

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



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Summary of the April 11, 2012 Meeting

This meeting was held in Conference Room 4 of the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, in Boston, MA.

1. Introductions – *Steve Olanoff, Chair*

Steve Olanoff, Chair (Westwood) called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page N)

2. Chair's Report – *Steve Olanoff, Chair*

S. Olanoff briefed the Council on the two MPO meetings and the MPO's UPWP Committee meeting which were held since the last Advisory Council meeting. The last UPWP Committee selected projects which were sent to the MPO for approval to advance for public comment. The MPO will vote to forward the TIP and the UPWP for public review at its April 19 meeting. The Advisory Council will prepare a comment letter to express our concerns on the TIP and the UPWP.

Other MPO activities conducted at the last meetings:

- Approved a work program for the "Access to Transit for Pedestrians and Bicyclists" technical study
- Approved the "Boston Region MPO 2010 Freight Study—A Profile of Truck Impacts", the technical study to be presented later in this meeting
- Selected arterial roadway segments to be analyzed in the "Priority Corridors for Long Range Transportation Plan Needs Assessment" planning study
- Approved a work program for the "Assembly Square Station Service and Fare Equity Analysis", an MBTA funded planning study
- Started hearing comments about projects that will be on the upcoming TIP

Also, the MBTA Board of Directors voted approval of next fiscal year's budget incorporating "Scenario 3" which had been developed after public discussions of the fare increase and service cutbacks were conducted over the last several months.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes of March 14, 2012 – *Steve Olanoff, Chair*

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as amended in discussion. The minutes of the March 14, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved.

4. Staff Recommendations for the Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2013-16 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Sean Pfalzer, TIP Manager, MPO Staff

S. Pfalzer discussed the development of the Staff Recommendation for the 2013-16 TIP. The recommendation serves as the first step in the discussion of which projects will be funded over the next four years. The presentation included an overview of the sources for highway funding, how the funds are distributed in Massachusetts, and how regional target funding is derived. The three main program areas for funding include statewide programs for bridges, infrastructure items, and the regional targets. The Federal Highway Administration commitment was \$560 million last year.

Projects for consideration for funding originate with community outreach. This year over 135 projects totaling more than \$775 million comprised the Universe of Projects. The Universe of Projects lists all the projects under consideration. The projects that were evaluated show their evaluation score. The evaluations are very important in informing the staff recommendation. This year, 40 projects were evaluated totaling an estimated \$235 million in costs.

The projects that evaluated the highest and could be made ready for advertising within the timeframe of the upcoming TIP are candidates for the First Tier List of Projects. The Staff Recommendation draws from the First Tier List. More funds were available this year for programming and as a result, the staff recommendation includes 15 projects totaling \$120 million. Geographic equity is also considered in formulating the staff recommendation. Two projects that were not on the First Tier List were recommended: the reconstruction of Route 85 in Marlborough project and Route 53 project in Hanover.

Due to Crosby's Corner and Route 128 funding, spending on major highways is up slightly this year. Arterial intersection funding has increased slightly as have bicycle-pedestrian project recommended allocations. There was no flex-funding of highway funds to transit projects in the staff recommendation. FFY 2016 funding for the MPO has increased, which allows for a more extensive project funding list.

S. Pfalzer responded to questions posed by those present:

- Although the Staff Recommendation did not include the Green Line Extension and the Assabet River Rail Trail projects, this does not mean that these projects will not be discussed by the MPO when formulating the new TIP.
- Any member of the MPO can add to the list of recommendations for discussion. In order to add to any year on the TIP, the proposer must take something off for that year as the TIP is financially constrained.
- Some projects' evaluations may be revised if the project is revised and scores better as a result.
- The Staff Recommendation is fiscally constrained and can only include projects up to the level of funding expected to be available.
- Earmarks may have an impact on whether a project is programmed, but they are not considered as part of the project evaluation process.

Member Comments

Members expressed a strong commitment to the Green Line Extension project and encouraged Chairman Olanoff to indicate this at the upcoming MPO meeting.

5. Staff Recommendation for the Draft Federal Fiscal Year 2013 Unified Planning Work Program – David Fargen, MPO Staff

D. Fargen discussed the proposed FFY 2013 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The Metropolitan Planning Organization's UPWP Committee considered 23 planning studies in the UPWP Universe of Projects. In the past, between \$350,000 and \$400,000 has been available for new programming. The Committee selected seven of the 23 projects in the Universe. Projects for the Universe are generated from public comments, existing planning documents, staff recommendations, and federal guidance. D. Fargen reviewed the specific projects proposed by the MPO's UPWP Committee for the draft FFY 2013 UPWP and the schedule of activities that will lead to the endorsement of the document.

Member Questions

Additional comments by MPO staff and Advisory Council members include:

- Subregions will continue to be involved in the determination of which locations will be addressed in the Priority Arterial Roadways project. The list of intersections and locations to be considered is being identified.
- The proposed HOV study builds on the HOV Study Phase I, not on the special study conducted on Southeast Expressway.
- The Universe of Projects identifies all proposed planning projects that were considered in developing the staff recommendation.

6. MPO Freight Study – a Profile of Truck Impacts – Mike Callahan, MPO Staff

M. Callahan introduced this study, which is the first of two truck studies. The purpose of this study was to examine how, where and the extent of impact trucks have on the regional transportation system and to provide information that might improve the MPO's capability to conduct freight planning and to analyze projects and programs associated with freight benefits.

A critical component of the study was vehicle classification. There are many different classification schemes available but this study considered three distinct groups of trucks. One group is a simple truck having two axles and six wheels; these are called single-unit trucks. The second is a tractor-trailer, and the third is a multi-trailer truck. There are only about 180 Massachusetts locations with classification counts available from MassDOT. Interstate highways have generally good coverage but there are not many counts.

The MPO's truck model was another source of data, as was the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) which is responsible for collecting crash reports.

The study reviewed characteristics of truck vehicular traffic in the region. Findings pertaining to the region include:

- According to the truck model, there are 815,000 truck trips per day
- Two-thirds of the trips are internal to the region

- 23% of the truck traffic is “through” traffic
- Of the 70 million vehicle miles travelled by all vehicles in the region, 8.5% are by trucks—or 6 million vehicle miles per day

The study profiled trucks by time of day compared to all other vehicles. A graph identifying vehicle volumes shows that truck traffic has a separate and distinct difference in peak hour volume. The afternoon peak of 3 P.M. for trucks is a few hours sooner than general traffic. This shows that trucks are more prominent in the vehicle mix in the morning than in the afternoon—which may reflect desired delivery scheduling.

Locations experiencing heavy truck volumes suggest that the major freeway interchanges in the region have the highest truck volumes. Included in these high truck traffic zones are segments along I-495 in the northwest area of the region as well as segments generally dispersed along I-90, I-95, and I-93. Along I-495, between I-90 and Route 3, there are up to 18,000 trucks per day on a typical weekday. Trucks make up to 15% of the traffic volume along this stretch, making it one of the most heavily traveled highway segments by trucks. Collecting count location information would benefit better ramping and intersection design by MassDOT.

The study also looked into truck crashes. The RMV data identifies about 200 thousand crashes between 2006 and 2008 of which 10,800 involve trucks (6.1% of total). Although the truck model used in the study shows that truck traffic comprised more than 8% of the total volume of traffic, trucks are involved in 7.9% of fatal crashes and 4% of crashes involving an injury. Traffic crash data indicates that alcohol is less of a factor in crashes involving trucks.

As is the case with the truck volumes, the high accident locations for trucks were most often noted at interchanges – where big freeways meet. Trucks were also frequently involved in crashes at rotaries, including those along Route 16 in Medford and Everett. A graphic showed that many of the truck crash hot spots are inside Route 128 and especially along I-93 from Woburn to Braintree.

Member Questions

Additional comments by MPO staff and Advisory Council members include:

- Many truck accidents are caused by cars and a failure of passenger vehicle operators to understand the nature of truck vehicle movement. This might require further analysis and could be of benefit in developing educational programs.
- Further study of common hazardous material crash locations would be good candidates for further accident analytical studies.
- Recommended data needs include more information on freight commodity flow including cargo analysis and vehicle weight data.
- Highway design including constant radius curves on ramps is critical for safe vehicle operations. High crash location analysis would help to identify these types of crashes.

Regional Transportation Advisory Council
April 11, 2012 Meeting

- Off-peak deliveries have many proponents and many operational advantages; however, in the past the regulation of deliveries has been resisted by some freight receivers. One advantage to off-peak delivery is significant lowering in parking fines.

Member Announcements – there were none

Committee Reports – there were none

Adjourn – 4:50 PM

Regional Transportation Advisory Council
April 11, 2012 Meeting

Cities and Towns:

Acton, Mike Gowing
Arlington, Laura Wiener
Boston, Tom Kadzis
Lexington, Richard Canale
Marlborough, Walter Bonin
Millis, Dom D'Eramo
Quincy, Kristina Johnson
Wellesley, Frank DeMasi
Westwood, Steve Olanoff, Chair

Agencies:

MassDOT - Planning, Calli Cenizal
MassDOT Aeronautics Division, Steven Rawding
MBTA Advisory Board, Brian Kane
MAPC - Inner Core, Kristina Johnson
MAPC - MAGIC, Franny Osman
MAPC - SWAP, Chan Rogers
Joint Legislative Transportation Committee, Steven Smalley
(Sen McGee)
MassRides, Catherine Paquette

Citizen Groups:

AACT, Mary Ann Murray
American Council of Engineering Companies, Tom Daily
Association for Public Transportation, Barry Steinberg
Boston Society of Architects, Schuyler Larrabee
Boston Society of Civil Engineers, Balek Al-Khatib
Eastern Massachusetts Freight Rail Coalition, Jenna Bernabe
Massachusetts Bus Association, Chris Anzuoni
Massachusetts Motor Transportation Assoc., Anne Lynch &
Jillian Zywer
MassBike, Chris Porter
MoveMassachusetts, Jon Seward
National Corridors Initiative, John Businger
Riverside Neighborhood Association, Marilyn Wellons
Route 128 Business Council, Monica Tibbits, Vice-chair
WalkBoston, John McQueech

Guests and Visitors:

Ed Lowney

MPO Staff:

Mike Callahan
David Fargen
Bill Kuttner

Karl Quackenbush, Director, CTPS
Sean Pfalzer
Pam Wolfe, Manager, Certification Activities