water transportation
- The MBTA operates the following number of maintenance facilities: 4 for heavy rail, 4 for light rail, 3 for commuter rail, 9 for buses, and 17 for general maintenance.
- The MBTA has 117 power substations and operates an extensive signal system.
- The MBTA owns a number of bridges including those over which the commuter rail and rapid transit system run, as well as highway and pedestrian bridges.

Liz Moore, CTPS, provided an overview of the 2008 Program for Mass Transportation (PMT).

- The PMT is a fiscally unconstrained, long-range (25 year) capital-planning document that the MBTA is required to complete under its enabling legislation.
- The PMT includes projects for system preservation, maintenance, and expansion of the system. Unlike the 2003 PMT, which focused on expansion, the 2008 PMT will have a greater focus on system preservation.
- A focus of the 2008 PMT will be to strengthen the relationship between the PMT and the 5-year Capital Investment Program (CIP).
- As the PMT is developed, the MBTA will be asking people to think about mobility issues in each of the MBTA's transportation corridors. Public workshops will be held to gain input on all corridors, and the public comments will be used to develop problems mobility statements for each corridor. These will be addressed through the PMT.
- The Stakeholder Advisory Committee will meet regularly throughout the process to provide advise on development of the PMT.
- The internal process for developing the PMT will involve conducting a 25-year needs assessment for each of the MBTA's asset categories. Interviews will be conducted with MBTA departments.
- Development of the PMT will be a 15-18 month process ending in mid-2008.

Joe Cosgrove, MBTA, discussed the context for the MBTA's long-range planning.

- Since 2000, the MBTA is no longer a line item in the state budget. With Forward Funding, the legislature handed the MBTA's previous debt over to the authority. Paying for this debt places a major burden on the MBTA's operating budget.
- The MBTA's revenues include a percentage of the state sales tax and assessments paid by towns.
- Although the PMT is a fiscally unconstrained document, there needs to be recognition of fiscal constraints in the development of the document.
- Joe noted that transit improvements could be a catalyst for development (Transit Oriented Development).

Discussion:

Members of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee offered several suggestions:

- The 2008 PMT should build on what was identified in the 2003 PMT in terms of expansion projects.
- General Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) needs should be addressed in the PMT (it was noted that the CIP has a Technology category).
- The Transportation Finance Commission Report indicates that, although maintaining our transportation systems is currently fiscally problematic, the Commonwealth needs to continue to enhance and expand transportation services to support a growing population and expanding economy.
- MAPC recommended that the new MetroFuture land use data should be used for the PMT.
- Environmental Justice (EJ) should not be an add-on at the end of the process.
- Given the financial constraints, the MBTA might consider buses as the best way to expand the system. London's transit system was referenced as an example of how increasing bus service can be very successful at increasing ridership and reducing congestion. The best way to increase bus ridership in the urban core is to increase service—even where rapid transit lines already exist.
- Improving infrastructure for buses needs to be considered, e.g., for BRT.
- Transit oriented/sustainable development should be linked to transit planning.
- Bus station amenities, such as communication and signage, should be updated.
- Congestion needs to be reduced for buses to be effective.
- If cities/towns stop paying MBTA assessment to support separate RTAs, the financial burden on the remaining municipalities will increase.
- If expanding the bus system, clean fuel buses should be used. This would be doubly beneficial for environmental justice areas as it would provide better bus service and improve air quality.
- During the PMT process, the MBTA will be addressing air quality issues and engaging the environmental agencies (David Cash may be involved).

The next meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee is currently scheduled for the last week of April.