

# REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



## Regional Transportation Advisory Council

### January 13, 2016 Meeting

3:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

### Meeting Summary

#### Introductions

T. Bennett, Chair (Cambridge) called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 6)

#### Chair's Report-Tegin Bennett, Chair

T. Bennett reported on the recent Boston MPO meeting discussions. She explained that the MPO continued to address TIP Project Evaluation Criteria. The next step will be to conduct a test of the project evaluation measures on a selected set of advertised TIP projects in order to compare the current criteria to the proposed new criteria.

Alexandra Kleyman was introduced as the newly-hired UPWP Manager for the CTPS.

#### Minutes - December 9, 2015

A motion to approve the minutes for the December 9 meeting was made and seconded. The minutes were approved as amended.

#### The 3C Process of the Boston Region MPO - Panel:

- *Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, CTPS*
- *Bryan Pounds, MPO Liaison / STIP Coordinator, Office of Transportation Planning, MassDOT*
- *Lourenço Dantas, Certification Activities Manager, CTPS*

*Summary of the Presentation: A Review of the MPO Structure and How the 3C Process Works:*

K. Quackenbush explained the historical context of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) commencing with the passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962. MPOs serve as a vehicle to allocate federal surface transportation funds and to conduct the federally-required metropolitan planning process for all metropolitan areas with populations greater than 50,000. The framework around the MPO transportation planning process is called the 3C Process that expresses a commitment to a process that is cooperative, continuing and comprehensive. The 3C Process directs planning activities that include a wide range of parties through public participation; reflects short-term and long-term planning perspectives; and covers all modes of transportation in terms that are consistent with land-use and economic development plans.

The Boston MPO's planning area is composed of 101 cities and towns and has boundaries that are coextensive with those of MAPC. This comprises a fifth of the land area in the state and about half the state's population. The Boston MPO is not MAPC; it is the only MPO among the 14 MPOs in the state where the MPO staff is not co-located/staffed with regional planning agency. MAPC operates as the fiduciary agent for the Boston Region MPO with CTPS serving as staff to the MPO.

K. Quackenbush explained the six core functions of an MPO. The first core function is to create a fair and effective decision-making setting. Since being created in 1973, changes in the organizational structure of the Boston Region MPO include the ongoing increases in local representation over a period of twenty years. In 1997, six cities and towns were added to the MPO Board with 8 more local representative entities being added in 2011. The Advisory Council, formerly the Joint Regional Transportation Committee (JRTC) was added to the MPO as a non-voting entity in 1976, and later attained voting member status in 2011.

The second core function of the MPO is to maintain the Long-Range Transportation Plan. The LRTP is the major planning document that is updated every four years. Future planning process will include more scenario planning in the ongoing updating of the LRTP. The Advisory Council can help in scenario planning by advising the MPO on the development of scenarios for analysis.

Creating a short-range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the third core function of the MPO. The TIP is an annual process used to implement the programs and projects identified in the LRTP.

Problem identification and the evaluation of alternative solutions is the fourth core

function. The Advisory Council has been influential in developing program alternatives, including the statewide freight program.

Performance-based planning is the fifth core function of the MPO. This involves establishing goals which are obtained by focusing on certain objectives and targets designed to achieve the chosen objectives. The MPO will seek input from the Advisory Council in developing the connection between targets, goals and objectives.

The sixth function of the MPO is to involve the public in all aspects of its workings.

K. Quackenbush encouraged the members to continue with early involvement with the MPO in the development of ideas and programs that are documented in the planning certification documents.

*Summary of the Presentation: Upcoming Work Schedule for the TIP and UPWP:*

L. Dantas explained the staff schedule for taking the MPO visions and goals statements and applying these to TIP and UPWP. He identified key points in the development cycle of the TIP and UPWP with an understanding when the Advisory Council should be involved. The 3C Documents Committee of the Advisory Council will have time to review certification documents.

A draft schedule of the Certification Document Development Schedule distributed at the meeting covers three broad ranges representing phases of TIP and UPWP development. Information gathering started in October, 2015, and will continue until mid-February, 2016. The analysis phase, which includes the evaluation of transportation planning and project requests, will roughly span mid-February through late April. The document development phase, which involves finalizing new transportation planning and projects is scheduled through the end of June. This phase includes the public participation and final endorsement of the TIP and the UPWP by the MPO. The documents are then submitted for State and Federal approval prior to the commencement of the federal fiscal year 2017 on October 1, 2016.

Currently, staff is working with the UPWP Committee of the MPO on exploring themes and project ideas that could be included in the work program either as planning studies, research studies, and technical assistance projects.

The Advisory Council will discuss the broad themes of projects that are forming in February. By March, both the TIP and the UPWP will have some initial lists of projects and planning studies comprising their respective universe of projects. The draft staff recommendation of projects for both certification documents may be prepared by late April. The Advisory Council's 3C Documents Committee and the full Advisory Council

will maintain ongoing review of the process during these phases.

**Summary of the Presentation: MassDOT's Role in Statewide Planning and Project Development:**

B. Pounds distributed materials relating to project development timelines with opportunities for public participation and points in the development process where public can get involved in MPO activities. He mentioned the role of the Advisory Council in the Boston Region MPO relative to other MPOs in the state.

Project Need Forms submitted by project proponents are evaluated by MassDOT. Project need could be identified from an MPO planning study in the UPWP. If approved by the MassDOT Project Review Committee, which determines funding eligibility, the project becomes a "real" project, with a project identification number. The project advances to a universe of projects that competes with all other projects in initial conception stages.

The Highway Division oversees project design and permitting. A project must reach a 25 percent design completion before it will be recommended for programming in the TIP. As the project design advances, there is increasing confidence in programming (funding) it in the early time-bands of the TIP.

Programming recommendations for the TIP are in the development stage, which makes this a good time to increase Council involvement. Ongoing awareness of TIP project status in the development process will make the Council's input more proactive.

Since the typical project timeline is from 2 to 4 years due to funding competition, new ideas for projects or planning studies should be presented to the MPO staff or the MPO through the Advisory Council Chair. Ideas and proposals should be made as early as possible because of the large number of project proponents.

***Questions and Comments***

In response to a member's question, B. Pounds stated that the best way for project proponents to stay involved in the process from development through construction phases. The best way to guarantee that projects garner support in their communities is by programming projects that meet design standards and by keeping the community informed of the ongoing status of the project. R. McGaw expressed a concern that public support for roadway projects can erode when there is a perception of lack of progress.

K. Quackenbush added that decision-making has come a long ways towards using a

data-driven process. With the introduction of performance-based planning there will be an even closer adherence to a scientific approach. He said the Advisory Council has an important role in becoming an active and ongoing partner in shepherding new performance-based planning standards and practices.

In response to a question from J. Businger on why the Federal Railway Administration (FRA) is not a primary partner in the MPO decision-making process, K. Quackenbush and M. Sanborn explained the relationship of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to the MPO and in the context of surface transportation regulations.

S. Olanoff expressed concern that the MPO and the Advisory Council work well with the guidelines of the development process yet have little control over the construction end of the projects.

B. Pounds explained that MassDOT is involved in the public participation aspects of projects with a project manager assigned to each project, in response to a question from J. Rowe.

T. Bennett explained that the Advisory Council will be more proactively involved in the project and planning study selection process in the future and will be developing a working schedule to track the Council's planned progress and to meet important timelines.

### ***Old Business, New Business and Member Announcements***

T. Bennett mentioned the new annual report released by the MBTA's Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB) as well as the State of the System Reports for the MBTA's Focus40 long-range capital funding and investment plan. Links to these resources will be sent to members.

P. Nelson mentioned that proposed fare-increase studies and changes to commuter rail schedules are out for public comment through February 12. Links to these resources will be sent to members.

T. Bennett explained that there was no vote on the Green Line Extension Phase II at the last MPO meeting. The topic is under study and advisement and may be raised at a future meeting.

Several members discussed various aspects of the FMCB's proposed fare increase.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:20 PM.

## Attendance

### Agencies (Voting)

MassRides

Gary St. Fleur

### Municipalities (Voting) - \*MPO Member

Belmont

Robert McGaw

Cambridge

Tegin Bennett

Needham

Rhain Hoyland

Westwood

Trevor Laubenstein

Weymouth

Owen MacDonald

### Citizen Groups

AACT

Mary Ann Murray

American Council of Engineering Companies

Fred Moseley

Association for Public Transportation

Barry M Steinberg

Boston Society of Architects

Schuyler Larrabee

Massachusetts Bus Association

Mark Sanborn

MASCO

Paul Nelson

MoveMassachusetts

Jon Seward

National Corridors Initiative

John Businger

Riverside Neighborhood Association

Marilyn Wellons

WalkBoston

John McQueen

### Agencies (MPO & other non-voting)

MassDOT

Bryan Pounds

MassDOT - Aeronautics Division

Steve Rawding

TRIC

Steve Olanoff

Boston Redevelopment Authority

Josh Weiland

### Guests

350MA.ORG

Susan Ringler

Boston Resident

Dee Whittlesey

Boston Resident

Christopher Blackler

Malden Resident

Ed Lowney

Millis Resident

Ed Chisholm

### Staff

Karl Quackenbush

Matt Archer

Lourenço Dantas

David Fargen

Ali Kleyman

Jen Rowe