

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

July 19, 2018 Meeting

10:00 AM–11:00 AM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

David Mohler, Chair, representing Stephanie Pollack, Secretary, and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreed to the following:

- Approve the minutes of the May 3, 2018, meeting
- Release Amendment Two to the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for a 21-day public review period
- Release Amendment Six to the federal fiscal years (FFY) 2018–22 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for a 21-day public review period

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 9.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT*

There was none.

4. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

5. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Tegin Teich, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

T. Teich reported that the Advisory Council conducted a field trip—a tour of the air traffic control tower at Logan International Airport—in lieu of a meeting in July, and would not meet in August.

6. Executive Director's Report—*Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

K. Quackenbush reported that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have scheduled their on-site visit for the MPO's certification review for October 16, 2018 and October 17, 2018.

Nelson Hoffman (FHWA) stated that the certification review is a joint effort of FHWA and FTA that is conducted at least once every four years. FHWA and FTA are currently reviewing the MPO's documents and processes, and will ask questions related to these at the on-site meetings in October. The on-site review will include a public meeting regarding the MPO's process. There will also be opportunities for MPO board members to speak with FHWA and FTA staff. N. Hoffman also introduced Tina Lee, Civil Rights Specialist at FHWA, who will be participating in the certification review.

Discussion

Steve Olanoff (Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce) asked whether the board will have reached a consensus regarding the representation of Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) on the MPO board before the on-site review. This issue was raised during the last certification review in 2014. D. Mohler responded that either the board would reach a conclusion or FHWA and FTA likely would raise this issue again.

7. Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden (DI/DB) Policy Development Update—*Tegin Teich, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

T. Teich reported that stakeholder engagement process for the DI/DB policy has concluded. A public meeting was held on June 26, 2018, in Roxbury, at which stakeholders, MPO staff, and approximately 10 members of the public continued to discuss how to establish an effective policy. The last stakeholder meeting was held on July 17, 2018, where the group came to a consensus on a recommendation that MPO staff will bring to the board at a later meeting.

8. Approval of May 3, 2018, MPO Meeting Minutes—*Róisín Foley, MPO Staff*

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 3, 2018, was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Paul Regan) and seconded by the South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (Glenn Trindade). The North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly) (Aaron Clausen) abstained. The motion carried.

9. Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Amendment Two—Anne McGahan, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Charting Progress to 2040 Amendment Two: Air Quality Conformity Determination, MassDOT and Metropolitan Planning Organizations, July 2018](#)
2. [PowerPoint Presentation: Air Quality Conformity, Long-Range Transportation Plan](#)

Amendment Two to the current LRTP, *Charting Progress to 2040*, is an ozone (O₃) air quality conformity determination for the plan. The MPO was not required to conduct an O₃ conformity determination when the plan was adopted in 2015 because the MPO region had been classified as in attainment for the O₃ standard. The MPO was required to conduct a conformity determination for carbon monoxide (CO) and to demonstrate progress with certain State Implementation Plan (SIP) projects including the Green Line Extension to Somerville and Medford and improvements on the Fairmount Commuter Rail Line.

A recent court ruling has determined that the MPO must now do an O₃ conformity determination, which must be amended into the plan via Amendment Two. The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) air quality conformity process is as follows:

1. The EPA establishes national ambient air quality standards for six common air pollutants, known as "criteria pollutants." These standards are revisited every five years, and the EPA may change them if the science supports it.
2. The EPA classifies each state as either attainment or nonattainment for each pollutant.
3. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been classified as nonattainment for two criteria pollutants. The first is O₃, and second is CO. The state is meeting the standards for all other criteria pollutants.
4. As a nonattainment area, the Commonwealth established an emissions budget for each pollutant for which the state is in nonattainment. Using that budget, MPOs conduct conformity determinations in their LRTPs and TIPs to ensure that their plans conform to attainment standards.
5. The Commonwealth monitors the pollutants across the state and after three years of clean data for each pollutant, the EPA will reclassify the area as a maintenance area.
6. The Commonwealth establishes a new emissions budget to ensure that the area continues to meet the standards and does not slide back into nonattainment.

7. The MPO must continue to do conformity determinations for a 20-year maintenance period, after which the EPA will reclassify the area as attainment and the MPO does not need to do conformity determinations.

The EPA established O₃ and CO standards in the 1970s as part of the Clean Air Act. Boston and eight surrounding communities were classified as nonattainment for CO. CO budgets were established and the MPO did a conformity determination for each of its TIPs and LRTPs. The EPA reclassified this area as maintenance in April 1996. The Boston Region MPO continued to do conformity determinations with a maintenance budget. In April 2016, after a 20-year maintenance period and continued clean data, EPA reclassified the area as attainment. The MPO no longer has to do conformity for CO in Boston and the eight surrounding communities.

A new standard for O₃ was set in 1997 (0.08 parts per million (ppm), averaged over eight hours and not to be exceeded more than once per year). EPA classified the Commonwealth as being in nonattainment for the 1997 standard. The MPO conducted conformity determinations for this standard until 2008, when EPA again revised the standard for O₃ (0.075 ppm). After reviewing data from Massachusetts monitoring stations, EPA found that most areas in Massachusetts were in attainment for the stricter 2008 standard. Instead of requiring these areas to develop a maintenance plan for the older standard, EPA revoked the 1997 standard and classified all of Massachusetts, with the exception of Dukes County, as attainment. This eliminated the requirement to do conformity for ozone on future LRTPs and TIPs, including *Charting Progress to 2040*.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District in California filed a lawsuit claiming that EPA did not have the authority to revoke the 1997 ozone standard without requiring nonattainment areas to continue to do conformity. In February 2018, the court agreed.

FHWA and FTA issued interim guidance in April requiring the MPO to do a conformity determination for O₃ on any new LRTP, TIP, update, or amendment that includes the addition of a project that is not exempt from air quality, or what we call “regionally significant projects.” EPA has asked for a rehearing, but this will take time. MassDOT has decided that the MPO should move forward in case the decision stands, so that the 2019–23 TIP, with the conformity determination, is ready to be implemented on October 1, 2018. MassDOT has also decided that the MPO should do a conformity determination on the LRTP. This also allows any TIP amendments over the next year to be covered by an air quality conformity determination prior to the adoption of new plans in 2019.

This may change if EPA is successful in rehearing the case. If not, the Department of Environmental Protection may need to develop an O3 maintenance plan for the 1997 standard. The results of the conformity determination show that the MPO region is well within the emissions budget that was established for the 1997 O3 standard.

Discussion

There was some discussion of a 21-day versus a 30-day public review period for this amendment. A 21-day public comment period would allow the amendment to be released to the public immediately following the meeting and approved at the next meeting on August 16, 2018.

Vote

A motion to release Amendment Two to the LRTP for a 21-day public review period was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan) and seconded by the City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department) (Jim Gillooly).

10.FFYs 2018–22 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Amendment Six—Alexandra (Ali) Kleyman, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [FFYs 2018-22 TIP Draft Amendment Six TIP Tables](#)
2. [FFYs 2018-22 TIP Draft Simplified Amendment Six Table](#)
3. [Comment Letter Regarding Kelley's Corner in Acton](#)

Amendment Six includes four changes to MassDOT highway programming in FFY 2018. The amendment accommodates cost changes for three MassDOT projects. Two cost changes are the result of refined estimates during final project design. One cost change is the result of revisions in project scope. The fourth change is the removal of a bridge project because it needed additional design and review. Amendment Six does not affect any MPO target-funded projects.

A. Kleyman also noted that MPO staff received a comment letter from the Acton Republican Town Committee regarding TIP project #608229 (Intersection Improvements at Massachusetts Avenue (Route 111) and Main Street (Route 27) (Kelley's Corner) in Acton). This project is currently programmed in FFY 2022.

Vote

A motion to release Amendment Six to the FFY 2018–22 TIP for a 21-day public review period was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan) and seconded by South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (G. Trindade).

11. Update on Focus40, the MBTA's 25-Year Investment Plan—Jennifer Slesinger, MassDOT

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [PowerPoint Presentation: Focus40 Draft Plan Preview](#)

The enabling legislation for the MBTA requires the creation of a 20-year plan to serve as a roadmap of investments to feed future MBTA Capital Investment Plans (CIP). *Focus40* is the newest long-range plan for the MBTA. *Focus40* includes both programs, potential investments that could enable the MBTA system to serve the region best over the long-term, and priority places, areas that the MBTA can prioritize for new or improved service based on where investments have the greatest likelihood to deliver increased ridership and other benefits.

Focus40 is not a financially constrained capital plan. Once the plan is finalized, investments that are not yet underway (those identified in We're Planning) will be prioritized for planning and design and phased through the existing, rolling five-year capital planning process.

To craft *Focus40*, MassDOT staff began with data collection, public outreach and engagement, goal setting, and scenario planning. Staff met with stakeholders, held public events, and met with riders on the MBTA system at stops and stations. Throughout engagement, the *Focus40* team heard concerns about reliability and frequency throughout the system.

Focus40 positions the MBTA to help meet the needs of the region in 2040 via four goal areas: sustainability, livability, equity and affordable housing, and economic competitiveness. Instead of planning for one specific future, *Focus40* includes four plausible futures for the region. The programs in *Focus40* include investments that make sense regardless of which future scenario eventually arrives. The four possible futures are:

- MetroFuture: takes the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) regional plan as its basis, envisions compact, sustainable growth
- Business as Usual: envisions a future where low and moderate income households increasingly move to more affordable suburbs and Gateway Cities
- Innovation Acceleration: a future where technological changes are adopted quickly and radically change the transportation landscape
- Climate Responsive: a future with an enhanced commitment to invest in greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction and climate resiliency.

Focus40 also identifies three types of priority places:

- Major Employment / Destination Districts (South Boston Waterfront, Kendall Square, Longwood Medical Area, Logan Airport)
- Inner Core Communities Lacking Rapid Transit (Chelsea, Everett, Blue Hill Avenue and Roslindale in Boston)
- Urban Gateways (Lynn, Salem, Waltham)

Eight of the programs in *Focus40* are specific to existing MBTA services and focused on making the system more reliable, robust and resilient. Three programs are systemwide (customer experience, resiliency, and accessibility/paratransit). An additional program is included for planned and future expansions serving priority places.

Focus40 lays out studies, projects and investments within each program, divided into the following categories:

- We're Doing (Commitments through 2023): Investments that are programmed in the Capital Investment Plan.
- We're Planning (Next Priorities through 2040): Investment options that are important to meet the needs of the region in 2040 in most of the plausible futures.
- We're Imagining (Big Ideas): Investment options whose feasibility, benefits, and costs must be better understood. Many of these big ideas are potentially transformative and may be important hedges or shaping investments for the region.

J. Slesinger highlighted several specific programs, including Customer Experience, Green Line 2040, Silver Line 2040, Bus 2040, and Commuter Rail 2040. MassDOT staff hopes to incorporate long-term policy priorities into project scoring and the ongoing redesign of the bus network and vision for the Commuter Rail.

Focus40 will be released as a printed book that summarizes key elements and on a website with more detailed information. MassDOT staff planned to post the final draft in July and conduct outreach regarding the draft through September, before releasing the final plan in the fall.

Discussion

J. Gillooly suggested the inclusion of Allston/Brighton as a priority place. J. Gillooly also commented on the challenge of planning investments that will benefit Environmental Justice (EJ) populations given the potential for demographics to shift due to housing dynamics between now and 2040.

S. Olanoff asked whether the Commuter Rail 2040 program includes specific upgrades to the platform at Ruggles Station. J. Slesinger replied that specific upgrades would be included in the CIP but overall plans for station improvements in the long-term are included in *Focus40*.

T. Teich asked how each program relates to the four possible futures. J. Slesinger replied that the full document includes the types of investments for each program that make the most sense in each specific scenario.

Tom Bent (Inner Core Committee) (City of Somerville) asked whether *Focus40* will include any cost estimates. J. Slesinger replied that *Focus40* does not include cost estimates, but that staff did attempt to include programs that seemed financially reasonable over the next 25 years. For example, the Commuter Rail Vision, which is ongoing, will include costing related to possibilities like electrification.

12.Members Items

K. Quackenbush stated that the next MPO meetings would be August 2, 2018, and August 16, 2018.

13.Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan) and seconded by the South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (G. Trindade). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	David Kucharsky
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jim Gillooly
Federal Highway Administration	Nelson Hoffman
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
MassDOT Highway Division	John Bechard
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Eric Waaramaa
Massachusetts Port Authority	Chris Grillo
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)	David Manugian
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Aaron Clausen
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Jay Corey
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Tegin Teich
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)	
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Glenn Trindade
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees Affiliation

Frank Tramontozzi	City of Quincy
Scott Zadakis	CrossTown Connect
Victoria Mier	MassDOT Press Office
Erin Reed	MA SRTS
Tina M. Lee	FHWA
Benjamin Jaffer	BTD

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
Robin Mannion
Róisín Foley
Elizabeth (Betsy) Harvey
Alexandra (Ali) Kleyman
Anne McGahan
Jen Rowe
Michelle Scott
