

## **MBTA 2008 PMT Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting May 31, 2007**

The third meeting of the PMT Stakeholder Advisory Committee was held in the MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150, on May 31, 2007 from 12 – 2 PM.

### **Attendees:**

Christi Apicella, Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization, Inc.  
Anna M. Barry, MBTA Subway Operations  
Phil Beaulieu, Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA  
Clinton Bench, Central Transportation Planning Staff / Boston Region MPO  
Marc Breslow, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs  
Kay Carson, MassRIDES  
Joe Cosgrove, MBTA  
Robert H. Doyle, MBTA Subway Operations  
Jeff Gonneville, MBTA Bus Operations  
Patrick Hart, Department of Housing and Community Development  
Ulla Hester, MBTA Advisory Board  
Maureen Kelly, Central Transportation Planning Staff / Boston Region MPO  
Gail Latimore, Codman Square Neighborhood Development Association  
Barbara Lucas, Metropolitan Area Planning Council  
Steve Martinson, University of Massachusetts at Boston  
Elizabeth Moore, Central Transportation Planning Staff / Boston Region MPO  
Thomas Nally, A Better City  
Steve Olanoff, Regional Transportation Advisory Council  
Richard Page, Blue Cross Blue Shield  
Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board  
Victor Rivas, MBTA Capital Programs  
Will Shannon, MBTA Railroad Operations  
Mark Siegenthaler, Department of Housing and Community Development  
Karen Wepsic, MBTA Rider Oversight Committee

### **Meeting Highlights:**

- Maintenance facilities are one of the key components of the MBTA's asset mix. Currently, 5.6% of the Capital Investment Program's (CIP) funds are devoted to maintenance facilities.
- Issues for maintenance facilities include: aging facilities; keeping up with new technology and energy/power requirements; expansion of facilities and fleets when facing space and land constraints; deferred upgrades; and siting issues.
- Maintenance facilities are critical for ensuring reliability of service as the MBTA's fleets expand.
- One of the main constraints to expanding commuter rail service is the need for space to store train sets during off-peak periods during the day.

- Maintenance facility capacity must be factored into decisions about system expansion.
- Current constraints on the system include: bus maintenance facilities at or above capacity; lack of repair facilities for the commuter rail system on the south side of the city; and lack of facilities to do work on the roof structure of subway cars.
- MBTA staff will be developing a timeline for equipment replacement and improvements to facilities. The MBTA's vehicle needs will be relayed to regional planners.
- Members discussed the MBTA's role in addressing the mobility needs of underserved municipalities in the region.
- One of five public meetings has been held. The rest will occur in June. Attendees will be asked to discuss their mobility problems.
- CTPS has been studying projected trip flow changes and has found that by 2030 there will be some growth in "circumferential" trips in the urban core and the Route 128 corridor.
- CTPS found that mode share is lower than would be expected given the level of existing transit services in several communities outside the urban core (Lynn, Malden, Waltham, and Quincy). A challenge will be to determine why people in these areas are not choosing to use transit and how to better address their mobility needs.

## **Meeting Notes**

### **Introduction – Joe Cosgrove, MBTA**

The PMT Web site is on-line and the first of five public meetings was held in Braintree on May 22.

### **MBTA Maintenance Facility Needs and Priorities — Joe Cosgrove, MBTA**

Maintenance facilities are one of the key components of the MBTA's asset mix. Currently, 5.6% of the Capital Investment Program's (CIP) funds are devoted to maintenance facilities. Maintenance facility issues include:

- the age of the facilities: many were built in the 1920s and 1930s
- keeping up with new technologies and new energy/power requirements
- space and land constraints affect the ability to expand facilities and fleets
- upgrades have been deferred over the years
- siting issues: some facilities, originally built in the early-to mid-1900s, are now surrounded by residential areas and neighbors have complaints about noise and idling vehicles

An overview of the MBTA's current maintenance facilities was provided. (See presentation.)

Maintenance facilities are critical for ensuring reliability of service as the MBTA's bus and rapid transit fleets expand. The MBTA has nine bus maintenance facilities. The largest, with a capacity of 242 buses, is in Charlestown. Planning and design work is

moving ahead for a facility at Wellington. In conjunction with this, Fellsway will be closed and the capacity at Lynn may be reduced. Bartlett garage was closed in 2004 or 2005 due to environmental concerns raised by neighbors. The current Arborway facility is temporary.

The rapid transit system uses seven maintenance facilities. The Orient Heights maintenance facility is being expanded to accommodate the additional cars that will be added to the Blue Line fleet to operate 6-car trains. It was noted that the Green Line's Lechmere Station will be relocated.

The main facility for heavy maintenance of buses and rapid transit vehicles is in Everett. This facility is being retrofitted to accommodate work on CNG buses.

One of the main constraints to expanding commuter rail service is the need for space to store train sets during off-peak periods during the day. The MBTA is adding tracks to the Readville facility, which is south of the city, to accommodate the trains that will be on the Greenbush Line when it opens. The MBTA would like to expand the Readville and Beacon Yards facilities; however, there are neighborhood concerns at Readville. Another major concern of the MBTA is that maintenance capacity needs are not always factored into decisions about system expansion.

Members discussed whether there is a means for analyzing and determining the future maintenance facility needs to accommodate future new vehicle purchases. MBTA representatives explained that, for the commuter rail, there is no single index that can be used to determine those needs, because each facility is unique and would have to be evaluated individually. For buses, indexes do exist for determining maintenance facility needs (e.g., mechanics/bus or bays/bus). For the Orange Line, additional maintenance capacity requirements are tied more to the larger size of new vehicles than the number.

MBTA representatives discussed constraints and problems that the system's maintenance operations are currently facing:

- The bus facilities are all at or above capacity now. The Charlestown facility is over capacity. Due to the layout of some bus facilities, only one end of a bus can be lifted at a time to be worked on.
- The commuter rail system is undergoing expansion south of the city while the main repair facilities are on the north side.
- The MBTA does not have a facility to do work on the roof structure of subway cars; the new cars have equipment in the roof rather than in the undercarriage.

The MBTA has a large backlog of system maintenance needs. It will continue to do infrastructure studies to identify future maintenance needs. Right now the T is trying to come into a state of good repair and maintain it over time. To do so, it is important to tie the long-range range plan (PMT) more closely to the short-range plan (CIP).

MBTA staff will be developing a timeline for equipment replacement and improvements to facilities. Barbara Lucas, MAPC, suggested that MBTA look into using state planning

and research funds for this purpose. She also expressed concern about the PMT is that there is a disconnect between service planners and service providers, and that there is no comprehensive way of planning for transit across Boston Region MPO area. She suggested that the Stakeholder Advisory Committee might be able to help address these problems. In response, an MBTA representative stated that the MBTA's vehicle needs would be relayed to regional planners.

**PMT Vision, Goals, and Objectives – Elizabeth Moore, CTPS/Boston Region MPO**

A draft text of the PMT vision and goals was distributed for discussion. Members were asked to consider whether other themes should be added to the goals, and whether the vision should be more general. The vision and goals are important because the PMT evaluation criteria will flow out of them. The evaluation criteria will differ from those done in 2003 as the MBTA will be taking a systems approach that looks at corridor mobility issues and proposes integrated solutions.

Karen Wepsic, MBTA Rider Oversight Committee, expressed concern that environmental justice is not stated explicitly enough in the vision and that the vision includes text that states the MBTA would respond to “the expanding mobility demands of individuals and communities.” She stated her belief that transportation is not a “need” and that people could choose to live closer to their place of employment to avoid needing transportation services.

B. Lucas noted that the system's hub and spoke design does not well serve all municipalities in the region. Some suburbanites would have to travel into Boston and back out in order to get to the next town over via transit. As the entity that serves as the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) for much of the Boston region, the MBTA should look at mobility needs beyond its defined corridors, she stated. If the MBTA doesn't address this issue, it risks losing political support and assessments from municipalities, she added.

Members discussed the possibility of the MBTA partnering with RTAs to coordinate services. It was noted that currently services are not linked between RTAs. One way to address this issue would be to make fare structures mesh across RTA borders. While the issue of meeting mobility needs for underserved areas should be acknowledged in the PMT, it might be beyond the MBTA's scope to implement these inter-suburban services, J. Cosgrove stated. Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, added that it might not be cost effective for the MBTA to meet the transit needs of all areas of the region.

Mark Siegenthaler, Department of Housing and Community Development, suggested that the PMT vision should be responsive to the conditions that drive the need for transit (for example, providing transit to areas where new employment clusters develop). Reducing trip times and transfers and increasing connectivity should be reflected in the goals.

Gail Latimore, Codman Square Neighborhood Development Association, noted that long travel times are an issue for Dorchester residents. Buses that do not accommodate baby strollers are also a concern.

Steve Olanoff, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, stated that public input should be taken seriously in the development of the PMT, but that the MBTA should not waste time evaluating projects that, realistically, will not be built.

CTPS staff will organize the goals into themes and forward them to members for continued discussion at the next meeting.

**Public Process Update – Clinton Bench, CTPS/Boston Region MPO**

At the upcoming public meetings, members of the public will have the opportunity to look at maps of existing transit service and demographic maps showing 2030 projections. Attendees will be asked to discuss their mobility problems. Staff will send another press release to media contacts to announce the upcoming meetings.

**Identifying Mobility Issues – Clinton Bench, CTPS/Boston Region MPO**

Clinton indicated that CTPS has been studying projected trip flow changes and has found that by 2030 there will be some growth in circumferential travel in the urban core (e.g., trips currently served by bus Routes 1, 47, and 66), as well as in the Route 128 corridor. CTPS has also found that, in several communities outside the urban core, mode share is lower than would be expected, given the existing level of services (e.g., Lynn, Malden, Waltham, and Quincy). A challenge will be to determine why people in these areas are not choosing to use transit and how to better address their mobility needs.

B. Lucas noted that the new MetroFuture “Winds of Change” land use/population projections have been distributed to communities in the region for review. She anticipates that these projections will be incorporated into the Regional Transportation Plan shared with the MBTA for use in the PMT.

Members suggested posting leading questions on the PMT website to help focus the input that individuals provide regarding mobility issues. These questions, as well as the meeting schedule flyer, will be sent to members so that they can distribute them in their communities or to their associated groups. The flyer will also be placed on the PMT website for easy access.

**The next Stakeholder Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, June 28, 2007 from 1:00 - 3:00 PM in the MPO Conference Room, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150.**