

## Minutes of the June 30, 2005

### Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

#### *Agenda Item # 1: Welcome and Introductions*

Acting on behalf of MPO Chairman Cogliano, Executive Office of Transportation (EOT), Dennis DiZoglio opened the meeting at 10:10 AM. The attendance sheet is attached.

#### *Agenda Item # 2: Consultation with EOT on re-evaluation of State Implementation Plan (SIP) transit commitments and EOT recommendation*

After a brief summary of the role of the MPO in the re-evaluation of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) transit commitments; the process used by EOT for formulating its recommendations; and an overview of comments heard at the June 22 public meeting, Dennis DiZoglio asked members to make comments on the EOT recommendations regarding the SIP transit commitments and posed the following questions to MPO members: Did EOT succeed in trying to meet all the diverse transportation needs in the region in its recommendation on the State Implementation Plan transit commitments? Were environmental justice and regional equity adequately considered? Were the best projects chosen under the context of air quality? He reminded members that much of their work on the MPO involves comparing the relative benefits of projects.

The recommendations emerged after consideration of many factors, including objective criteria, comments from the community, and issues that affect readiness such as environmental hurdles and extensive permitting. The role of the MPO at this point is advisory, providing advice and input to EOT.

#### *Paul Regan, MBTA Advisory Board*

Mr. Regan expressed difficulty in balancing his role as member of Environmental Oversight Committee of Central Artery/Tunnel project and his interest in the Transportation Improvement Program, Program for Mass Transportation, and the MBTA Budget. In reviewing the commitments and recommendations, one should look at all the transit projects that were required as part of the Central Artery/Tunnel project and the existing investments. The Fairmount Line project was not a commitment, but it deserves to be included in the recommendation. It has public support from the City of Boston and the affected neighborhoods, and serves a transit-dependent, environmental justice neighborhood. The service would provide better commuting options and connectivity within the inner core area.

He supports Green Line extension through Somerville, with or without the branch to Union Square and. hopes to see Somerville use this opportunity for revitalization along the Washington Street corridor.

He carefully weighed the Red-Blue Line connector. It would be a good project if done in conjunction with the Blue Line extension to Lynn, which could be partially funded by New Starts, making it not solely a state-funded project. The ridership generated by the extension to Lynn would justify the connection between the Red and Blue Lines.

The Arborway project is an inflexible, 1940s solution to the transportation problems in Jamaica Plain. There are no other examples of a transit authority operating light rail at grade in two-way traffic. The Arborway project is unsupportable from an urban planning perspective.

All of the projects, except the Red-Blue Line connector, will place operational burdens on the MBTA. New funding will be needed to pay for the operational costs of the projects.

Additional parking is needed and desired just about everywhere but additional parking should be focused in the inner core.

While commitments were made and should be kept, the transportation system as it exists today and the funding constraints are what need to be considered today.

*Joe Cosgrove, MBTA*

The MBTA has been grappling with all the issues related to the legal commitments and potential replacement projects. There are significant implementation problems with the Arborway project, as has been noted in its 20-year process. The EOT recommendation reflects that transportation finance has significantly changed since 1990. The commitments are a commonwealth commitment. The MBTA does not have the resources to pay for them. This brings balance and a dose of reality to the MBTA's views of the EOT recommendation. An effort was made to select projects that can be implemented soon, so as not to defer the burdens to future administrations.

The MBTA is supportive of the EOT recommendations, while acknowledging that additional planning work is necessary. The Fairmount Line project will perform very well in terms of equity and land use. The project will help fill extra capacity on the line.

The Green Line extension through Somerville will succeed in terms of land use, regional equity, and mobility.

The EOT recommendation is balanced and includes a realistic mix of projects that can be implemented.

*Barbara Lucas, MAPC*

MAPC agreed that the projects being proposed by EOT (the Green Line to Somerville and Medford, Fairmount Line upgrades, and 1,000 new parking spaces for the MBTA system) are all worthy projects that should be advanced. All these projects should be completed by the same deadline as already exists for the SIP commitments. However, MAPC has consistently noted that there need to be air quality benefits in the corridors of the original commitments. These benefits are not achieved in the corridors for the two SIP Commitments (the Arborway and the Red-Blue Connector), which are not recommended for immediate advancement. Neither the Fairmount Line project nor the unspecified parking additions provide significant air quality benefits to either the Arborway corridor or the Red-Blue Connector.

MAPC recommends that the MPO study signal prioritization for buses along the Arborway corridor and would like to see such prioritization become part of the SIP transit commitments.

The Red-Blue Line connector has suffered from a lack of significant public support, as it is not a project with an identified and outspoken clientele. Nevertheless, the connector will reduce congestion in downtown stations, fill excess capacity on the Blue Line, and improve system connectivity at no operational cost to the MBTA. While including the Red-Blue connector in the recommendations for the Blue Line extension might be a positive step, it means the realization of the project will be dependent on success as a "new starts" program for federal funding. There is no guarantee that this will happen. Ms. Lucas would like to see the connector continue to move forward as a SIP commitment.

She is pleased to see that the Green Line extension through Somerville including Union Square is a recommended project. The Fairmount Line is an excellent project, but it should not replace other projects in the SIP transit commitments. In addition, several of the Fairmount station improvements recommended by EOT have already been supported by the MPO in the regional transportation plan and listed for funding in the MBTA's Capital Investment Program. For these stations, this proposed SIP commitment does not represent a new project – merely credit for projects already approved.

Additional parking is needed in the inner core as well as the suburban areas. MAPC hopes to see additional parking capacity added in the region, but it should be added because there is a need and not simply as part of the SIP commitments.

Deadlines for implementation of the final commitments should be required for each project to be included in the SIP.

*Tom Kadzis, City of Boston*

The projects selected in 1990 are benefiting from a round of re-analysis. Decisions made now must be sensitive to the communities in which transportation projects were committed.

The City of Boston strongly supports the Fairmount Line project. Improvements to public transportation in the Arborway corridor should be aggressively pursued. The South Street and Center Street rights-of-way provide significant physical constraints. Improvements should include roadway reconstruction, bus shelters, and ITS tools such as bus signal prioritization and GPS advanced notification.

The City of Boston believes the Red-Blue line connector should be implemented. If the project is not retained in the transit commitments, replacement projects should provide benefits to East Boston.

The recommended projects would result in a reduced level of investment in transit in Boston. The City of Boston looks forward to the opportunity to comment on this as a community speaking for its citizens during the Department of Environmental Protection review. The re-evaluation process has been positive.

*Steve Olanoff, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

The Regional Transportation Advisory Council will meet on July 13 to discuss the SIP commitments. Comments on the SIP transit commitments will be submitted to EOT following that meeting.

*David Koses, City of Newton*

Mayor Cohen supports the Green Line extension to West Medford as a SIP commitment and supports the recommendation not to move forward with the Arborway project. The Green Line branch to Union Square does not have as high user benefits as the Red-Blue Line connector. The connector is a worthy project and the City of Newton recommends it stay as a SIP commitment.

*Mary Pratt, Town of Hopkinton*

Deadlines should be set for the completion of all projects. Ms. Pratt expresses support for the Green Line to West Medford project because it has strong air quality benefits. She noted that the Red-Blue Line connector has higher user benefits than the Green Line branch to Union Square. Light rail on the Arborway made sense when fewer cars were on the road, but this is a thing of

the past. Priority should be given to bus signal prioritization in the Arborway corridor. A study should be funded in the FY 2006 UPWP.

The Red-Blue Line connector is a worthy project despite minimal support from the affected communities. Additional parking is needed in the region, but should not be considered as a replacement project.

In the future, promises should not be made if they will not be kept. Creative funding sources should be sought to pay for necessary transit improvements. Ms. Pratt supports the Fairmount Line project, but questions whether it should replace the existing SIP commitments.

*Shirin Karanfiloglu, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority*

The Turnpike Authority supports the re-analysis of the SIP transit commitment projects. Air quality is one important aspect, but economic development, quality of life, and urban planning issues are important. The increased utilization of the Fairmount Line in the proposed project is an excellent idea. The Green Line extension through Somerville is excellent in terms of economic development, accessibility, air quality, and quality of life. Additional parking capacity should be added to areas where parking lots are often full.

The Red-Blue Line connector raises technical questions and it is costly, though it would provide access to Mass General Hospital for employees and patients. Buses might be a good substitute.

*Lynn Duncan, City of Salem*

There is support on the North Shore for the Blue Line extension to Lynn and the Red-Blue line connector. Mayor Usovich is supportive of the proposed substitutions.

After the comments were made, members discussed early light rail service in the Arborway corridor compared with current constraints of the right-of-way; and the air quality benefits of the Green Line extension to West Medford, as recommended by EOT.

Comments from the Advisory Council can be submitted after July 13.

All comments will be passed on to EOT.

*Agenda Item # 3      Other Business*

There was no other business.

*Agenda Item # 4:      Adjourn*

The meeting ended at 11:15 AM.

**Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Thursday, June 30, 2005**

<b>Initials</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
	Matthew J. Amorello	MassPike
	David Cash	EOEA
	Jonathan Church	CTPS
	John Cogliano	EOT
	David Cohen	City of Newton
<b>X</b>	Joseph Cosgrove	MBTA
	Paul Coviello	City of Everett
	Craig Coy	Massport
<b>X</b>	Sean Daly	CTPS
	Rick Dimino	MAPC
<b>X</b>	Dennis DiZoglio	EOT
<b>X</b>	Lynn Duncan	City of Salem
	Ginger Esty	Town of Framingham
<b>X</b>	Jared Fijalkowski	CTPS
	Gordon Feltman	Town of Bedford
<b>X</b>	Jim Gallagher	MAPC
	James Gillooly	City of Boston
<b>X</b>	Astrid Glynn	EOT
	Stephen Hines	MassPike
<b>X</b>	Thomas Kadzis	City of Boston
<b>X</b>	Shirin Karanfiloglu	MassPike
<b>X</b>	David Koses	City of Newton
	Jeff Levine	Advisory Council
	Cathy Lewis	CTPS
<b>X</b>	Barbara Lucas	MAPC
	Rick Marquis	FHWA
<b>X</b>	Anne McGahan	CTPS
	Thomas Menino	City of Boston
	Kenneth Miller	MassHighway
<b>X</b>	David Mohler	MassHighway
	Bill Moore	CTPS
	Andrew Motter	FTA
<b>X</b>	Mary Pratt	Town of Hopkinton
<b>X</b>	Karl Quackenbush	CTPS
	David Ragucci	City of Everett
<b>X</b>	Paul Regan	MBTA Advisory Board
	Bob Reyes	Massport
	Ed Silva	FHWA

<b>X</b>	Arnie Soolman	CTPS
	Mary Ellen Sullivan	CTPS
	John Stasik	Town of Framingham
	Bruce Thibodeau	City of Salem
	William Tuttle	MassPike
	Mayor Stanley Usovicz Jr.	City of Salem
<b>X</b>	Stephen Woelfel	MBTA
<b>X</b>	Pam Wolfe	CTPS
	<b>Other Attendees:</b>	
<b>X</b>	Wig Zamore	Mystic View Task Force, STEP
<b>X</b>	Christine Kirby	DEP
<b>X</b>	Mark Slusarz	Coler & Colantonio, Inc.
<b>X</b>	James Colman	DEP
<b>X</b>	Sherri Walker	Nep. Valley Chamber of Commerce
<b>X</b>	Steve Olanoff	RTAC