

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

September 5, 2019, Meeting

10:00 AM–12:15 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

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

Decisions

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

- Approve the hiring of Tegin Teich as Executive Director of the Central Transportation Planning Staff to the Boston Region MPO

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 17.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Chair's Report—Stephanie Pollack, Secretary and CEO, MassDOT

There was none.

4. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

5. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—AnaCristina Fragoso, Vice-Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council

A. Fragoso reported that the Advisory Council would reschedule its September meeting from September 11, 2019, to September 18, 2019. The Advisory Council's Election Committee will present at the September 18, 2019, meeting.

6. Executive Director's Report—Annette Demchur, Co-Interim Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff

A. Demchur reported that the next MPO meeting would be rescheduled from September 19, 2019, to September 26, 2019.

7. Hiring of Executive Director—Stephanie Pollack, MassDOT, and Marc Draisen, Metropolitan Area Planning Council

On behalf of the MPO, Secretary Pollack thanked A. Demchur and Scott Peterson for serving as Co-Interim Executive Directors of the Central Transportation Planning Staff, the staff to the MPO, during the search for a new Executive Director. Secretary Pollack acknowledged the long and occasionally fraught history of the relationship between the MPO and MassDOT. She stated that the hiring of a new Executive Director is an opportunity for a more collaborative and collegial relationship. Secretary Pollack noted that the Boston Region MPO is uniquely structured among MPOs nationally and that while MassDOT will continue its active role, this does not mean the MPO should not have its own part in policymaking. Secretary Pollack stated that from her time spent in other states it is clear that some other MPOs are active policymakers and not just agencies that approve investments. Secretary Pollack added that she welcomes working with an engaged MPO as a partner on an aligned set of planning and policy objectives for eastern Massachusetts. Secretary Pollack thanked M. Draisen and David Mohler (MassDOT), who conducted the Executive Director search, and the members of MPO staff who participated. Secretary Pollack stated that MassDOT is ready for an Executive Director who can take the relationship between the MPO and MassDOT in a new direction.

M. Draisen reiterated that the hiring of a new Executive Director is an important inflection point in the relationship between the MPO and its members, and an opportunity to underline the need for cooperation and collaboration. M. Draisen stated that MPO staff plays an important role in the technical and policymaking work of regional transportation planning. M. Draisen agreed that the Boston Region MPO is uniquely structured but capable of being as effective as possible in its current format. M. Draisen thanked the MPO members for their patience throughout the search, A. Demchur and S. Peterson for serving as Co-Interim Executive Directors, and Hiral Gandhi for her work in the MPO's Finance and Operations group.

M. Draisen reviewed the hiring process. An initial committee of MPO members reviewed incoming applications, established a series of questions for candidates, and deliberated on finalists. This committee consisted of Steve Woelfel (MassDOT), Eric Bourassa (MAPC), Jen Garcia (MAPC), Denise Deschamps (North Shore Task Force) (City of Beverly), Paul Regan (MBTA Advisory Board), and Vineet Gupta (City of Boston) (Boston Transportation Department). The hiring committee was supported by a group of staff consisting of Ali Kleyman, Kate Parker-O'Toole, Ben Dowling, and H. Gandhi. This group helped to devise questions for the hiring committee and had an opportunity to

interview finalists. M. Draisen stated that he hoped this would be the beginning of increased staff engagement in decisions about MPO leadership.

Three finalists were presented to M. Draisen and D. Mohler, who agreed to advance Tegin Teich to the MPO as the finalist. T. Teich has represented the Regional Transportation Advisory Council on the MPO board for the past four years. M. Draisen stated that T. Teich would be a bright, engaged, innovative leader for MPO staff.

T. Teich thanked the Chair, Vice Chair, MPO Board, and MPO staff for the opportunity to appear as a candidate for the role of Executive Director. T. Teich stated that as Chair of the Advisory Council she has sought to represent the perspectives of a diverse group of stakeholders. T. Teich stated that her goals as Executive Director would remain the same—to advance a resilient, sustainable transportation system that meets the needs of a diverse population, offers a robust set of options for accessing opportunities, improves quality of life, and serves economic development goals. T. Teich stated that she would bring a focus on relationship-building and a passion for engaging technical staff to an agency that has an opportunity to modernize its approach to solving regional transportation challenges.

T. Teich's educational and career background includes a dual master's degree in Urban Planning and Transportation from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where her thesis explored the use of regional travel models in different transportation planning processes. Following her time at MIT, T. Teich worked in consulting for six years before joining the City of Cambridge, where she manages both large-scale design projects and quick-build projects, leads a growing public transit program, and serves as a regional liaison. As Advisory Council Chair and in her Cambridge role, T. Teich has worked with MPO staff on both MPO related activities and technical projects, such as modeling for the Kendall Square Mobility Task Force.

T. Teich commended MPO staff for their hard work in a challenging field and context, where the rate of change is accelerating while growing congestion increases the pressure to find solutions. T. Teich thanked A. Demchur and S. Peterson for stepping up in a demanding time of transition for the agency.

T. Teich stated that she applied for the Executive Director position because it is an opportune time to build on ongoing efforts to modernize how the MPO responds to the region's needs. Some examples of how this is already happening include new partnerships between MAPC and MPO staff, revisiting Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project selection criteria, the evolving conversation on diversity and equity, interest in expanding the universe of TIP and Long-Range Transportation Plan

(LRTP) projects, exploring how to update the regional travel demand model, formalizing regional transit authority representation, and developing an operations plan.

T. Teich stated that her top priorities as Executive Director would be to

- energize and enable staff to best utilize their talents in a communicative, open, and honest way;
- hire a Deputy Executive Director, recognizing that leadership is a team effort;
- make the MPO more accessible to the unengaged public, particularly those hardest hit by the failures of the transportation system; and
- modernize the agency and board to provide data-driven input to the regional transportation planning process and contribute to investment decision-making and policymaking.

Discussion

Tina Cassidy (North Suburban Planning Council) (City of Woburn) noted that much of T. Teich's career has been focused on the Inner Core of the region and asked how she would approach issues faced by suburban communities like Woburn. T. Teich replied that her approach to transportation is to provide a robust set of choices for people who are trying to access housing, jobs, and resources in their daily lives. This means not just prioritizing the densest parts of the region, but also improving access for people in less dense areas. T. Teich acknowledged that there are different economic development challenges for suburban communities. She added that the MPO must consider how proposed investments affect the immediate vicinity of a project and the region as a whole, and how these projects support the overarching goals of supporting access to public transit and economic development. T. Teich stated that her approach is to try to elevate questions about individual projects to a regional framework and think about transportation problems in a holistic way, rather than within municipal boundaries.

A. Fragoso stated that T. Teich is incredibly focused on transportation equity and has the integrity to focus on that issue at a regional level.

Glenn Trindade (South West Advisory Planning Committee) (Town of Medway) stated that the issues faced by communities in the SWAP subregion are different than those of communities in the Inner Core. G. Trindade stated that he struggles to engage communities in the subregion in the MPO process because they do not see it as a viable opportunity to receive construction funding. G. Trindade asked if T. Teich would commit to coming to a meeting in SWAP to hear the concerns of municipal representatives in the area and see what it is like to be a commuter in that subregion. G. Trindade noted, for example, that the parking lot at the commuter rail station in

Franklin is full by 7:00 AM. Local communities have tried to institute shuttles and bus transportation to and from the station.

T. Teich stated that the perspective of SWAP residents is critical and that listening is imperative, especially in the early stages of a leadership position like Executive Director. T. Teich stated that she would be eager to hear these perspectives. T. Teich commended MPO staff on their ongoing work to be more present at outreach events around the region, acknowledging the resources in terms of time and budget necessary to do so. T. Teich added that in her 20 years in the Boston region, she has lived in Natick and Weymouth, among other suburbs, and has some perspective on the challenges faced by smaller communities.

Sheila Page (At-Large Town) (Town of Lexington) reported that Richard Canale, the previous MPO designee from Lexington, was happy to hear of T. Teich's candidacy. S. Page echoed the concerns of T. Cassidy and G. Trindade, stating that while she appreciates the efforts of MPO staff she encourages T. Teich to think about ways to include municipalities that lack the staff to participate in the MPO process. T. Teich replied that she has heard very similar input from Advisory Council participants.

Daniel Amstutz (At-Large Town) (Town of Arlington) stated that he was happy to hear of T. Teich's candidacy, as well as Secretary Pollack's comments about her openness to improving the relationship between MPO staff and MassDOT. D. Amstutz stated that in his experience, T. Teich asks the right questions at the MPO table. D. Amstutz noted that while MPO staff conducts very high-level technical work, sometimes analyses and recommendations end up shelved due to a lack of capacity at the municipal level. D. Amstutz asked how T. Teich would approach this issue. T. Teich stated that she would advocate for restructuring work programs to reallocate funding earlier in the project process to engage with stakeholders to ensure buy-in. T. Teich added that because MPO staff is not an implementing agency, it is up to the agency to build stronger relationships with implementing agencies to ensure follow-through.

Thatcher Kezer III (MetroWest Regional Collaborative) (City of Framingham) asked what MPO staff and municipalities should do to turn the results of technical work into concrete improvements. T. Teich stated that data is not objective in its usage and framing, and it is important for MPO staff to have more of an active role in applying analysis to policy in order to reach regional goals. This requires municipalities to be willing to think about the broader goals of the region. T. Teich stated that some of the most rewarding work she has done in Cambridge has been partnering with other municipalities on projects that try to solve regional problems, such as improving public transit by providing bus priority.

Tom Bent (Inner Core Committee) (City of Somerville) asked for T. Teich's thoughts on follow-up actions that MPO staff can take to evaluate its studies and project funding over time. T. Teich stated that she would like to move in the direction of looking more holistically at MPO projects and how they affect the region. T. Teich stated that the TIP criteria development process is a good opportunity to do this, as is ongoing work to make the regional travel demand model more nimble.

Laura Gilmore (Massachusetts Port Authority) asked T. Teich to speak about her priorities for modernizing MPO staff's role in working with agency partners.

T. Teich replied that strengthening and deepening relationships with MassDOT, MAPC, and other partners is very important, noting early discussions about how MPO staff and MAPC can collaborate on ongoing work in Allston as an example. In addition, T. Teich stated that it is important to modernize thinking about technical tools, adding that there are times when having a more flexible, iterative conversation can help identify when the best times in processes are to use particular tools and methods of analysis. T. Teich stressed the importance of breaking down territorial lines between agencies and departments to yield the best results.

Secretary Pollack asked whether there are other tools in the planning, policy, and investment toolkit that the MPO staff need to evolve. T. Teich replied that the agency has a lot of room to grow in how it engages with the public and frames its work. T. Teich added that there are also opportunities to partner with research institutions to pursue new approaches to solving problems in the region, recognizing that MPO staff must continue to provide data-driven support to the MPO process.

Vote

A motion to approve the hiring of Tegin Teich as Executive Director of the Central Transportation Planning Staff to the Boston Region MPO was made by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham) (T. Kezer) and seconded by the City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department) (Tom Kadzis). The motion carried.

Further Remarks

Secretary Pollack reported that MassDOT has released a request for proposals for its Workforce Transportation Program, which provides funding for first-mile/last-mile transportation, and they are hoping to supplement this funding with some additional funds from the legislature. Secretary Pollack added that the agency is always trying to balance the need to improve the condition of current assets with the desire to expand the system. Secretary Pollack noted that the federally required asset management plan produced by MassDOT Highway and the MBTA will be finalized soon. She also stated

that the recent bond bill filed by Governor Baker's administration increases funding for asset classes exactly as described in the alternative scenarios in this plan. Secretary Pollack stressed that the administration is committed to increasing state funding to advance asset condition goals.

In regards to the Congestion Report presented later in this meeting, Secretary Pollack stated that MassDOT and the MPO have the shared responsibility of addressing congestion in a way that advances other goals including sustainability, equity, resiliency, and accessibility. Secretary Pollack stated that MassDOT and the MPO are in the business of greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction and the future of the planet depends on transportation professionals because the transportation sector is the largest emitter of GHGs, and GHG emissions from transportation sources are increasing. Secretary Pollack highlighted the ongoing multistate Transportation and Climate Initiative. Secretary Pollack added that equity concerns can encompass race and class, but also the difference between high density and low density areas, and she noted that we should overinvest in places that we have underinvested in in the past. Secretary Pollack stated that a system without options is not resilient, and accessibility should be the overarching goal of both MassDOT and the MPO. Secretary Pollack highlighted a troubling finding of the congestion report, which is that congestion in the region is now reducing access to jobs. Secretary Pollack expressed her hope that all partners in regional transportation would focus on equity, sustainability, resiliency, and accessibility in order to build a better transportation system for the region and the Commonwealth.

M. Draisen stated that S. Peterson and A. Demchur would remain in their interim roles until T. Teich begins on October 21, 2019. M. Draisen also encouraged MPO members to participate in the ongoing Transportation Climate Initiative activities and stated that it would be appropriate to have a presentation on the initiative at a future MPO meeting.

Note: At this point in the meeting, D. Mohler assumed the Chair's seat.

8. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project Evaluation Criteria Revisions—Matt Genova, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [FFY 2019: Evaluation Criteria and Approach for FFYs 2019–23 TIP Development](#)
2. [FFYs 2021–25 TIP Criteria Revisions](#)
3. [Currently Applicable TIP Project Evaluation Criteria by Investment Program](#)

M. Genova reviewed the proposed framework and timeline for revising the TIP project evaluation criteria. The proposed framework is a complete reimagination of the TIP criteria to create distinct criteria for projects in each LRTP investment program, make

significant updates to existing criteria, and change scoring weights. This approach would accommodate the new Transit Modernization investment program, more closely align criteria with specific project elements within each LRTP investment program (including dedicated bus lanes and resilience investments), emphasize MPO goals associated with different project types, eliminate disparities in scores across project types, and allow for each project type to achieve full points.

The current timeline for this process accounts for the presentation of public outreach results and further ideas at the MPO meeting on October 3, 2019. The plan is to present draft criteria in November and final criteria for approval in December. The presentation of the universe of potential projects for inclusion in the FFYs 2021–25 TIP will be combined with the presentation on the TIP criteria.

Public outreach will consist of two surveys: one for TIP contacts and municipal representatives, and one for the public and advocacy groups. There will also be in-person outreach meetings. Once a draft set of criteria is available, staff will invite feedback from stakeholders. Staff will also host TIP How-To Webinars which will be recorded and posted to the MPO website.

The goals of this process are to develop revisions that are manageable to implement, make use of best available data and methods, create balance across investment programs, are both realistic and aspirational, and are clear to project proponents and other stakeholders.

M. Genova reviewed the “[Currently Applicable TIP Project Evaluation Criteria by Investment Program](#)” handout. This handout shows existing criteria by the investment programs to which they directly apply, as they are currently defined. Universal criteria are denoted by rows where every column across the page is filled in. These criteria could be applied in their current form to all five project types. Universal criteria include all criteria under the LRTP goal areas of Equity, Clean Air/Sustainable Communities, and Economic Vitality. Universal criteria also feature truly multimodal aspects of the Capacity Management and Mobility goal area, such as “Improving Intermodal Connections to Transit” and “Improving the Pedestrian Network and ADA Accessibility.” They also include the existing resilience-oriented criteria, such as “Improving the Ability to Respond to Extreme Conditions.”

In addition to universal criteria, there are those that fall into the category of program-specific criteria. These criteria are directly applicable to each project type in their current form, meaning they evaluate aspects of projects of those types; for instance, Complete Streets projects are not scored on “improves transit assets,” because Complete Streets

projects do not improve transit assets. M. Genova noted that just because a criterion appears under a given project heading or headings, it still may be adjusted to make it more applicable to other project types. The criterion “Improves Transit Assets” is a good example of this, as it is currently very narrowly defined as, “Brings transit asset into a state of good repair,” and, “Meets an identified need in a transit asset management plan.” This definition could be expanded to include elements such as transit signal priority, which would make it more applicable to Complete Streets, intersection, and major infrastructure projects.

Additionally, just because a criterion is listed under multiple headings currently does not mean it is equally applicable to all project types. The criterion relating to pavement condition is an example of this. Because pavement quality is measured in relation to the quantity of pavement, Complete Streets and intersection projects score differently on this measure. While pavement condition is important in both, a corridor and an intersection will likely have different quantities of pavement. A criterion that does not base quality on the amount of substandard pavement would be more universally applicable. The bottom of each column indicates how many points each project type would be eligible for. There are several gaps in the distribution of criteria across investment programs, showing how the current criteria address the five investment programs in highly uneven ways. Remediating some of these imbalances is a key priority moving forward.

M. Genova encouraged members to reach out to him directly with specific concerns regarding criteria revisions.

Discussion

E. Bourassa clarified that MPO staff will be considering new data sources for building criteria metrics, not simply using the same sources but arranging them differently. M. Genova agreed that a large part of the process will be considering what new data sources are available and what metrics the MPO wants to include.

Ken Miller (Federal Highway Administration) asked whether these criteria will be used to evaluate projects for the LRTP in addition to the TIP. M. Genova replied that the immediate intention is to apply them to projects being considered for Regional Target funding in the TIP. K. Miller suggested that they be designed to be applied to projects in both the LRTP and TIP, stating that it does not make sense to have different criteria for the two processes. K. Miller noted that it would be necessary to first address the issue of redefining what constitutes a Major Infrastructure project (the LRTP only lists these projects, while the TIP lists lower-cost projects), but applying the criteria to all projects would make the process clearer overall. K. Miller added that any criterion should have

the ability to “go negative,” in order to reflect that some projects may have drawbacks under certain criteria. K. Miller also suggested that the MPO pursue the inclusion of a measure of cost-effectiveness, either as part of this process or as an additional analysis.

D. Amstutz noted that if the MPO moves away from the use of universal criteria, it may be harder to define which category a specific project belongs in.

S. Page noted that in addition to criteria that evaluate specific resilience improvements, it might be useful to have resilience criteria that apply to projects that do not account for issues like sea level rise, so that the MPO is not investing in infrastructure that may not be usable in forty years. M. Genova agreed that it will be important to make sure the criteria distinguish between different types of resilience across geographies.

A. Fragoso asked whether the current criteria consider projects in neighboring municipalities and the overall distribution of projects across the region. M. Genova stated that as part of the current process, MPO staff provide members with information on regional equity, analyzing the distribution of projects throughout the region in relation to the share of population, employment, and roadway miles to make sure certain subregions or municipalities are not overrepresented or underrepresented.

David Koses (At-Large City) (City of Newton) asked whether, currently, a project’s score would not differ based on the type of project (i.e. intersection versus bicycle and pedestrian improvement). M. Genova replied that currently project scores often vary based on the type of project because different types of projects are evaluated according to different criteria. This is why, when presenting evaluation scores to the board, staff shows the scores broken down by project type. Going forward it will be necessary to be very clear with proponents about where projects best fit.

D. Mohler asked whether, under the new criteria, the MPO would only score similar projects against one another. M. Genova replied that scoring like projects against one another helps the MPO allocate funds based on the funding goals included in the LRTP. If there is only a certain amount of funding available for Complete Streets projects, it makes sense to look at all the Complete Streets projects and advance the best ones for their share of funding. However, the MPO can always decide that a certain project is worth funding regardless of the score or funding goal. D. Mohler asked M. Genova to clarify that when MPO staff formulates the initial programming scenario for the TIP, the scenario is based on the funding goals in the LRTP. M. Genova replied that this is the goal, but it would depend on the kinds of projects that are advanced for evaluation and funding.

A. Fragoso asked whether project scores are fixed or can change as a project reaches 100 percent design. M. Genova replied that MPO staff only undertakes a full project evaluation when a project is first considered for funding via the TIP. MPO staff has not traditionally gone back and rescored projects as designs evolve. A. Fragoso added that, particularly for resiliency concerns, it might be useful to reevaluate as mitigation techniques or other improvements are added to projects. M. Genova agreed that a priority for MPO staff is to make sure proponents are aware of the kinds of design elements the MPO would like to see early in the process, so that those considerations do not affect project cost or design later. L. Gilmore seconded K. Miller's opinion that negative impacts should be accounted for in the scoring. L. Gilmore added that it would be helpful to think about being consistent across categories when it comes to modal considerations.

D. Amstutz agreed that it is important to keep in mind how projects might have drawbacks for certain modes but still be important to fund because of their alignment with the MPO's overall vision and goals. D. Amstutz also raised the issue of projects that are low scoring but can still be funded because of the amount of funding available in a certain category. D. Amstutz suggested that the MPO consider setting a cutoff for low scoring projects.

Steve Olanoff (Three Rivers Interlocal Council Alternate) seconded K. Miller's suggestion about considering cost effectiveness.

9. MassDOT's Congestion in the Commonwealth: Report to the Governor 2019—*Liz Williams, MassDOT*

L. Williams described the findings of MassDOT's analysis of traffic congestion on major roads in the Commonwealth. This report includes ten findings about congestion and nine recommended next steps. The report almost exclusively provides information on roadways in the National Highway System, most of which in Massachusetts are owned by MassDOT. These are the only roads in the Commonwealth from which data are regularly collected and reported to the Federal Highway Administration. While anecdotal information suggests local roads are significant sites of congestion, there is no authoritative data source to confirm that information.

Key Findings

The report's key findings confirm that congestion is taking its toll on the economy and environment and on the daily lives of Massachusetts communities. The key findings are as follows.

1. Congestion is bad because the economy is good.
Since 2010, Massachusetts has added 350,000 new residents. During the same period, employment in Greater Boston (along and within Interstate 95/Route 128 belt) grew by 19 percent. More people and jobs lead to more driving and congestion.
2. The worst congestion in the Commonwealth occurs in Greater Boston.
On an average workday, the worst congestion in the Commonwealth occurs primarily within the I-95/128 belt because this is where the jobs are. In many places along I-93 and Routes 1, 3, 9, 16, and 28, the system is at or beyond capacity at most times of the day.
3. Congestion can and does occur at various times and locations throughout the Commonwealth.
Southeastern, western, and central Massachusetts are not free of traffic congestion. Congestion is a source of frustration for drivers on Routes 9 and 7, I-91, I-290, and some western parts of the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) during peak commuting periods.
4. Many roadways are now congested outside of peak periods.
While the most severe congestion occurs during the morning and afternoon peak periods, many roads are congested outside of those time periods. By 6:00 AM, one-quarter of roadway miles inside the I-95/128 belt are already either congested or highly congested. The afternoon “rush hour” inside Route 128 begins by 3:00 PM and 62 percent of roadway miles are congested or highly congested during this period.
5. Congestion worsened between 2013 and 2018.
The most significant increases in travel time occurred on the roads in and around Greater Boston. Statewide, the most significant worsening of congestion was on the southbound segment of Route 1A that includes the Sumner Tunnel, where travel times in the morning nearly doubled.
6. Simple changes in travel time on an average day do not capture the severity of the problem.
During most hours of the day and on most roadways, travel time grew by just one or two minutes per roadway segment between 2013 and 2018. However, these relatively modest increases in travel time clearly do not capture the frustrating experience for commuters.

7. Massachusetts has reached a tipping point with respect to congestion.
When travel times lengthen and become inconsistent and unreliable, it is difficult for motorists to plan their lives. Congestion has become as much a quality of life problem as it is a transportation or economic problem.
8. Many commuting corridors have become unreliable, resulting in lengthy trips on bad days.
In certain key commuting corridors, one trip every five days can take one and a half times as long as the average; one trip every ten days can take nearly twice as long.
9. Congestion has worsened to the point that it reduces access to jobs.
As measured by the University of Minnesota, Boston ranks 5th among 50 metropolitan areas studied in access to jobs by transit and 16th in access to jobs by automobile. By 8:00 AM, the few communities that still have access to hundreds of thousands of jobs are those where housing is very expensive.
10. We should be worried about congestion on local roads, too.
Although the dataset used in this report does not include information on local roads, anecdotal and experiential data suggest that congestion is also worsening on local roads. MBTA data on trip times for its buses confirms that roadway congestion is increasingly hampering the performance and efficiency of buses.

Recommendations

The recommendations from the report are as follows.

1. Address local and regional bottlenecks where feasible.
Road design can lead to congestion. Many state and local roads would benefit from maintenance, design upgrades, new signals, better signal management, and better traffic enforcement. Some bottlenecks will require reconstruction. MassDOT plans to replace all traditional traffic signal controllers with advanced signals that will allow MassDOT to evaluate their performance over time.
2. Actively manage state and local roadway operations.
Massachusetts has implemented Traffic Management and Systems Operations (TSMO) practices for years. TSMO provides a disciplined framework for managing roadways, including coordinating work zones, incident response, special events, traffic signals, the integration of multiple modes, and traveler information. MassDOT has developed a unified response manual, considered a

national best practice, and provides a number of emergency response services for motorists. Like MassDOT, municipalities are not only the owners of roads and pavement but also the managers of them as well. Cities and towns also have almost exclusive jurisdiction of perhaps the most overlooked and undervalued element of surface transportation: the curb. Parking and curb management are critical for maintaining the flow of people and vehicles through networks and especially intersections. Active management of curbs also means that municipalities must respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by the introduction of TNCs, which can obstruct the flow of traffic due to frequent stopping.

3. Reinvent bus transit at both the MBTA and regional transit authorities. Creating a robust and reliable transit option for more Massachusetts residents is a central strategy for addressing congestion. Congestion is affecting the attractiveness and reliability of buses. Upgrading and enhancing bus services could mean adopting transit signal priority (TSP) systems, dedicating roadway miles for the exclusive use of buses, purchasing new vehicles, upgrading fare collection, or updating service delivery policies, including routes and stops.
4. Increase MBTA capacity and ridership. Increasing rapid transit and commuter rail ridership is a critically important strategy for addressing congestion. Investments already planned and paid for will significantly expand the capacity of the system to support future ridership growth: an all-new, expanded Orange Line fleet, the Green Line Extension, an all-new, expanded Red Line, and the South Coast Rail project.
5. Work with employers to give commuters more options. There is currently no comprehensive state program to work with employers to reduce commute trips. With or without a formal program, employers can help employees by offering pre-tax transit benefits, fewer employer-sponsored parking spaces, and cash incentives to employees that telework or have transit or walk/bike commutes.
6. Create infrastructure to support shared travel modes. Most trips to work and non-work destinations are made in vehicles in which the driver is the only occupant. This exacerbates congestion and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. Changing travel behavior requires providing better options for shared travel modes. Greater Boston has relatively few travel lanes dedicated to transit and shared travel modes. There has been no comprehensive

effort to look at the potential for adding new high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes since the 1990s. In addition, the HOV lanes that exist are not connected to a network of HOV lanes or parking facilities that could support transfers from personal vehicles to shared travel modes. Many MassDOT-owned park and ride lots are full. There is no organized system for assessing where additional commuter parking might be valuable. Another opportunity is the use of shoulders as potential travel lanes for buses.

7. Increase remote work and telecommuting.

Massachusetts lags behind other states in its share of workers who telecommute. Some of the sectors with the largest share of telecommuters are also among the state's largest employers, including those in the health care and social assistance sectors, and professional and technical services. As technology improves and teleworking becomes an increasingly viable option, remote work arrangements could make a meaningful difference in congestion.

8. Produce more affordable housing, especially near transit.

The number of residents and households far outstrips the supply of housing, particularly in areas with good access to public transit and jobs. Housing is being constructed unevenly across the region and in much smaller numbers than is needed. More and more residents of the region are paying as much as half of their monthly income for housing, reducing economic security, contributing to inequality, and making Massachusetts a difficult place for people to settle. Some municipalities with MBTA service are working hard to produce more housing, but other cities and towns effectively limit the construction of new housing, thereby reducing the benefits of public transit while also contributing to regional congestion and housing unaffordability. MBTA service should be used to attract and concentrate residential and employment density and to attract new riders and reduce the number of vehicle trips. More opportunities to affordably live in communities in and around employment centers, especially in places served by reliable transit service, provides regional benefits, including helping to mitigate roadway congestion.

9. Encourage growth in less congested Gateway Cities.

The major employment hubs in the Commonwealth are primarily concentrated along I-495 and the I-95/128 belt. This means that a large share of all existing and future workers in the state are and will be commuting to roughly the same places at roughly the same times or are at least taking the same roadways to get between home and work. Redistributing economic activity to parts of the state

that are already prepared to anchor regional economies, including Gateway Cities, is one strategy to reduce traffic volumes.

Congestion Pricing in Massachusetts

At least forty congestion pricing projects have been implemented in the United States. The Commission on the Future of Transportation in the Commonwealth recommended that MassDOT “consider various congestion pricing strategies that compel changes in default transportation behaviors on corridors that are or could be served by transit and/or new mobility options.” The congestion report recommends an investigation into the feasibility of congestion-pricing mechanisms, in particular managed lanes.

Discussion

D. Amstutz stated that he was glad to see housing production included in the report, noting concerns he has heard from Arlington residents about increasing housing near transit when MBTA service is already stretched to capacity. D. Amstutz stated that managing this response is important in the discussion of congestion. D. Amstutz asked whether the report includes analysis of non-commute trips or first-mile/last-mile issues. L. Williams replied that the report does include an acknowledgment that commute trips are only 20 percent of all trips, and commuting includes other trips (for instance, dropping children at school). L. Williams stated that the report focuses on commuting because that is the data most widely available, but MassDOT is pursuing other data packages to more fully assess non-commute related congestion.

A. Fragoso asked whether the report includes information about whether increased congestion is causing more dangerous driving or increasing the number of crashes. L. Williams replied that the study did not focus on those questions. She noted, however, that there is anecdotal information that a lack of enforcement, particularly related to transportation network company vehicles, is an issue on local roads.

10. Metropolitan Area Planning Council’s Perfect Fit Parking Research Phase II—Kasia Hart, MAPC

The chair postponed this item until the next meeting.

11. Members Items

E. Bourassa reminded members that the MetroWest, Inner Core, South Shore, and MAGIC subregional seats are up for election this year. Nominations are due to MAPC by October 4, 2019. Election information is available on the MPO’s website. Once nominations are in, absentee ballot information will be distributed to chief elected officials. The election will take place at MAPC’s Fall Council meeting on November 6, 2019.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) 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) | |
| At-Large City (City of Newton) | David Koses |
| At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) | Daniel Amstutz |
| At-Large Town (Town of Lexington) | Sheila Page |
| City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency) | Jim Fitzgerald |
| City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department) | Tom Kadzis Ken Miller Amy Sullivan |
| Federal Highway Administration | |
| Federal Transit Administration | |
| Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) | Tom Bent Stephanie Pollack |
| Massachusetts Department of Transportation | David Mohler John Bechard John Romano Samantha Silverberg Laura Gilmore |
| MassDOT Highway Division | |
| Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) | Marc Draisen |
| Massachusetts Port Authority | Eric Bourassa |
| MBTA Advisory Board | Thatcher Kezer III Richard Reed |
| Metropolitan Area Planning Council | |
| MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham) | Aaron Clausen |
| Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford) | Tina Cassidy AnaCristina Fragoso |
| North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly) | |
| North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) | |
| Regional Transportation Advisory Council | Glenn Trindade |
| South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree) | |
| South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) | |
| Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce) | Tom O'Rourke |

| Other Attendees | Affiliation |
|------------------------|---|
| Erik Maki | TetraTech |
| Frank Tramontozzi | City of Quincy |
| Steve Olanoff | TRIC Alternate |
| Jillian Linnell | MBTA |
| Kristiana Lachiusa | LivableStreets Alliance |
| Shimon Warden | SWG Capital |
| Bill Conroy | <u>Boston Transportation Department</u> |

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Annette Demchur, Co-Interim Executive Director

Scott Peterson, Co-Interim Executive Director

Róisín Foley

Judy Fung

Hiral Gandhi

Matt Genova

John Gliebe

Betsy Harvey

Sandy Johnston

Ali Kleymen

Michelle Scott

Kate White
