

# REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



## Regional Transportation Advisory Council

November 9, 2016, Meeting

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

### DRAFT 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 7)

#### Chair's Report - T. Bennett Chair

T. Bennett began her remarks by stating that transportation equity remains a central theme to the ongoing discussions on planning and funding. She expressed that the Council continue to work with the MPO and MPO staff in keeping equity at the forefront of deliberations. Next, T. Bennett provided an update on recent MPO activities. At a recent meeting, the MPO considered updated work plans for the TIP and UPWP processes, both which will receive more attention to the geographic distribution of projects with a better understanding of the outcomes of planning studies. The MPO also reviewed the proposed plans for the Public Participation Program.

T. Bennett noted that MPO staff member A. Kleyman has transitioned from UPWP Manager to the TIP Manager. Outreach to the MAPC municipal sub-regions is underway. A "Brain-Storming Worksheet" was distributed to members for review and consideration as the TIP and UPWP development processes begin. Members were encouraged to study the worksheet to aid in generating or evaluating new planning project ideas.

L. Dantas, MPO Staff, added that the MPO released the first TIP Amendment of the year for public review. The amendment relates to the MBTA's Capital Investment Program and how funding will be reflected in the TIP. The 30-day comment period ends on December 7, 2016, and a vote on the Amendment will be taken at the December 15 MPO meeting. L. Dantas also mentioned that a discussion on the representation on the MPO of Regional Transit Authorities will be considered at an upcoming meeting. He noted that although

currently the MBTA has representation on MPO, the two other RTAs in the Boston metropolitan region do not.

T. Bennett followed-up on the suggestion about a possible brief recap by the MPO Chair to summarize the topics and outcomes of items being discussed at the Fiscal and Management Control Board meetings. This information would inform the MPO members (including Advisory Council) of the current activities involving transportation planning and finance.

## **Minutes - October 12, 2016**

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 12 meeting was made and seconded. The minutes were approved.

## **MAPC's Landline Initiative: Developing a Regional Greenway Network; David Loutzenheiser, MAPC**

D. Loutzenheiser introduced a presentation on connecting the greenway trail structure that considers active transportation networks on par with highway and transit networks. Ideally, the network of active transportation facilities would include lanes that are physically separated from vehicular traffic. Pathway signage is also a key ingredient to safety and access to the network. D. Loutzenheiser identified the Greenway Network development goals of safer transportation for cycling, walking and access through the use of separate paths, and physical separation along roadways or shared-use on low-traffic streets.

Natural surface trail corridors through conservation and scenic or historic areas are network goals for regional walking trails. There is a direct relationship between promoting regional walking trails and preserving underdeveloped land as greenbelt corridors.

D. Loutzenheiser discussed significant greenway projects in the region including DCR Parkways, Coastline Project, Aqueduct Trails and the Mass Central Rail Trail project. He noted that there are several proposed regional walking trails including the Boston Greenbelt Trail, Cape Ann Trail, Cross Westwood/Tri-Town Trail, Warner Trail Extension, South Fells Connector and others.

### **COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

In response to a member's question (M. Wellons), D. Loutzenheiser explained that there was a net gain of green park space in the Greenough Trail construction, which balanced the taking of mature trees while building the path.

D. Loutzenheiser explained that a signage system will be developed that will allow for multiple names of some segments of the paths, in response to a question from a member. (J. Prang Wallerice)

D. Loutzenheiser indicated that leases on the rail trail do contain reversionary language so that primary use as rail connection could be reinstated at some future time, however, it was noted that in the case of the Mass Central Rail Trail there are no current considerations by the MBTA to invest in commuter rail for this line. (S. Larrabee)

T. Bennett commended the effort on unifying the network onto one map and noted the complexities in identifying existing land use without precluding potential future use. She was assured that proposals reducing gaps in the bikeway network can be offered by anyone while the network is being analyzed and developed.

In response to a question on financing the network (B. Steinberg) D. Loutzenheiser explained that much of the benefit of increased healthy transportation alternatives is measured in attributes that include the reduction of pollution, the increase in public health and the attainment of public policy goals like more park and green space. One member suggested that bicycle licensing would help to defray the cost of building the greenway network and make biking safer. (M. Wellons) T. Bennett indicated that the Advisory Council will continue to consider and comment on transportation financing issues throughout the future.

## **Update on the State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans; Peter Sutton, MassDOT**

### **PEDESTRIAN PLAN**

P. Sutton introduced the updates to the Massachusetts Pedestrian Transportation Plan which is being updated for the first time since 1998. P. Sutton presented several graphics depicting sidewalk locations throughout the state. MassDOT controls less than 20 percent of all of the roadways in the entire state, mostly highways, Interstate highways, and bridges and tunnels.

The policies pursued by MassDOT that best support walkability include funding and investment strategies and priorities; project selection criteria and prioritization process; project development processes (including design policies); maintenance policies and enforcement; and coordination with others modes. The pedestrian plan is about defining policy, not identifying specific projects. Three key issues addressed in the plan are: better access to transit; better maintenance—especially the clearing of snow and ice; and making walkable options available for people throughout the state, not just in high-density areas.

The approach to this plan is to establish context, identify the top-ten demand areas and to provide investment direction to the MassDOT's Capital Investment Plan (CIP). Funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects is set at \$60 M over the next four years in the CIP in addition to all regular new and maintenance projects MassDOT is undertaking.

P. Sutton noted that outreach for the CIP will included communicating to agencies

throughout MassDOT, the MA Office on Disability, MA Department of Public Health, regional planning and regional transit agencies, and municipalities.

- Core plan goals include the improvement of accessibility; the improvement of safety; the improvement of maintenance and usability; and guiding prudent investment. Improvement of safety will be addressed through project selection criteria and the Highway Safety Improvement Program. Safety also includes being safe from neighborhood criminal activity while walking and bicycling.
- Maintenance and usability goals include the importance of maintenance for safety from tripping hazards, drainage and forced detours. Removal of snow from sidewalks, curb ramps, bridges, bus stops and work zones must be addressed in making biking and walking more accessible.
- Funding investment programs for pedestrian infrastructure include the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Chapter 90, Complete Streets Funding Program and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs.

Accessibility issues will center on first mile/last mile connections to transit improvements. In addition to these concerns, shifts in the demographics involving low-income and elderly pedestrians as well as support for ADA Transition Plans and Universal Access will be addressed.

Opportunities to advance walkability include developing precise, quantitative walkability metrics to use in project selection; developing measures to evaluate program effectiveness; support small-scale projects; and improve coordination with other Divisions and Agencies.

Issues identified in the planning process show that responsibilities for maintenance need to be clarified and enforced. Universal Access and ADA Transition Plans need to be a top priority. Concerns over simple projects that often snowball into complicated ones due to requirements and pedestrian connections to transit were also noted. Preliminary plan recommendations include developing ways to enable small projects; adding smaller projects onto larger ones when possible; and encourage local and regional pedestrian plans.

Some of the plan outcomes include a Municipal Resource Guide; Top 10 Priority Areas for CIP Investment; and recommendations for possible ongoing topics.

Next steps include outreach to districts and municipalities, safety research, documenting issues, developing an outline and presenting recommendations. The Draft Plan Outline will be written this winter with the Draft Plan scheduled for completion in the summer of 2017.

For more information on the plan, visit the project website ([click here](#)).

### **COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION (Pedestrian Plan)**

T. Bennett asked about the relationship between walkability metrics and how they make projects more competitive in terms of funding. P. Sutton stated the metrics for these purposes are to identify projects most cost-beneficial thus they are more of a mechanism for project prioritization. T. Bennett also asked about the makeup of the Municipal Resource Guide. P. Sutton stated that the guide will focus on case studies of several municipalities.

In response to a question from a member, P. Sutton explained that the top 10 priority geographic areas for CIP investment will be an outcome of the Plan. (P. Nelson) P. Nelson commented that the [“Local Access Score”](#)—an index scoring tool developed by MAPC and presented at the Moving Together conference this Fall—can be used to analyze gaps in sidewalks and pinpointing access conditions for making investment choices.

A member asked about prioritizing maintenance activities to help stretch municipal maintenance budgets. (D. Montgomery) He provided an example of making sidewalks accessible on one side of the street instead of both sides in order to offer some service instead of no service at all. P. Sutton stated that municipalities make local policy but that MassDOT projects provide sidewalks on both sides of the street.

A member asked if MassDOT manages any small projects. P. Sutton stated that for most small projects, MassDOT provides more of an assistance role to municipalities. Some small projects connected with the Complete Streets funding project are being led by MassDOT. Some of these types of projects simply involve signal and crosswalk installation.

### **BICYCLE PLAN**

P. Sutton presented on the Bicycle Plan, which was last updated in 2008. The plan attempted to establish a statewide network of on-road and off-road routes called the Bay State Greenway with a long-range planning focus. The current plan is being developed with Toole Design Group and will focus on cycling locations in more densely populated places in order to find areas where mode-shift can be most impacted. The plan comes forward with the understanding of a growing momentum for active transportation, both at the state and local level. Changing demographics, land uses, preferences, and technologies are driving the need for bicycling investment. The plan needs to identify high-stress network gaps where investment could unlock latent demand and fully realize MassDOT’s healthy transportation vision. The plan must also identify priorities and recommendations that directly integrate into the CIP.

Participation and engagement of local communities is necessary for the plan to be successful. The nature of the gaps can present a challenge when they are not easily solved with pavement. Bicycling investments must be effective, responsive to needs, and

reflect MassDOT's long-term goals. The Bicycle Plan is progressing along with other parallel initiatives including MassDOT's CIP, MBTA's Focus40, the Massachusetts Pedestrian Transportation Plan, and Vision Zero.

Activities by the project consulting teams will identify emerging trends, identify key gaps in the network, and develop a public participation plan. Some of the outreach events will employ "open streets events" which are becoming more popular.

Strategies to be used to improve the existing and planned bicycling infrastructure include CIP integration; bicycle-friendly webinars; a bike share start-up tool; bicycle tourism; year-round maintenance; and evidence-based countermeasures.

The final report for the plan is scheduled for completion near the end of next summer.

### **COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION (Bicycle Plan)**

T. Bennett pointed out that coordination of municipalities will help minimize the disruptions in bicycling connections from one town to another due to different commitments to bicycle planning when crossing local boundaries. P. Sutton concurred saying that coordination would make bicycling safer with more awareness of infrastructure now available on the existing road system.

In response to a question on the Municipal Guide (J. Rowe), P. Sutton explained the MassDOT wants to work with all the municipalities and regional agencies in the state to make active transportation planning and implementation easier.

Regarding safety concerns, a member asked for guidance on bicycling policy on sidewalks in areas where there is limited street width to install bike lanes or where "sharrows" do not provide a high enough safety threshold (R. Hoyland). P. Sutton explained that detailed policy on bicycle use of sidewalks is made at the municipal. He noted that in some larger cities the activity is illegal, but in some smaller rural areas bicycling on sidewalks is accepted which has an impact on the bicycle network gaps.

D. Montgomery commented that an important constituency for building support for bicycle policy includes non-resident workers who want to bike to work. P. Sutton stressed the benefits of biking and walking to work as well as taking part in bike tourism.

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

T. Bennett announced upcoming Green Line Extension meetings at various venues over the next several weeks. Also, the MPO's TIP and UPWP subregional municipal outreach meetings will be held over the next three weeks.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM.

## Attendance

### Municipalities - Voting

Cambridge

Needham

Weymouth

### Citizen Advocacy Groups

Association for Public Transportation

Boston Society of Architects

MassBike

MassCommute

MASCO

Riverside Neighborhood Association

### Municipalities Non-Voting

Boston

### Agencies Non-Voting

MassDOT - Aeronautics Division

### Guests

Crosstown Connect

### Staff

CTPS

CTPS

CTPS

CTPS

CTPS

### Member

Tegin Bennett  
Rhain Hoyland;  
David  
Montgomery

Owen MacDonald

Barry M.  
Steinberg  
Schuyler  
Larrabee  
David Ernst

Julia Prange  
Wallerce

Paul Nelson  
Marilyn Wellons

Tom Kadzis

Michael Gates

### Name

Scott Zadakis

Lourenço Dantas  
David Fargen  
Matt Archer  
Jen Rowe  
Casey Claude