

Memorandum for the Record
Transportation Planning and Programming Committee of the
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

June 28, 2007 Meeting

10:15 AM –1:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4, 10 Park Plaza,
Boston

David Mohler, Chair, representing Bernard Cohen, Executive Office of Transportation
(EOT)

Decisions

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee members voted to take the following actions:

- Endorse five projects in the Regional Transportation Plan (Plan) – the Lowell Junction Interchange, Fall River/New Bedford Commuter Rail, Fitchburg Commuter Rail, I-90/495 Interchange, and I-495/Route 9 Interchange projects – which are located in sister MPOs and funded by those MPOs
- Revise the Plan to address comments received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Approve the \$6.126 million FFY 2008 Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) budget, which includes \$300,000 reserved for a household survey, as recommended by the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee’s Administration & Finance Subcommittee
- Approve the Public Participation Program with recommended changes for submittal to the federal transportation agencies
- Table the presentation on the Route 28 Corridor Transportation Plan until a future meeting

Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comments

Wig Zamore, Mystic View Task Force/Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership, asked whether the FFYs 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is in conformity with the current State Implementation Plan (SIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (Plan). Staff explained that the Plan complies with the current SIP, however the Plan may be amended when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency rules on the proposed changes to the SIP. It was noted that the status of projects is included in the TIP. A new model run will be done to determine air quality conformity for the TIP.

2. Chair’s Report – David Mohler, EOT

EOT is filing a status report on the SIP commitments with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. A public hearing will be scheduled soon.

Robert Rooney has been appointed as the new Deputy Secretary of Public Works. He will be reviewing MassHighway’s project delivery system to identify if there are

systemic problems, and he will be coordinating the work of EOT agencies. He will also be the point person for the Charles River Crossing project issues.

3. Subcommittee Chairs' Reports – Barbara Lucas, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

A Suburban Mobility/Transportation Demand Management Subcommittee meeting is now scheduled for July 12 at 1:00 PM.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Subcommittee meetings are scheduled for 1:00 on July 5, 10:00 AM on July 12, and 9:15 on July 19.

4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council – Steve Olanoff, Advisory Council

The Advisory Council will meet on July 11 at 3 PM. Agenda items will include the TIP and a briefing on the New Bedford harbor and ports and current activity by Kristen Decas, Executive Director of the New Bedford Harbor Commission.

5. Action Items

Approval of the Administrative Adjustment for the Regional Transportation Plan – Anne McGahan, MPO Staff

Staff distributed comments from FHWA on the MPO's Plan and a memorandum on staff's proposed responses to the comments. (See attached.) Staff also distributed the pages of the Plan that include proposed changes made as a result of FHWA's recommendations.

To address several of the FHWA comments, staff proposed revising the Plan to include the following:

- a summary of how the Plan addresses SAFETEA-LU requirements for environmental mitigation, new consultations, consistency between the Plan and planned growth and development plans, and visualization
- additional information on the goals of the state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan
- project cost listings in tables 10-1, 12-3, and 13-1
- an explanation that projects listed in Appendix B are not illustrative projects

In addition, staff raised two remaining issues commented on by FHWA. FHWA had questioned whether agreements had been reached with developers who will be funding the Canton – I-95 Northbound/Dedham Street Ramp and Bridge and Weymouth, Hingham, and Rockland – South Weymouth Naval Air Station Access Improvements projects. Staff proposed addressing this comment in correspondence to FHWA and in revised footnotes for these projects (in table 13-3) noting funding contributions from non-MPO sources.

Regarding the earmarks for the South Weymouth Naval Air Station Access Improvements project, D. Mohler explained that a portion of the \$14 million earmark, formerly targeted to the East-West Parkway project, will be used on the Weymouth – Route 18 Capacity Improvements project. The remaining \$8 million earmark was

reduced to \$6.9 million by federal action and will be used for multi-modal improvements in the former base area. Negotiations are on-going regarding the funding that will come from non-MPO revenues (state, developer, local). Members agreed to revise the project's footnote in the Plan.

The correspondence to FHWA would state that both projects are going through the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) process and that the MPO expects that there will be financial agreements for funding both projects.

FHWA also advised the MPO to state whether it endorses the Lowell Junction Interchange project, which is located in the Merrimack Valley MPO. Members discussed the intent of their February 8 action in which they voted to include the project in the Plan and whether that vote was a motion to endorse the project. D. Mohler noted that by endorsing the project, the MPO would not be committing money to the project, rather the MPO's endorsement would indicate that the MPO does not object to the project and supports the next phase of the project's implementation. The project cost is not included in the Boston Region MPO Plan, as it will be funded through the Merrimack Valley MPO.

A letter from Dennis DiZoglio, Executive Director of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, was distributed. (See attached.) It was noted that the project will include a lane widening between two highway interchanges.

D. Mohler explained that "endorse" means "support" for the project's next phase of implementation. It does not imply providing funding. B. Lucas asked if there would be an opportunity to revisit an endorsement as the projects progress. D. Mohler stated that it could be revisited during the development of subsequent Plans as long as the project had not been constructed.

A motion to endorse five projects located in sister MPOs (near the border with the Boston Region MPO) and funded by those MPOs – the Lowell Junction Interchange, Fall River/New Bedford Commuter Rail, Fitchburg Commuter Rail, I-90/495 Interchange, and I-495/Route 9 Interchange projects – was made by Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, and seconded by Joe Cosgrove, MBTA. The motion passed with Thomas Bent, City of Somerville, abstaining.

The title for table 13-5 will be changed to reflect this action.

It was noted that the MPO endorsed the Fitchburg Commuter Rail project as defined in the presentation given to members at the January 4 Committee meeting. The project described in that meeting would not include station consolidation.

A motion to recommend that staff make the aforementioned changes to the Plan and resubmit the revised Plan to the federal agencies was made by Thomas Kadzis, City of Boston, and seconded by Mary Pratt, Town of Hopkinton. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action on the Recommendation of the Administration & Finance Subcommittee –
*Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board, and Arnie Soolman, MPO Staff***

The proposed FFY 2008 operating budget for Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), recommended by the Administration & Finance Subcommittee, was distributed.

The Subcommittee recommended segregating \$300,000 from the \$6.125 million budget to reserve for a Household Travel Survey. The MPO last conducted a Household Travel Survey in 1991, and the Subcommittee has recognized that the MPO is overdue to conduct a new survey. The Boston Region MPO has one of the oldest surveys of all the large MPOs in the nation.

The survey will ultimately cost over \$2 million. Approximately \$1.4 million of the funds will have to be contributed by state transportation agencies, the legislature, or other agencies and organizations that would benefit from the survey.

CTPS has also reserved funds to fill two new staff positions if the survey moves forward. The new hires would work with the survey consultant to help design the survey, as well as help process and analyze the data that results from the survey. (The \$300,000 does not include the cost of hiring these two staff.) If the \$300,000 is not used for the survey, the MPO would vote on other projects for expending the funds.

A motion to approve the \$6.126 million FFY 2008 CTPS budget as approved by the Administration & Finance Committee, which includes \$300,000 reserved for a household survey, was made by P. Regan, and seconded by Ginger Esty, Town of Framingham. The motion passed unanimously. It was noted that this motion did not include approval for the hiring of two new positions at CTPS – the MPO would not approve the hiring of the two new positions until the survey goes forward – and the \$300,000 reserve will not be spent until the Committee has approved undertaking the household survey in the UPWP.

Recommendation on the Revised MPO Public Participation Program – *Pam Wolfe, MPO Staff*

Staff distributed a summary of the focus group sessions held in June at which participants suggested ways the MPO could improve its Public Participation Program, a memorandum containing summaries of public comments received on the Program, comments from FHWA, and a memorandum containing proposed responses to FHWA's comments. (See attached.) A redline version of the Public Participation Program showing staff's recommended edits was also distributed.

P. Wolfe summarized the themes of the comments received. FHWA's comments focused on considering the issues of residents of environmental justice areas and outreach to those residents, and addressing how the MPO consults with other agencies and officials during the Plan development.

Members of the public expressed support for many elements of the MPO's outreach process. Many voiced that they like receiving notices about MPO activities via MPOinfo and TransReport, and conveying their comments to the MPO via workshops, public meetings, and special inserts in *TRANSREPORT*. They advised the MPO to send e-mails in a format that can be easily relayed to membership groups for posting in their newsletters and forwarding on to others. They suggested that the MPO use its Web site more effectively. (Improving the MPO Web site is on staff's agenda this year.) They also suggested that the MPO improve the clarity of its documents and consider regularly preparing executive summaries and text on how to use each. Some remarked that the planning process is confusing and cumbersome, and that it would be useful if staff provided a concise –but clear sketch of the 3C Process during meetings.

B. Lucas stated that the MPO members should have a fuller discussion of the Public Participation Program and follow-up on focus group recommendations.

T. Kadzis suggested adding text to the Regional Equity Program section of Appendix A in the Public Participation Plan to describe the analysis that the MPO has conducted, under federal guidance, regarding residents' access to education, health care, and jobs. This work is the underpinning of the MPO's outreach to environmental justice communities, he added. D. Mohler stated that a vote would be necessary to approve the recommended changes and that EOT would vote against the proposed addition. T. Kadzis subsequently withdrew his suggestion.

B. Lucas stated that the MPO should be more engaged in Regional Equity work. She stated that members should have input into the scheduling of Regional Equity meetings. P. Wolfe stated that, since January, MPO staff has been increasing the Regional Equity work; prior to January staff was focused on conducting environmental justice outreach and analysis for the Plan. She added that the schedule for upcoming Regional Equity meetings will be shared with the MPO members.

D. Koses suggested that staff remove the references in Appendix B of the Public Participation Program to the racial make-up of members of the MPO's advisory boards and committees. Staff noted that the MPO is required, under Title VI, to assess the minority make-up of its decision-making bodies, but that this information on individual members could be excluded from the Public Participation Plan. It should be noted, however, when members are representing residents of environmental justice areas. Members concurred.

S. Olanoff suggested that on page 2, the Advisory Council should be described as a body created and supported by the MPO as a conduit for public input.

M. Pratt suggested that staff add language that explains that the MPO actively encourages members of the public to attend its meetings when projects are discussed.

A motion to approve the Public Participation Program with recommended changes for submittal to the federal transportation agencies was made by Ginger Esty, Town of Framingham, and seconded by Joe Cosgrove, MBTA.

A motion to recess for the MPO meeting was made by J. Cosgrove, and seconded by M. Pratt. The motion passed unanimously. The Committee meeting resumed at 12:20 PM, following the MPO meeting.

6. Toward a Route 28 Corridor Transportation Plan: An Emerging Vision – Karl Quackenbush, MPO Staff

The Route 28 Corridor Transportation Plan was distributed.

A motion to table the presentation on the Route 28 Corridor Transportation Plan was made by G. Esty, and seconded by M. Pratt. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Public Involvement Schedule – Pam Wolfe, MPO Staff

Staff distributed a memorandum with proposed locations for the MPO's public workshops to be held in mid-July during the public comment period for the draft FFYs 2008-2011 TIP and proposed FFY 2007 TIP amendment and asked members for direction to begin scheduling the meetings. (See attached.)

Staff will be mailing compact discs containing the TIP documents and flyers (announcing the public workshops and inviting comment) to chief elected officials, TIP contacts, municipal planners and heads of departments of public works, members of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council, Regional Equity contacts, public libraries, and legislators. Members of the Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA will be made aware of the documents' availability and invited to comment.

Staff will be attending MAPC subregion meetings during the public comment period to discuss the TIP and gather input.

M. Pratt suggested that a workshop be held in the Medway/Franklin area.

B. Lucas stated that the MPO must have a conversation about the MPO's public process, and possibly revise the process so that the MPO can better responded to public comments during the TIP development process. She suggested that members should receive more notice about meeting dates. P. Wolfe noted that the scheduling of the public workshops and open houses, and the amount of advanced notice members can receive, depends on the timeframe in which the TIP is approved for public review by the MPO. She also reminded members that staff distributes summaries of comments (and actual comments) to members in a timely manner. She also noted that staff understands the members' wishes to allow for time to respond to public comments before approving the draft certification documents and that this year's schedule for development, review, and approval of the draft TIP provided more time for this than in previous years.

Staff was advised to refer to all the public meetings as “workshops.” Staff noted that the open houses often include discussion of MPO studies as well as the TIP documents and process. The open house meetings will, therefore, be referred to as an “open house and workshop.”

In light of the legislation proposed by state Representative Karen Spilka to form a new Regional Transit Authority (RTA) in the MetroWest area, G. Esty recommended that staff compile a list of all projects that the MPO has conducted in that area so that MPO representatives can show members of the public how the MPO has served the area.

8. Members' Items

M. Pratt provided copies of the June 20 issue of the AMPO email newsletter and referred members to the Policy Update on page 2 regarding the U.S. House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee's approval of the FFY 2008 appropriations package. The appropriations package would provide \$40.2 billion for FFY 2008 highway projects nationwide, which is \$600 million more than the Bush Administration proposed. The package includes \$1.7 billion for New Starts projects.

9. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Mark Guenard, EOT, and seconded by G. Esty. The motion passed unanimously.

Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Meeting Attendance
Thursday, June 28, 2007, 10:00 AM

Member Agencies

EOT

City of Boston

City of Newton

City of Somerville

MassHighway

MAPC

MBTA

MBTA Advisory Board

Advisory Council

Town of Framingham

Town of Hopkinton

Representatives and Alternates

David Mohler, Chair

Mark Guinard

Thomas Kadzis

David Koses

Thomas Bent

Kate Fichter

Barbara Lucas

Jim Gallagher

Joe Cosgrove

Paul Regan

Steve Olanoff

Ginger Esty

Mary Pratt

MPO Staff/CTPS

John Hersey

Maureen Kelly

Robin Mannion

Anne McGahan

Karl Quackenbush

Ben Rasmussen

Arnie Soolman

Mary Ellen Sullivan

Pam Wolfe

Other Attendees

Chris Howell

Wig Zamore

Neponset Valley Chamber of
Commerce

Mystic View Task

Force/Somerville Transportation

Equity Partnership



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Massachusetts Division

55 Broadway, 10th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02142

May 31, 2007

Mr. Arnie Soolman
Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff
Certification Activities Group
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116-3968

In Reply Refer To:
HDA-MA

Attn: Anne McGahan

**Subject: Transportation Plan of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning
Organization**

Dear Mr. Soolman:

Thank you for submitting the Journey to 2030 Transportation Plan to FHWA for review and comment. Significant effort has been undertaken in developing the Plan, and FHWA would like to commend CTPS for developing a truly comprehensive document. We have completed our review and offer the following comments:

Page 4-7 to 4-13

The Plan discusses the *Eight Planning Factors in SAFETEA-LU*, but does not discuss the new SAFETEA-LU requirements that the Plan must address. These new requirements include Environmental Mitigation, New Consultations, Consistency between Regional Transportation Plans and Planned Growth and Development Plans and Visualization Techniques. A summary of how the Plan addresses these new requirements should be included in this section.

Strategic Highway Safety Plan, Page 7-3

23 CFR 450.306(h) discusses that the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process should be consistent with the SHSP, as discussed in 23 USC 148, and the Regional Transit Security Strategy, which is required by the Department of Homeland Security. The Plan lists six emphasis areas contained in the SHSP, however a summary of the priorities, goals, countermeasures, or projects contained in the SHSP should be included in the document.

Tables 10-1, 12-3, 13-1

The cost for all projects listed should be included in the above tables.

Table 13-3, Page 13-8 to 13-9

Footnote number 2 and 3. The total cost for both projects should be included in the table, and source of revenue expected to be available to implement the projects should be clearly identified.

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ECONOMY**



Has the State secured written agreements with the participating developers who will provide the funding? The projects should only be included in the Plan if full funding is reasonably expected to be available for project implementation.

Table 13-5, Page 13-88 – Projects Included in Other MPO Areas

The table shows that the Lowell Junction Interchange project is located in the Merrimack Valley MPO (MVMPO), and funding for the project is included in the MVMPO transportation plan. The project limits for the interchange is actually located within the boundaries of three MPOs, Boston, Merrimack Valley and Northern Middlesex. The Boston MPO needs to clearly state its position, and whether it endorses the project or not.

Appendix B: Universe of Projects

It should be clearly stated that these projects are not recommended in transportation plan, and that they would be included if reasonable resources beyond those identified in the financial plan were available and identified. These projects should therefore be listed as illustrative in the Plan.

Should you have any questions or comments, please contact Michael Chong at (617) 494-3275 or michael.a.chong@fhwa.dot.gov.

Sincerely,
Richard Marquis
Acting Division Administrator

/s/ Michael Chong 5/31/07

By: Michael Chong
Planning and Environment Program Manager

cc: Mark Guenard, Manager MPO Activities

MEMORANDUM

**TO: Transportation Planning and Programming
Committee**

June 14, 2007

**FROM: Anne McGahan, Project Manager
JOURNEY TO 2030**

RE: Proposed Responses to FHWA Comments on JOURNEY TO 2030

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) submitted comments to the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on JOURNEY TO 2030, the MPO's Regional Transportation Plan (Plan) in correspondence dated May 31, 2007. The letter noted that the document was comprehensive and transmitted FHWA comments on the Plan. There were six items that FHWA cited for revision. This memorandum summarizes each comment and discusses the proposed responses and changes for the Plan. Affected pages, with changes redlined, are attached, as is a copy of the correspondence from FHWA.

SUMMARY OF REQUESTED ADJUSTMENTS AND PROPOSED RESPONSES

The six requests for revisions and proposals for responses are as follows:

- 1. Include a summary of how the Plan addresses the new planning requirements from SAFETEA-LU – Environmental Mitigation, Consistency between Regional Transportation Plans and Planned Growth and Development Plans, and Visualization Techniques.**

The following text will be added to page 4-7 at the end of the Eight Planning factors in SAFETEA-LU section of the Visions and Policies chapter:

SAFETEA-LU has placed increased emphasize in a number of areas in transportation planning, including Environmental Mitigation, Consistency between Regional Transportation Plans and Planned Growth and Development Plans, and Visualization Techniques. These areas have been addressed in the Journey TO 2030 Plan in the following chapters.

- Environmental Mitigation is discussed in Chapter 10 – Environment, outlining the different environmental areas that are affected by transportation in the region. It also includes maps showing how these areas are affected by the specific projects that are recommended in the Plan. A discussion of the consultation that occurred with the environmental agencies during the

development of the Plan as well as when mitigation will occur is also included in Chapter 10. Chapter 3 – Plan Development also includes a summary of the consultation process on environmental issues.

- Consistency between Regional Transportation Plans and Planned Growth and Development Plans is discussed in Chapter 11 – Land Use and Economic Development. It includes a discussion of how proposed planned growth and development through 2030 has been incorporated and used in the development of Journey TO 2030. Chapter 3 – Plan Development includes a summary of the development of demographic projections and Chapter 13 – The Recommended Plan also includes a summary of the recommended land use scenario.
- Visualization Techniques have been used in the development of the Plan in a number of ways including the development of the recommended land use scenario, in public participation events during the development of the Plan, and in presentations to the MPO in their discussions throughout the Plan process. Chapter 3 – Plan Development includes a summary of the steps undertaken in the development of the Plan.

2. Provide a summary of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan’s priorities, goals, countermeasures, or projects included in the Plan.

The following text will replace paragraph 2, on page 7-4.

During the development process for MSHSP, six emphasis areas were explored, and strategies for improving safety in each were developed.

They are:

1. Data Systems Strategies

Data systems strategies emphasize educating public safety officials to promote greater use of standard forms, electronic submission and sharing software. This includes developing standard forms and on-line, common database submission procedures for crash reports, citations, and trauma registration.

2. Infrastructure Safety Strategies

Improving infrastructure safety begins with using criteria to identify high-crash locations and corridors and gathering data on safety deficiencies in order to expedite implementation of improvements. MassHighway Project Need Forms will request information on safety deficiencies and may provide design assistance in some instances. Lane departure issues will be discussed with engineering, enforcement, emergency medical services, and education communities to develop regional and local programs to address this problem. MassHighway will undertake Road Safety Audits, promoting the inclusion of basic safety elements into routine maintenance projects and work zone safety practices.

3. At-Risk Driver Behavior Strategies

Solutions for at-risk driver behavior issues focus on education and awareness. Strategies include public outreach regarding the instruction and value of safety belt use (particularly as it pertains to child restraint) and of low-speed driving habits. The State will support bi-lingual Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) programs to certify law enforcement to make highly accurate assessments of persons who may be under the influence of drugs.

4. Higher-Risk Transportation System Users Strategies

Like most strategies, the State relies on greater awareness to improve careful driving among young drivers, assessing crash data from before and after adoption of the Massachusetts' Junior Operator Law (JOL), educating teenagers about accident trends among this age group, and informing parents about the JOL, its regulations, and its consequences. The State proposes a similar approach with its older drivers, working both with the Healthy Aging Coalition to provide transportation safety-related data, analysis, and information for the Coalition's strategic plan for healthy aging and with the Massachusetts Council on Aging to inform older and disabled residents about safe mobility alternatives available to them. In terms of pedestrian and bicyclist accidents, the State will work with local and regional authorities to identify high-crash locations, to encourage local implementation of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program, and to promote road-sharing and motorcycle education programs.

5. Public Education and Media Strategy

The SHSP includes recommendations for public education- and media-related strategies that will educate the public, legislators, and other opinion leaders to encourage safer behavior on Massachusetts' roadways. Strategies discussed focus on raising the awareness of safety and the importance of crafting and delivering specific messages to targeted audiences.

6. Safety Program Management Strategy

The SHSP proposes a management structure comprised of executive and advisory leadership committees to plan and implement the strategies mentioned above. The executive leadership committee will be responsible for developing and executing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing its members' commitment to safety planning, including identifying potential contributions to the safety planning process and reviewing progress and updates on agency-specific safety initiatives during quarterly meetings. Members of the steering/advisory committee will be responsible for informing their respective agencies about current safety projects and for staying up-to-date on important safety initiatives through bi-monthly meetings. These committees will work to develop detailed action plans and report annually to the

Secretary of Transportation, after which MassHighway will assess projects to monitor SHSP's effectiveness.

3. Add total costs to tables 10-1, 12-3, and 13-1.

The tables have been revised to include the cost for each project:

Table 10-1 on page 10-8

Table 12-3 on page 12-4

Table 13-1 on page 13-5

4. Add information to footnotes 2 and 3 on Table 13-3 on the total project costs with information on source of revenue and whether there is a signed agreement with developers for the two projects referenced.

This comment will be addressed in correspondence to FHWA. Both of the projects – the I-95 NB/Dedham Street Ramp in Canton and the South Weymouth Naval Station Access Improvements are currently in the MEPA process. Discussions are ongoing with the developers of these projects concerning project financing and other issues.

5. Clearly state in Table 13-5 whether the MPO endorses the Lowell Junction Interchange project in the Merrimack Valley MPO.

Text to be developed by the MPO.

To further clarify the information, the Table 13-5 heading “*Project Location*” will be changed to “*Responsible MPO*”.

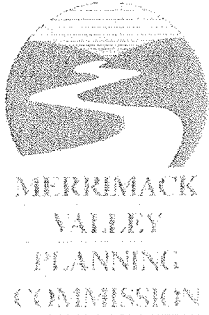
6. List the projects in Appendix B: Universe of Projects as illustrative, clearly stating that they are not in the recommended Plan but would be included if resources were available.

Include the following text on page B-1 at the end of paragraph 1:

Please note that the projects listed in this Appendix include all projects that were considered for the recommended Plan. It is not a list of illustrative projects as discussed in Chapter 13 on page 13-100.

Include the following text in correspondence to FHWA:

Appendix B: Universe of Projects is not a set of illustrative projects. It is a complete inventory of all project ideas collected during the development of the Plan. This includes projects in development and ideas for projects mentioned by state, regional, or local officials or members of the public during the development of the last and the current regional transportation plans. A section on illustrative projects is included in Chapter 13 page 13-100.



June 19, 2007

Mr. David Mohler
Chair, TPPC
Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works
10 Park Plaza – Room 4150
Boston, MA 02216

Dear Chairman Mohler:

As you may recall I, along with my colleagues from the Northern Middlesex MPO and the Town of Wilmington, attended the Boston MPO TPPC meeting on February 8, 2007 to discuss the proposed interchange at Lowell Junction located in Andover, Wilmington and Tewksbury. At that time I informed the committee that this was an important project for the three communities (all in different MPOs) and that they were embarked on a unique planning effort, where the three communities through a letter of agreement were working collaboratively to develop a joint land use vision for the area.

I am pleased to report that the communities have agreed to pursue a mixed-use scenario and at their June 8, 2007 meeting began the discussion of density levels. This land use vision will complement the existing businesses located in the area: Wyeth, Gillette, AGFA, Charles River Labs and many others. With over 6,000 jobs currently on site and over 11,000 jobs projected, this growth area can play a critical role in the economic development of our regions.

Recently the Town of Andover and Wyeth submitted a MORE application to help fund the construction of the Interchange. As part of the grant application, Wyeth committed to create over a hundred jobs. Not only will this interchange improve access to one of the largest concentrations of employment in northeastern Massachusetts and reduce cut through traffic in residential neighborhoods but it will also facilitate the clean up and redevelopment of a 50 acre EPA superfund site in Tewksbury and open up the potential for a new commuter rail stop. This concept parallels the Boston MPO supported new interchange in Woburn, where improved access resulted in the clean up of an EPA superfund site, the construction of the Anderson RTC and the creation of hundreds of jobs.

I would also like to try to put to rest the belief that this is “just a slip ramp to a mall”. Mills Corporation who had proposed to construct a mall at this location has been sold to Simons, a national development concern. Simons owns two malls, both just 15 miles north and south of this location and has expressed support for the new mixed use land-use vision proposed by the communities.

Robert Lavoie
Chairman
Kevin Bogerty
Vice Chairman
Rob Phillips
Secretary
Orlando Salazar
Treasurer
Joseph Sullivan
Asst. Treasurer
Dennis A. DiZoglio
Executive Director

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160 Main Street
Haverhill, MA 01830
Tel: (978) 373-0519
Fax: (978) 372-4890
www.mvpc.org
info@mvpc.org



The Federal Highway Administration recently approved the Interchange Justification Report and the preparation of the environmental impact study/report can begin. The Governor and the development cabinet are monitoring the progress of this development program and have identified Greg Bialecki, permitting ombudsman for the Commonwealth, as the point person at this time.

I ask you to join your two neighboring MPOs, Merrimack Valley and Northern Middlesex, as well as your member community Wilmington in endorsing this important project for our regions. The Merrimack Valley will continue to cover the cost of the interchange in its fiscally constrained RTP. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dennis A. DiZogno".

Dennis A. DiZogno
Executive Director

Cc:
Robert Flynn, NMCOG
Carol Hamilton, Town of Wilmington
Pam Wolfe, CTPS
Anne McGahan, CTPS

NOTES ON THE BOSTON MPO FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS FOR THE DRAFT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

Boston Region MPO Public Participation Plan Focus Group Session

June 11, 2007

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Attendees

Members of the Public:

Paul Barresi, AACT

Nadav Carmel, MassBike

David Watson, MassBike

Marilyn Wellons, Riverside Neighborhood Association (Cambridge)

Wig Zamore, Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership/Mystic View Task Force

MPO Members:

Tom Kadzis, City of Boston

MPO Staff:

John Hersey

Ben Rasmussen

Pam Wolfe

The meeting opened with introductions from those in attendance. Following introductions, Pam Wolfe asked the group how the MPO could best inform them about planning and programming activities. Paul Barresi commented that audio recordings from the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind announcing upcoming events and large print documents were valuable. He reminded participants that while email works for some, not everyone has or uses email, so it should not be the only way to distribute information. People with disabilities need to be given information in varied, accessible formats. He also offered that video or audio recordings posted on the Web would not provide any added benefit, particularly since the opportunity for input into the discussions would have passed. David Watson supported increased electronic dissemination of information, including posting reports, meeting minutes and agendas, project updates and providing a better overview of the planning and programming process on the MPO Website and using listserve emails.

The group asked for background information on the MPO, the metropolitan planning process, and transportation planning and policy in the region. Participants also asked for clarification on the roles and responsibilities of MPO entities in the process. Pam Wolfe, Ben Rasmussen and Tom Kadzis helped to answer the group's questions. Looking at the figure, "Relationship of MPO Certification Documents to Other Transportation Planning Documents", in *Transportation Planning in the Boston Region: Be Informed, Be Involved*, Nadav Carmel commented that it

depicted a complicated process, unfortunately indicative of the region's confusing transportation planning environment.

Returning the conversation to information exchange between those in attendance and the MPO and staff, David Watson and Nadav Carmel expanded on their interests in a more inclusive and informative MPO website. They suggested that providing information in an Extensible Markup Language (XML) format would facilitate the sharing of data across different information systems on the Internet. (MassBike would like to be able to post information and updates from the MPO Web site onto its own.) If the MPO asked advocacy groups to help with the outreach by forwarding notices and information, they would. They were also interested in having the opportunity to review agendas before meetings and the ability to contact staff with comments or questions about the topics to be discussed.

Marilyn Wellons expressed some interest in providing frequently updated surveys and their results on the MPO websites to encourage active participation in the planning process. Regarding participants' concerns about low participation in the planning process, she said that there is better involvement when there is an issue at hand. Staying in touch with elected officials would also be useful. The Regional Transportation Advisory Council is a useful organization and is a source of good information on transportation and planning in the region.

Wig Zamore would like the MPO to assist in providing more information on projects and updates on project development. The MPO Web site should be more of a clearinghouse for transportation information and public meetings in the region. For example, he suggested posting the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Consultation meetings on the MPO Web site. He said that it is hard to know if your comment will make a difference. He suggested partnering with local educational institutions to provide curricula on metropolitan transportation planning.

In general, participants felt that the current methods of outreach were working well. They also thought that having more background, including information on how decisions are made, would be useful.

MassBike is an advocacy group that would like to be more directly involved in project development and regional transportation planning and in a collaborative way. They are looking for early involvement to minimize objections later on in the process when it might be too late to raise such concerns.

Boston Region MPO Public Participation Plan Focus Group Session
June 13, 2007
12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

Attendees

Members of the Public:

Hiep Chu, Executive Director, Viet-AID
Thomas Cullen, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Public Works, City of Marlborough
Olivia Ferrante, Member, Revere Committee on Disability
Marc Fournier, Director, Department of Public Works, Town of Hull
Wendy Landman, President, Walk Boston
Richard Mahoney, Member, AACT
Jim Oliver, Board Member, AACT
Ellin Reisner, Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership
Alison Steinfeld, Mayor's Office, City of Waltham
Don Summerfield, Board Member, AACT, and Member, Cambridge Commission of Persons with Disabilities, and advocate for persons with disabilities

MPO Staff:

John Hersey
Ben Rasmussen
Pam Wolfe

Before the meeting formally began, attendees made some valuable comments regarding accessible materials. Large-print documents, particularly the survey, and clipboards would make these materials easier to write on and to read.

The meeting formally opened with introductions from those in attendance, after which Pam Wolfe provided a summary of the role and responsibilities of the MPO. Following this summary, Ms. Wolfe asked the attendees how the MPO could better provide information to them.

Wendy Landman would like the MPO members to listen to the MPO's regional constituency directly. In her view, members' absence conveyed a lack of interest in public outreach. She was concerned about how comments would be communicated to the MPO.

Ellin Reisner said that she sees the metropolitan planning process as complicated and that this deters participation by members of the public. She sees two types of information that the public needs: 1) about the process (metropolitan planning) and 2) on specific projects. People tend to be interested in specific projects and will participate more readily in project-focused discussions. She would like the MPO to provide more information on individual projects. She also suggested that municipal websites could be another way to communicate with more members of the public and that municipal contacts be asked to post MPO information and meeting notices. In addition, advocacy and interest groups should be asked to post the information on their websites and in newsletters and other transmittals. Information sent by listserve for forwarding to others or for use in another website (including *TRANSREPORT*), will need to be included in the messages' text, not simply attached as a PDF document.

Ms. Reisner also said that the planning process can be frustrating. For ideas on how to handle these issues, she suggested that the MPO: 1) explore information on outreach provided by the Transportation Research Board (TRB) in Washington, D.C., and noted that TRB has a compact

disk on providing multi-lingual information in a variety of media formats, and 2) send a staff representative to the annual meetings to keep current on best practices. She also said that she sees the MPO structure in Massachusetts as unusual, considering others nationwide. In light of the strong involvement of the state's Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works, the Regional Transportation Advisory Council is very important. She would like to see a centralized location or a clearinghouse for information and collecting comments on transportation projects under development. All transportation-related agencies in the region could send information to the MPO for posting on its website. Members of the public should be able to go to such a location to find or share information.

Jim Oliver thought that three meetings were not enough to gather input from such a large area. He received notice through his e-mail. He suggested that press releases on MPO news be sent to local and regional newspapers.

Olivia Ferrante noted that when given alternative media for the disabled, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind forwards information on its website and on a news tape accessed over the telephone. There is also a statewide Talking Information Service that provides public announcements as part of its radio reading service. The Massachusetts Association for the Blind sends out a large-print newsletter. All of these methods provide valuable information in very accessible formats. The practice of holding some meetings in the daytime and some at night is a good way to try to accommodate peoples' work schedules and travel preferences. The Boston Public Library is a good, accessible location for public forums.

She spoke about the challenges of being a visually impaired pedestrian and cited a recent experience at the Museum of Science.

Ms. Landman applauded the objectives presented in the Public Participation Program draft, but sought some method to evaluate the effectiveness of the process in achieving them. Ms. Reisner suggested that the MPO bring together a task force to identify possible measures for evaluating the effectiveness of the Program in achieving its objectives.

Participants said that members of the public should be able to quickly find the information they are seeking and easily understand the documents' contents. The documents and outreach materials should provide information concisely and clearly so people can participate in a meaningful way. Accordingly, participants suggested that the certification documents be accompanied by a short summary or executive summary of their contents, what the document is and is not, how to find information in them, and how the document fits into the process/"bigger picture." This information should be on the MPO's website and sent with or on the compact disks of the certification documents.

Marc Fournier said that he finds the metropolitan planning process to be complicated and cumbersome. The TIP process is overwhelming for small communities; it may be good, but he feels buried in paper. He would like to have a better idea of what is expected from him in advance of Municipal TIP Day and what the next steps are thereafter (i.e., when will he hear back from the MPO, etc.). In addition, appearing before the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee can be daunting. E-mail is an effective way to send information, but

duplicate messages appear. Messages should have a clear subject line and if urgent, they should be flagged so that the recipient can understand whether they are urgent.

Mr. Fournier and other participants asked that information (both on the MPO process and on all the projects, including information on project evaluations) be simplified and be more direct. They would find it useful to have a snapshot that shows how the pieces of the process fit together that can be quickly understood.

Hiep Chu suggested that introductory information on the MPO process should use a variety of media, languages, and distribution locations and include summaries about the purpose, content, and terminology used in the TIP. Executive summaries of project descriptions and information on their funding sources would improve awareness for municipalities and non-profit organizations. The MPO's current public participation booklet, "Be Informed, Be Involved", is good, but should also be distributed at community centers, senior centers, health clinics, and by community development corporations. The Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations is a good way to publicize information.

Ms. Landman made several additional suggestions:

- Information about the entire state transportation budget is needed, so that people can see the entire picture. This information should include what projects are and are not funded.
- More information about project timelines would target individual interests and reduce "participation exhaustion". For example, if someone is interested in station design for the Urban Ring project, having a timeline that informs him or her that this portion of the project will be discussed in two years would encourage more focused participation.
- "Be Informed, Be Involved" should have information on what the MPO is right up front.
- The Department of Conservation and Recreation should be included in the MPO, because the agency plays a role in transportation projects involved in the TIP.
- Members of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council do not feel that their voices are heard. The Regional Transportation Advisory Council should have a vote on the MPO (Ms. Reisner agreed).

Don Summerfield commented that sign-up sheets should have check boxes for participants to request meeting handouts or minutes. The minutes of the discussion should be sent to participants and revisions to the draft Program should be available so that participants can understand what information was communicated to the MPO and what changes resulted.

The group felt that the timeline for creating the Public Participation Program draft, sending it for public review, receiving comments, and making revisions in response to those comments was too short.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning and Programming Committee, June 27, 2007

FROM: John Hersey and Pam Wolfe
Certification Activities Group

RE: Summaries of Comments Received on the MPO Public Participation Program
and Proposed Responses

The MPO asked members of the public to suggest ways that the MPO may improve its communication processes through the Public Participation Program. Notices inviting public participation in the development of an updated Public Participation Program was announced in a paid legal notice in the Boston Globe, the region's major daily newspaper and in *TRANSREPORT*. Press releases were sent to daily and weekly (including local) newspapers. Flyers were distributed to the Regional Transportation Advisory Council, the Access Advisory Board to the MBTA, the Riders Oversight Council, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council Subregions, and the MPO's list server, MPOinfo.

The MPO conducted two focus group discussions and distributed questionnaires through a special insert in *TRANSREPORT*. Comments were received during the focus groups and by mail through returned surveys. In addition, one letter was submitted.

This memorandum summarizes the comments and suggests possible responses that might be incorporated into the Public Participation Program. It also notes those the MPO may wish simply to adopt as practice. Copies of summaries of the focus group discussions and a matrix of the comments from participating members of the public are attached.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND PROPOSED RESPONSES

Comments from the meetings and from the surveys mostly involved issues about the clarity of the information describing the 3C process and the various media alternatives used to inform the diverse interested parties. Other comments requested additional activities or services. Suggestions for revisions for the text of the Public Participation Program are included below. These suggestions for the Public Participation Program text are included in the attached redlined version dated June 14, 2007. Comments not suggested for specific notation in the Program will be considered for use and incorporation in public participation practices.

1. Provide clear explanations of the MPO, the Metropolitan Planning Process, and MPO decision-making.

Meeting participants said they did not have a clear picture and were sometimes confused about the metropolitan planning process in the region and sometimes about the roles and responsibilities of MPO members. There should be clear and concise information on the MPO and how planning and programming decisions are made. Participants asked that executive summaries of the certification documents and other MPO reports and studies be

prepared and that overviews provide instructions on how to find information in the documents, perhaps with navigation tools for searching PDF documents. The executive summaries could include a description of the certification document's role in the planning and programming process, its relation to other certification documents produced by the MPO, and the methods involved in creating it.

Participants said that if they had more information on schedules (either for MPO activities or for projects undertaken by others) that they could better gauge their participation.

In response, the MPO will include text in the Program (under "Types of Activities" on pages 6 and 7, and under "Logistics, Notifications, and Materials on pages 8 and 9) that explains that it will regularly update and revise its outreach materials to make sure that they explain clearly the processes and decision-making. Graphics will be used to support the text and provide another way for members of the public to visualize and understand the process. The MPO will improve its publications by including, whenever possible, executive summaries of the documents and a key to their use. The year's schedule will be posted on the Web site and updated as needed.

2. Distribution of Information

Focus group participants supported the use of a variety of media in communicating with the public. There was support for all the methods currently used by the MPO, including the MPO Web site for posting MPO information and linking to other sites and sources. Notices and flyers sent by MPOinfo are very effective, but they must be sent in a format, such as Extensible Markup Language (XML) format, that can be easily forwarded or incorporated into the Web sites of interested organizations and advocacy groups and transmittals should include requests that the notices be posted on the recipients' Web sites; municipalities' sites would be excellent places for this sort of cooperative posting. The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and other organizations relay information and notices through audio recordings that are available over the telephone or broadcast on the radio.

Participants supported making the Web site more interactive and suggested posting a contact person for the meeting agendas so that people could contact that person to ask questions or submit comments; however, there was no support voiced for posting recordings of meetings on-line or streaming proceedings as they happen – listeners would be unable to participate.

Material should be sent in print format, too – not everyone uses a computer. Materials should also be provided in accessible formats.

Meeting participants suggested that the MPO coordinate an online clearinghouse with information (or links to information) about the status of all projects in development or underway. Information on these projects' schedules and milestones (so that interested parties can plan their participation) would be helpful.

Meeting participants also suggested that MPO outreach include sending notices to community centers, senior centers, community development corporations and health clinics.

In response, the MPO will add text to the Program (under “Types of Activities” on pages 6 and 7) that lists organizations providing information-support for persons with disabilities, community centers, senior centers, and health clinics to the list of interested parties. The MPO is working to update and expand the function of the MPO Web site to expand its content and improve its interactivity, accessibility, and its ability to help visitors find MPO-related and other transportation information.

3. Develop measures to evaluate objectives
Focus group participants favored the objectives set forth in the Public Participation Program, but suggested that measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the Program in meeting those objectives be developed and included in the text.

To respond, text should be added to the Program (under “Objectives for Public Participation” on pages 3 and 4 and “Development of the Public Participation Program” on pages 11 and 12) noting that the MPO will develop a process for identifying measures to understand the effectiveness of the Program, particularly in meeting its objectives.

Other Focus Group and Written Comments for Implementation

Other comments received during the public participation focus groups are valuable to guide MPO practices but may not need to be included as added text to the Program. These comments and recommendations for the MPO are summarized below.

1. Focus group participants encouraged MPO members to attend outreach meetings as a way to ensure that comments expressed at these meetings translate directly to the MPO. Participants would like to know MPO members have heard them and members’ attendance would demonstrate their interest.
2. Large-print copies of agendas, sign-up sheets, and meeting materials should be provided at meetings and workshops to assist visually impaired participants. Clipboards would make writing easier for some.
3. The MPO should explore the best outreach practices discussed at the Transportation Research Board (TRB).
4. E-mail messages should have a clear title for the subject line – one that will help the recipient understand its importance or urgency.
5. The MPO process is complicated and can be daunting and difficult to understand and navigate for smaller municipalities. They have limited staff resources to commit to the process. It can be overwhelming.

6. Minutes or notes of public participation events and meeting materials should be sent to participants if they request.

Comments from *TRANSREPORT* Survey

The MPO developed a survey of approximately 3,000 *TRANSREPORT* recipients asking for their input about methods to exchange ideas and information on transportation planning for the Boston region. Ten surveys were returned, and comments from those surveys are recorded below.

How would you like to be kept informed of the MPO's planning and programming activities? (ranked by number of times selected)

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How could the MPO do a better job of providing information?

- Explain the MPO process at a workshop or in a newsletter; it is difficult to understand the decision making
- Use the MPO Web site to: post information (meeting minutes, in a timely manner); provide links to detailed information such as reports and meeting notices
- Send press releases to local newspapers; buy commercials on radio and TV at critical stages in the planning cycle
- Provide updates on the Web site and at (possibly regularly scheduled) meetings and workshops held around the region held both the daytime and the evening

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- Through questions posted on the MPO Web site; questions should also ask for ideas about projects
- Postage-paid surveys are good and cost-efficient
- The website should provide either an "Email Us" option
- There should be more daytime workshops and more time at Municipal Input Day (do not allow presentations of "DM" projects) Attending all the decision-making meetings seems most effective; it is unclear whether letters have an impact

What methods and media would you most like to use to communicate with the MPO? (ranked by number of times selected)

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What would make participation in regional transportation planning more convenient and interesting for you?

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One letter was received expressing the view that:

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U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Massachusetts Division

55 Broadway, 10th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02142

June 7, 2007

In Reply Refer To:
HDA-MA

Mr. Arnie Soolman
Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff
Certification Activities Group
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116-3968

Attn: Pam Wolfe

**Subject: Draft Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
Public Participation Program**

Dear: Mr. Soolman:

Thank you for submitting the Public Participation Plan (PPP) to FHWA for review and comment. We have completed our review and offer the following comments:

Page 3 – Considering the needs of Low-Income and Minority Residents

23 CFR 450.316(a)(vii) states that the MPO needs to seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households. The Environmental Justice (EJ) committee does not appear to be engaged with the MPO, and it is recommended that additional efforts be made to reach out to the EJ community.

The MPO should consider consulting representatives of the EJ community to solicit their input, and also host meetings within the EJ community on the PPP.

The Metropolitan Planning Certification Review Report dated April 2004 included several public participation recommendations requiring MPO action (see attachment). The actions taken to address these recommendations should be addressed in the PPP.

Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program Consultation

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.316(b), the PPP needs to address how the MPO consults on the development of the transportation plan, and transportation improvement program with “agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities”. This requirement

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should be included in the PPP.

Should you have any questions or comments, please contact Michael Chong at (617) 494-3275 or michael.a.chong@fhwa.dot.gov.

Sincerely,
Richard Marquis
Acting Division Administrator

/s/ Michael Chong 6/07/07

By: Michael Chong
Planning and Environment Program Manager

cc: Mark Guenard, Manager MPO Activities

MEMORANDUM

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning and Programming Committee, June 27, 2007

**FROM: John Hersey
Certification Activities Group**

RE: Outreach Workshops for FFY 2008-2011 TIP

This memorandum serves to gain guidance from the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee regarding outreach workshops held during the public comment period for the Draft FFY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program and Air Quality Conformity Determination (Draft TIP). The public comment period for the Draft FFY 2008-2011 TIP will begin on Monday, July 2, and will close at 5:00 PM Tuesday, July 31. Information about the proposed amendment will also be available.

In order to gather input about the TIP, staff is proposing the MPO conduct three workshops (dates to be determined) in the following communities at the following times:

- Natick, 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM
- Reading, 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM
- Weymouth, 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

These workshops will be held at transit- and handicap-accessible locations and will plan to provide an American Sign Language translator and (upon request) a Spanish translator. Also, staff is suggesting the MPO will hold an open house (date to be determined) with two information sessions at the State Transportation Building at the following times:

- 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM
- 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM

In addition to these workshops, MPO staff will present information and record comments about the TIP and proposed TIP amendment at upcoming MAPC subregion meetings.