

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

September 19, 2019 Meeting

10:00 AM–11:45 PM, 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 meeting of August 15, 2019
- Approve Work Programs for Traffic Analysis and Design Group studies in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2020
- Endorse the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Meeting Agenda

1. Introduction

See attendance on pages 9 and 10.

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—*AnaCristina Fragoso, Vice-Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

A. Fragoso reported that the Advisory Council would meet on September 18, 2019, to discuss the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) criteria and the Disparate Impact/Disproportionate Burden analysis. Advisory Council members asked interesting questions and are supportive of the TIP criteria revision process.

6. Executive Director's Report—*Scott Peterson, Co-interim Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)*

There was none.

7. Approval of August 15, 2019, MPO Meeting Minutes, *Judy Fung, MPO Staff*

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 15, 2019, was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (Paul Regan). The motion carried.

8. Work Programs for Traffic Analysis and Design Group Studies in FFY 2020—*Seth Asante and Chen-Yuan Wang, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO Calendar:

1. [MPO Work Program FFY 2020 LRTP Priority Corridors](#)
2. [MPO Work Program FFY 2020 Subregional Roadways](#)
3. [MPO Work Program FFY 2020 Safety and Operations at Intersections](#)

S. Asante and C. Wang gave an overview of the Work Programs for the Traffic Analysis and Design group's FFY 2020 studies. While the LRTP Priority Corridors and Subregional Roadways studies take place annually, Safety and Operations at Intersections takes place every other year. Study locations change each FFY.

LRTP Priority Corridors

The LRTP Priority Corridors study addresses arterial segments in need of safety improvements and modernization to address congestion, multimodal transportation, and Complete Streets issues as identified in the Needs Assessment LRTP. In previous FFYs, MPO staff has conducted priority corridor studies for Route 203 in Boston, Route 1A in Lynn, Swampscott, and Salem, Route 138 in Canton and Milton, and Route 16 in Chelsea and Everett. The objectives of the FFY 2020 program are to select an arterial segment from those listed in the LRTP Needs Assessment, identify the transportation-related problems, and develop multimodal and Complete Streets solutions to the problems. This program is 3C (or cooperative, comprehensive, and continuing) funded, has a budget of \$120,000, and will take 11 months to complete. This program meets the MPO goals of safety, capacity management/mobility, system preservation, and economic vitality.

Subregional Roadways

This work program is similar to LRTP Priority Corridors; however, it focuses on the principal and minor arterials and major collectors that were not identified as priority corridors in the LRTP Needs Assessment. With input from the MPO's subregional

outreach meetings, this program aims to address safety, mobility, and access on subregional priority roadways for all transportation modes, including pedestrians, bicycles, transit services, and trucks. This work program has been conducted for the last eight years. The program has been well received by cities and towns, and MassDOT District offices. Several of the locations have been made MassDOT projects in previous years and are currently under design, such as Route 3A in Cohasset and Scituate, Route 20 in Marlborough, Summer/Rockland Streets in Hingham, and Route 1A in Wrentham. The estimated budget for FFY 2020 is \$115,000, and the program is scheduled to complete in 12 months.

Safety and Operations at Intersections

Safety and Operations Analysis at Intersections is a semi-regular (biennial) study MPO staff has conducted for the past 10 years. It builds on recommendations from the MPO's Congestion Management Process, evaluation of crash data, and input from the MPO's outreach process to address safety and operational problems at intersections in the MPO region. The FFY 2020 program is scheduled to complete in 12 months, with an estimated budget of \$80,000.

Discussion

E. Bourassa asked if there are priority corridors being identified for the next year to study. S. Asante replied that the priority corridors are selected using evaluation criteria. C. Wang added that the selection will be based on the Needs Assessment of the most recent LRTP, *Destination 2040*.

Jim Fitzgerald (City of Boston) (Boston Planning and Development Agency) asked about details regarding the study for Route 203. S. Asante replied that the study for Route 203 was completed in 2012.

A. Fragoso asked if the results of the FFY 2020 studies will be summarized and presented at the end of the work program. S. Asante replied that the results will be summarized and posted on the MPO website, and can be sent to her directly by request.

Vote

A motion to approve the work programs for the Traffic Analysis and Design group studies was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (John Romano) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent). The motion carried.

9. Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan— *Betsy Harvey, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO Calendar:

1. [MPO Final Draft Coordinated Plan](#)

B. Harvey invited the MPO to endorse the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (also called “Coordinated Plan”). The Coordinated Plan was presented to the MPO on August 15, 2019. The Coordinated Plan calls for full coordination among human services transportation and public transportation providers to better meet the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities. The Coordinated Plan documents those needs and identifies priorities and strategies to address them. The Coordinated Plan also guides transportation providers in the Boston region who are developing proposals to request funding from the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities Program. The Coordinated Plan was released for a 30-day public comment period on August 16, 2019. Overall, commenters were supportive of the content of the Coordinated Plan. Some of them provided suggestions on minor editorial changes. There were also comments that mentioned other transportation needs that should be included in the plan. Those suggestions included improving accessibility of surface level transportation, such as bus stops and intersections for wheelchair users, making the above-ground Green Line stations completely accessible, expanding evening hours of shuttle services that serve commuter rail stations, and ensuring commuter rail stops are fully wheelchair accessible. There were also comments focused on improving wheelchair accessibility of shuttle services for Transportation Network Companies (or TNCs). These comments were received after outreach efforts and a survey from MPO staff to get input from a broader audience. The MPO staff’s outreach efforts and the comments received are all documented in the Coordinated Plan.

Discussion

E. Bourassa asked a clarifying question on whether the Coordinated Plan categorizes all transportation needs. E. Bourassa then followed up with a question about how the plan connects to the Community Connections program. B. Harvey replied that the plan does not directly connect to the Community Connections program. The Coordinated Plan is required to ensure that services funded with §5310 coordinate with each other and with public transit. However, the FTA does encourage coordination between the Coordinated Plan and the LRTP, as the process of documenting transportation needs and identifying strategies in the Coordinated Plan is similar to the process in the LRTP. Outreach efforts from the Coordinated Plan, including the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities, will be documented in the LRTP.

E. Bourassa followed up his question by asking what grant the program was under. B. Harvey replied that the program is from the CTGP grant.

Vote

A motion to endorse the Coordinated Plan was made by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent) and seconded by MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan). The motion carried.

10. MAPC Perfect Fit Parking—Kasia Hart, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

K. Hart presented the results of the Perfect Fit Parking project initiated by MAPC. The goal of the study was to offer a more nuanced and data-informed approach for determining how much parking to build at multi-family developments. The project was intended to help guide municipal decision making around parking, and inform zoning and policy changes to better align parking supply and demand.

MAPC conducted overnight counting of parking spaces and measured parked cars during peak demand when residents were mostly at home. The team gathered data from 200 sites in the Inner Core communities including Arlington, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, and Melrose. The results indicate that there is an average supply of one parking space per unit and an average demand of 0.73 parking space per unit. About three out of 10 spaces are unused.

The data team conducted modeling work to understand how these different variables influence parking demand, including building and parking features, built environment characteristics and demographic indicators. While the number of jobs accessible by transit and the share of affordable units were significant, the main factors that drive parking demand was parking supply.

K. Hart provided a few recommendations for reducing parking oversupply and emphasized the need to align parking supply and demand. While there is not a one size fits all approach to reduce parking supply, it is important to try to reduce or eliminate parking requirements near transit-oriented sites, as having an oversupply of parking spaces in those sites is counterproductive. Secondly, cities and towns should work with developers to explore ways to unbundle parking costs from rent so that car-free residents are not required to pay for an amenity that they do not need. It is important to note that overbuilt parking might contribute to more traffic congestion, pollution, and a higher cost of living. By aligning parking supply and demand, there will be more opportunities to provide land for open space and encourage travel by a sustainable mode. K. Hart then opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion

P. Regan is curious whether the selected cities and towns for the study have an overnight parking ban. He believes that those cities and towns with an overnight parking ban might have a different sentiment towards this analysis. He is also curious about whether the studies collected feedback from cities and towns that have permit parking.

K. Hart replied that Arlington and Melrose have an overnight parking ban in place. Once the Massachusetts vehicle census mapping tool is updated, it will be a good resource to continue the research in that direction; however, the resource available is not able to consider resident permit parking into the analysis. Nonetheless, the study does show that there is an oversupply of parking spaces across communities in the Inner Core.

E. Bourassa echoed K. Hart's point that these results indicate that there is an oversupply of parking spaces in communities in general—even communities with overnight parking bans in place.

Daniel Amstutz (At-Large Town) (Town of Arlington) asked if the team reviewed the oversupply parking data to determine how much housing or open space the parking space could translate to. This would also be valuable to compare among different communities as different cities and towns have different land values. D. Amstutz is also curious if the study will look at commercial development.

K. Hart replied that the study did take a look at the land value of the excess parking. The average cost of an excess parking space is around \$16,000. This number could easily turn into how many square feet of affordable housing that could be constructed, for instance. To respond to D. Amstutz's second question, K. Hart thinks that there are opportunities to explore parking supply and demand at commercial development sites, and cities and towns have expressed interest in such analysis. K. Hart noted it is harder to determine the peak demand of parking spaces for commercial development sites since work hours for commercial sites are different.

E. Bourassa added that MAPC is very interested in looking into that and the team had conversations with MassDOT and a few traffic engineers to understand the standard approach of developing parking and how it affects trip generations. It is a much more challenging issue, but it is something that the team is interested in expanding.

Jay Monty (At-Large City) (City of Everett) was interested in whether the study takes into account other types of parking that might impact the residential parking demand.

K. Hart replied that the study did look at other types of parking, such as management parking, but did not take a deeper look at how those parking types would impact

residential parking demand. It is an area that could be expanded in the later stages of the study.

Steve Olanoff (Three Rivers Interlocal Council) (Town of Norwood) had a few questions on how to apply the study results into local zoning regulations. S. Olanoff is curious to know what the approaches are to making changes in regards to increasing more affordable units in transit-oriented development sites, and convincing developers to separate parking fees from rent.

K. Hart replied that Watertown zoning regulations required developers to unbundle the parking fees from rent and the MAPC team used similar language in the parking study report. Inclusionary zoning bylaws could also be one way to ensure affordable housing units. However, strategies are going to depend on the local zoning laws in each community.

J. Monty added that the city may allow the Zoning Board of Appeals some leeway, such as eliminating on-street parking permit but allowing developers to build on-site parking spaces. This market-driven approach to increase parking could also potentially decrease the number of overbuilt parking spaces overall.

Aaron Clausen (North Shore Task Force) (City of Beverly) asked if the study covers strictly residential developments or both residential and mixed-use developments. He also added that it would be interesting to look at regional urban centers.

K. Hart replied that vast majority of the sites are strictly residential. There are a small number of sites that are mixed-use, and the team made sure to account for those data in the process. She added that the team also gathered data in Salem and Beverly. The data is in the cleaning process, but she would be happy to share it when it is ready.

T. Bent mentioned that most of the time, residents are not excited for proposals for fewer on-site parking spots. He is interested to know if the team has talked to developers on effective ways of reducing on-site parking.

K. Hart replied that they have presented the studies to developers and the developers agreed that they do not want to overbuild parking spaces. However, the team has not had a specific conversation with developers about how those extra spaces could be constructed for different uses.

E Bourassa added that municipalities have leverage on how to use the extra value from overbuilt parking.

T. Bent asked if on-site bike parking was brought up in the conversation about using extra parking spaces.

K. Hart replied that the team did document on-site bike parking as it could be an alternate use of space. She added that the team thinks that overhanging bike racks could also be a very efficient use of space.

David Koses (At-Large City) (City of Newton) expressed concern with regard to some cities and towns planning to get rid of the winter overnight parking ban. He is curious how this will play out if developers decide on fewer parking spaces offered on-site. He also added that there will be a lot of players in this discussion, as it will also involve municipal zoning regulations and parking policies.

P. Regan appreciated the work of the team and asked if the study looked at the cost factor of a parking space.

K. Hart replied that the team did look at the cost of a parking space, but since there are very few sites that charge parking separately from rent, it was difficult for the team to determine the actual price of the parking space.

D. Amstutz suggested that it might be important to take a deeper look at the overnight parking ban because it has been speculated from residents and transportation advisory groups that due to the overnight parking ban, fewer people are owning cars, which results in empty parking spaces. It would be interesting to study these speculations as well.

K. Hart agreed that it is important to look at the overnight parking ban. The current study has already looked into cities and towns that have overnight parking ban policies in place, such as Arlington, Melrose, and Newton.

11. Members Items

E. Bourassa reported that the MPO election will be held at the MAPC Fall Council meeting on the evening of November 6, 2019 at the Colonnade Hotel in Boston. The keynote speaker is Gabe Klein, the former Commissioner of Transportation in Washington, D.C. and Chicago, and the co-founder of the National Association of City Transportation Officials. Nominations are due on the first Friday of October.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan). 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)	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)	Thomas Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Amy Sullivan
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	Bryan Pounds
MassDOT Highway Division	John Bechard
	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Jillian Linnell
Massachusetts Port Authority	
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Thatcher Kezer III
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)	Richard Reed
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Aaron Clausen
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	AnaCristina Fragoso
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)	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees Affiliation

Frank Tramontozzi	Quincy Mayor's Office
Askani Cruz	Senate President Silka's Office
Joe Collins	Town of Norwood
Sara Scully	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Lori Steans	MassDOT District 6
Abby Swaine	None
Kasia Hart	MAPC

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Scott Peterson, Co-interim Executive Director
Annette Demchur, Co-interim Executive Director
Mark Abbott
Seth Asante
Róisín Foley
Judy Fung
Hiral Gandhi
Matt Genova
Betsy Harvey
Sandy Johnston
Alexandra (Ali) Kleyman
Anne McGahan
Bradley Putnam
Michelle Scott
Chen-Yuan Wang
