

MBTA 2008 PMT Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting July 26, 2007

The fifth meeting of the PMT Stakeholder Advisory Committee was held in the MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150, on July 26, 2007 from 12 – 2 PM.

Attendees:

Dominic Anidi, MBTA
Christi Apicella, Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization, Inc.
Marcos Beleche, CSNDC
Clinton Bench, Central Transportation Planning Staff / Boston Region MPO
Kay Carson, MassRIDES
Paul Christner, Boston Transportation Department
Joe Cosgrove, MBTA
Kate Fichter, Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works
Mike Giordano, MBTA Budget
Patrick Hart, Department of Housing and Community Development
T. J. Hellmann, Chelsea Collaboration
Ulla Hester, MBTA Advisory Board
Maureen Kelly, Central Transportation Planning Staff / Boston Region MPO
Jason Kurian, Livable Streets Alliance
Barbara Lucas, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Elizabeth Moore, Central Transportation Planning Staff / Boston Region MPO
Ron Morgan, MBTA Development
Thomas Nally, A Better City
Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board
Victor Rivas, MBTA Capital Programs
Karen Wepsic, MBTA Rider Oversight Committee
Nigel Wilson, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Meeting Highlights:

- Reconstruction and accessibility projects are underway at a number of the MBTA's stations.
- The MBTA is the largest supplier of parking in New England. Most MBTA parking facilities fill in the morning; however a few facilities, such as the Lynn Garage and the Anderson Regional Transportation Center, have excess parking available. By 2025, demand for parking could exceed supply by 50% to 80%.
- The state is planning to build 1,000 more commuter parking spaces in the region as part of its State Implementation Plan (SIP) commitments, currently under review by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- More parking is needed along the Rockport/Newburyport commuter rail line, specifically at the Salem and Beverly station, and on the southern end of the Red Line
- Strategies to address parking issues could include changes to pricing mechanisms for lots that do not fill, and making bicycle and pedestrian access improvements; pricing changes should not, however, discourage transit use.

- The MBTA owns 469 bridges. Major rehabilitation projects have been funded for the Green Line bridges and several commuter rail bridges. The Merrimack River bridge and six bridges on the Fairmount commuter rail line are priorities.
- The public outreach meetings have been completed. Mobility problems and underserved markets have been identified. The PMT staff will now compile a list of potential mobility solutions for screening and evaluation.
- SAC members discussed the draft PMT evaluation criteria for potential mobility solutions and made a number of suggestions.

Meeting Notes

MBTA Needs and Priorities for stations, facilities, parking, and bridges – Joe Cosgrove, MBTA

Stations: The MBTA's station assets include 134 commuter rail stations, 127 rapid transit stations, 17 bus rapid transit stations, and 380 MBTA-owned shelters at bus stops.

The MBTA is putting some money toward station upgrades every year. Reconstruction projects are underway at the following rapid transit stations: Maverick, State Street, Fields Corner, Shawmut, Ashmont, and Mattapan. Accessibility upgrades are occurring at Arlington, Copley, Kenmore, Brookline Village, and Longwood rapid transit stations. Accessibility upgrades on the commuter rail include adding mini-high platforms. The MBTA currently has funding to add redundant elevators at Downtown Crossing, Porter, and Harvard stations, and new elevators will be added at Symphony. Future station reconstruction is planned for Government Center, Orient Heights, and Boston College stations. In addition, there are earmarks for work on stations in Newton, and the state is looking at air rights development over Yawkey station.

During a discussion period, a SAC member stated that some bus stations – such as Dudley Square, Ruggles, and Sullivan Square – need better signage, cosmetic improvements, and shelters for protection from the weather. She noted that this is an environmental justice issue. She also noted that if the MBTA wants to encourage people to take the bus, the MBTA should provide amenities to bus passengers that are similar to those at subway stations.

Facilities: The MBTA has a variety of types of facilities including ferry terminals, ventilation and storage buildings, noise and retaining walls, tunnels and culverts, layover and maintenance of way facilities, and administrative buildings. Money is currently in the pipeline to build a back-up operations control center.

Parking: The MBTA is the largest supplier of parking in New England owning 41,207 spaces. Most MBTA parking facilities fill in the morning, however others, such as the Lynn Garage and the Anderson Regional Transportation Center, have excess parking available.

The state is planning to build 1,000 more commuter parking spaces in the region as part of its State Implementation Plan (SIP) commitments to mitigate impacts from the Central Artery project. (The SIP is currently under review by the U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency.) The new spaces would be located in suburban areas and possibly at the Morton Street commuter rail station in Mattapan.

Building a parking garage costs approximately \$35,000 per parking space. The MBTA is partnering with cities and towns to build parking facilities. Some parking has been paid for through congressional earmarks.

When asked to prioritize parking needs based on demand, Ron Morgan, MBTA, stated that more parking is needed along the Rockport/Newburyport commuter rail line, specifically at the Salem and Beverly stations (which are the 4th and 5th busiest respectively), and on the southern end of the Red Line (though the opening of the Greenbush commuter rail line may address this problem).

By 2025, demand for parking could exceed supply by 50% to 80%. One strategy for meeting this demand would be to add more parking, but another would be not to increase the parking supply, but to manage the demand through other means like pricing mechanisms (such as discounts for lots that do not fill), and making bicycle and pedestrian access improvements..

The following points were raised by members during a discussion period:

- one problem with trying to provide more parking is that there are few economic benefits for towns that increase their amount of parking
- the parking issue is key to the long-range vision for transit, so the PMT should provide some parking
- in the next phase of Charlie Card implementation, parking and commuter rail will be added.—this will give the MBTA flexibility with parking pricing strategies
- if the MBTA were to increase the cost of parking at stations to the point that the cost of parking and the fare exceeded the price of parking in town, more people might choose to leave transit and drive into the city
- the role of parking in the PMT vision and goals should be defined
- planners should not rely entirely on CTPS’s “unconstrained parking assignment” model data
- the MBTA should consider lowering parking rates on off-peak periods

Bridges: The MBTA owns 469 bridges: 281 commuter rail, 58 rapid transit, 86 highway, 44 pedestrian. Major rehabilitation projects have been funded for the Green Line bridges and the following commuter rail bridges: Merrimack River, Concord Main Street, the drawbridge over the Charles River, and Fairmount Line bridges. Three of the six Fairmount Line bridges are currently under contract for repairs (Mass. Ave., Quincy, and Columbia), and the other three are entering the design phase as a part of the \$39 million Fairmount Line Improvement Program. Dominic Anidi, MBTA, stated that the Fairmount and Merrimack bridges are the MBTA’s top priorities. The Washington Street Bridge in Somerville is also a priority, which may be addressed as part of the Green Line extension project.

Repair of the Longfellow Bridge is now in 35% design. The bridge is owned by DCR, but Mass Highway is leading the project. Reconstructing the Red Line tracks will be a part of the design.

The MBTA uses the PONTIS program to evaluate the condition of bridges. The bridge inspection program is the same one used by MassHighway for roadway bridges.

Proposed 2008 PMT Evaluation Methodology and Criteria – *Clinton Bench, CTPS*

A handout outlining the proposed process for selecting and evaluating PMT mobility solutions was distributed. SAC members were asked to review the document for discussion.

Clinton Bench, CTPS, described the evaluation methodology used during the development of the 2003 PMT. At public workshops, attendees were asked to make suggestions for capital projects and draw their ideas for new transit routes on maps. The PMT staff then screened the project ideas considering technological feasibility, legal commitments, and community support for proposed projects, and winnowed the project list down to 150 potential projects. Those projects were assigned scores between zero and three, and grouped as high, medium, or low priority.

Clinton then summarized the work to date on the 2008 PMT. The public outreach meetings have been completed. Mobility problems and under-served markets have been identified. The PMT staff is now proposing to follow the process outlined in the attached handout to identify and evaluate the mobility strategies that will be recommended in the PMT.

The following points were raised by members during discussion of the proposed process and evaluation criteria:

- economic development and job creation should be included among the evaluation criteria
- the “land use impacts” criterion should include consistency with the regional land use plan
- the language under the “fairness” criterion regarding environmental justice, should be changed to reflect that benefits and burdens will be distributed throughout the system in an even handed fashion; the current language suggests that burdens on environmental justice communities of concern are acceptable so long as sufficient mitigating benefits are achieved
- the environmental justice statement should acknowledge that inequities in the system must be reversed; existing inequities must be addressed
- the criterion for “coverage” should be changed to “system or network access effectiveness”
- comparisons between transit and auto travel times should be considered when evaluating “expediency”
- the name of the category “Traffic Congestion and the Environment” should be changed, or the first two bullets—number of transit riders served and number of

new transit riders served—should be moved, since reductions in congestion and environmental impacts are not necessarily measured by transit ridership.

- the SAC should discuss how to deal with uncertainties that could change assumptions in the future; these uncertainties could include technological improvements in the auto industry, and the availability of more specific and localized data on air pollution levels (it was noted that uncertainties could be addressed in five-year revisions to the PMT)
- the CTPS model should not be relied on as the only source for planning data
- the PMT should evaluate how changing the base technology of the system would effect the emissions at garages, as this could affect the impact of garage location decisions
- regarding the consideration of community acceptance of projects, statements against the location of projects in particular communities by current political actors should not be used to eliminate projects from consideration for the long-term
- a criterion concerning language rights should be added; non-English speakers should have equal access to the system
- Governor Patrick's climate change goals will also have to be considered when setting goals

Concern was expressed that the Service Plan was included in the PMT outreach meetings and that the addition of this item was not made clear to the public. C. Bench explained that the two items were combined so that the public was not forced to discern whether their comments fell under the Service Plan or PMT category.

The next Stakeholder Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, August 23, 2007 from 12:00 - 2:00 PM in the MPO Conference Room, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150.

2008 Program for Mass Transportation

Process for Determining Preferred Mobility Strategies

Identify Potential Mobility Solutions

- **Compile list of mobility challenges**
Each mobility challenge identified during the public process will be categorized by corridor and theme and stored in a database for ease of reference.
- **Develop problem statements**
Groups of mobility challenges will be summarized in the form of a limited number of “problem statements.” In some cases, these statements will be corridor-specific, while in others they will reach across corridor lines.
- **Compile list of potential solutions**
For each problem statement, potential solutions will be identified. Solution concepts will be drawn from various sources, including the Commonwealth’s transportation agencies, the 2003 PMT, the ongoing 2008 PMT public process, the Boston Region MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and other sources.

Determine Measurable Targets For Each Goal

For each 2008 PMT goal, a specific target for the year 2030 will be identified. In the case of quantitative goals, such as those relating to travel speed, ridership, and environmental impacts, it will be easier to identify measurable targets. However, qualitative targets will also be identified for other goals, such as those relating to service coverage, safety, etc.

Assess Potential Solutions

- **Screen potential solutions**
Each of the potential solutions identified to address problem statements will be screened to ensure that they are technologically feasible, fiscally reasonable, consistent with MBTA operations service standards/goals, and generally acceptable to the affected communities. Solutions that meet these screening criteria will be advanced to a more detailed assessment. In addition, the commonwealth’s legal commitments will be considered at this stage to identify solutions that must be part of the PMT’s final set of mobility strategies.

- **Apply evaluation criteria to potential solutions**
Each of the potential solutions will be measured according to evaluation criteria that are linked to the PMT goals and objectives. Each criterion will have a unit of measurement appropriate to the corresponding objective.

Define Comprehensive Mobility Strategies

- **Summarize performance of potential solutions**
The results of the evaluation of all potential solutions to a given problem statement will be shown together, but solutions will not be ranked at this stage.
- **Identify proposed groupings of solutions**
For each problem statement, preferred groupings of solutions will be identified with the intent of meeting the targets for each PMT goal in a cost-effective manner.
- **Estimate combined impacts of proposed solutions**
The proposed set of solutions for all problem statements will be evaluated as a whole to determine whether the defined targets for PMT goals will be met. If they are not met, additional iterations of this and the previous step may be performed.
- **Identify incremental milestones for each strategy**
After the comprehensive set of mobility strategies are confirmed to meet the targets for each PMT goal, specific solutions within each strategy will be ordered according to their urgency, effectiveness, and estimated cost. The extent to which each goal is achieved at incremental stages of the 25-year plan will also be identified.

PMT Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation criteria for the 2008 PMT include both qualitative and quantitative measures that correspond to the PMT goals and objectives. They are listed below in a similar order to these goals and objectives. Cost effectiveness is an additional factor that will also be applied across these criteria. In particular, the annualized cost (capital and operating) per unit benefit for each measure will be calculated and considered in the development of proposed mobility strategies.

Coverage

- Elimination of Transfers/Minimization of Transfer Time
- Improvements to Interconnectivity Between Modes (including fare collection)
- Improvements to station access
- Expansion of transit access to geographical areas underserved by transit

Expediency

- Improvements to service frequency *
- Reduction in travel time
- Expansion of transit access during time periods poorly served by transit

Safety, Reliability, and Comfort

- Enhancements to customers' personal safety
- Improvements to reliability of service
- Expansion of capacity where and when crowding occurs
- Provision of amenities where customers access service
- Improvements to vehicle comfort and passenger circulation
- Enhancements to vehicle and station cleanliness *

Fairness

- Provide greater benefits than burdens in environmental justice areas of concern
- Expand accessibility for persons with disabilities
- Enhancements to responsiveness and courtesy of employees *
- Improvements to safety and security training for operators *

Customer Information

- Improvements to navigational tools
- Improvements to reliability and quality of stop announcements *
- Improvements to availability of schedules *
- Improvements to availability of real-time service performance data *

Traffic Congestion and the Environment

- Number of transit riders served
- Number of new transit riders served
- Change in transit mode share for the regional network
- Reduction in regional emissions

Land Use Impacts

- Support of sustainable land use patterns
- Consistency with MPO planning objectives
- Support of brownfield and infill development

* indicates criterion not included in 2003 PMT