

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Summary of June 14, 2006 Meeting

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

1. Chair's Report - *Steve Olanoff, Chair*

Steve Olanoff, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members, guests, visitors, and staff introduced themselves. See the attached attendance list.

Steve Olanoff announced that the next meeting of the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) would be held on Thursday, June 15, 2006 at 10:00 AM. This meeting will include briefings on the development of the draft federal certification documents, the FYs 2007-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and discussions on the TIP project evaluation process and the recommendations of the UPWP Subcommittee. A vote to release these documents for public review and comment is scheduled for the June 29, 2006 meeting of the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. As with all other MPO meetings, activities, and events, members of the public are invited.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes of May 10, 2006

MOTION: A motion to approve the draft meeting minutes of May 10, 2006 as amended by Vincent Dixon (with expanded description of Montreal's Underground City to include the adjacent plaza and an added statement differentiating Transit-Related Development from Transit-Oriented Development) was made by Richard Canale and seconded by Vincent Dixon. This motion passed unanimously.

3. Announcements

A report was given on the Association for Public Transportation's (APT) annual meeting by newly elected APT Board member Vincent Lawrence Dixon. Former Governor Michael Dukakis and former Amtrak President and Chief Executive Officer David Gunn spoke on the proposed North Station – South Station rail link and the future of intercity passenger rail respectively.

4. Briefing on the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Proposed Storrow Drive Tunnel Re-construction Project - *Jim Baecker, Project Manager, and Carl Haglund, Regional Planner, DCR*

Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Project Manager, Jim Baecker, and Regional Planner, Carl Haglund, briefed the Advisory Council on DCR's proposed Storrow Drive Tunnel Re-construction Project.

The existing Storrow Drive Tunnel was built in 1951. In the project area, eastbound traffic is carried next to the Esplanade in a below-ground tunnel. Westbound traffic travels on a surface roadway, which is also the roof of the eastbound tunnel. Ramps allow traffic to enter or exit at Arlington and Berkeley Streets. Over 100,000 vehicles per day travel on Storrow Drive.

At 55 years of age, the tunnel has exceeded its design life and its present risk of catastrophic structure failure is greater than what is acceptable under current structural design and service standards. Needed repairs include replacing deteriorated concrete and reinforcing steel in the walls and roof, replacing severely corroding steel beams and guardrails, and sealing roof, wall, and base slabs.

In February 2006, DCR began a public involvement process for this upcoming work and contacted affected neighborhoods, businesses, civic associations, and agencies. Public scoping sessions for the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the project were held this past May. The project expects to conduct an extensive Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review, beginning after March 2007.

Design options currently being considered include:

- 1.) Repairing and maintaining the existing tunnel
- 2.) Re-building the tunnel in its current configuration
- 3.) Different variations of demolishing the tunnel and constructing an at-grade parkway
- 4.) The construction of new tunnels to carry traffic in both directions

Each of the above four main options contains an additional four to seven sub-options which are different variations of the main theme.

Under any option, construction activities will involve traffic detours and occasional shutdowns of both tunnel and surface roadway entrances and exits. There will be 12 to 18 months of design, depending on the option ultimately chosen, which will be followed by an 18 to 48 month construction phase. DCR is currently planning to start construction in the spring of 2009.

A potential issue with the present schedule is the coordination with the reconstruction of the Longfellow Bridge. The Longfellow Bridge, the Boston University (BU) Bridge, and the Craigie Drawbridge are all presently slated for reconstruction in the same time period as the Storrow Drive Tunnel Reconstruction Project. The DCR sequence would propose starting the Storrow Drive project after the BU Bridge and Craigie Drawbridge projects, but before the Longfellow Bridge project. However, circumstances may dictate that the Longfellow project, estimated to last at least four years, start first, which would delay the Storrow Drive project.

For more information, including a down-loadable version of the PowerPoint presentation made at this meeting and a link to the ENF filed on April 18, 2006, go to <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/storrowdrive.htm>.

Points and Issues Raised During Discussion

What part of the Esplanade was slated to be used for temporary roadways? (Tom Kadzis)
The use of the Esplanade was merely media speculation; it was never a serious consideration by DCR. (Carl Haglund)

Has the re-use of the temporary bridges used by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project (CA/T) been considered by DCR for the Storrow Drive Tunnel project? (Steve Olanoff)
Yes, but space limitations may rule it out as a viable option, plus all but one of the CA/T bridges has been sold and is no longer in the city. (Carl Haglund)

Who will fund this project and how will that affect other DCR or MassHighway needs? (Bill Deignan and Steve Olanoff)
MassHighway has committed to the cost of re-constructing the tunnel in its present configuration. If a second tunnel must be constructed, it is believed that this additional money will need to come from another source, most likely from the Executive Office of Transportation's (EOT) five-year capital plan budget. Even though the list of deferred maintenance and repairs includes at least seven bridges requiring repair, DCR does not believe that the funding for the Storrow Drive Tunnel Project will affect that work. (Carl Haglund)

How can DCR consider delaying the re-construction of the Longfellow Bridge given its present deteriorated condition? As a Cambridge resident, I strongly recommend that the Longfellow project be undertaken first. (Vincent Dixon)
It is not a question of delaying the Longfellow project, but the fact that we do not believe that both the Longfellow and Storrow Drive projects can proceed at the same time that is the overriding concern. Complicating matters is the fact that the Longfellow project has an extremely long lead-time due to the complicated engineering required to accommodate the Red Line. (Carl Haglund)

Could the enhancement of at-grade pedestrian access to the Esplanade area, similar to the "short dip" concept of covered overpasses presently in use at Western Avenue and which APT endorses, be considered for this project? (Romin Koebel)
Yes. Based on comments received at public meetings held to date, it is likely that additional sub-options will be added based on this concept, which is similar to our present Scheme F. (Carl Haglund)

How will DCR deal with the potential imposition of AASHTO standards by either state or federal highway officials? What is the biggest safety issue facing this project and how will it be addressed? (Stephen Kaiser)
It is expected that this will be resolved by pointing out that Storrow Drive Tunnel is in a historic district. This happened during the recent Harvard Bridge project. Excess speed appears to be the biggest safety issue and various traffic-calming methods are being considered to address it. (Carl Haglund)

How was the origin and destination study conducted? (John Stasik) *Beta Engineering performed this study by passing out questionnaires at 20 signalized locations from 7 AM to 7 PM. 20,000 were distributed, along with the chance to enter a Red Sox ticket lottery, which yielded respondent zip codes, and 8,000 have been returned to date. (Carl Haglund)*

5. Briefings on the Development of Draft Certification Documents and Solicitation of Member Comments:

- a. **FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)** - *Mary Ellen Sullivan, UPWP Manager, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)*
- b. **FYs 2007 – 2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** - *Sam Snead, TIP Manager, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)*

UPWP

Manager Mary Ellen Sullivan briefed the Advisory Council on the list of projects gathered during the public outreach effort performed during this past year. which involved gathering project ideas and priorities in discussions at MAPC subregion meetings, MPO invite-us-over seminars, and through *TRANSREPORT* insert responses. Comments from last year provided a starting point. Other ideas were provided by staff or emerged as possible “next steps” from MPO studies.

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee’s UPWP Subcommittee is at work determining which project ideas from this ten-page list to recommend to the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee for FY 2007, considering this year’s limited \$450,000 UPWP budget. It is likely that three or four can be funded.

For more information and/or a copy of the above list, contact Mary Ellen Sullivan at (617) 973-7119 or mesullivan@ctps.org.

Points and Issues Raised During Discussion

Where are the UPWP Subcommittee meetings held? (Romin Koebel) *In the MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150, 10 Park Plaza, Boston. (Steve Olanoff)*

Why is the Green Line Extension Corridor Community Impact Study not being considered for the FY 2007 UPWP? (Vincent Dixon) *In order not to duplicate efforts, it is felt that this corridor study should not be performed until after the MBTA conducts the Green Line Extension to Medford Hillside alternatives analysis. (Mary Ellen Sullivan)*

Did the Rose Kennedy Greenway Historical Trolley make the cut? (Romin Koebel) *No, not for this year, but the Inner Core Committee (ICC) requested that it be included in a future year’s UPWP. (Mary Ellen Sullivan) While the trolley may be an excellent idea, the consensus of the ICC is that this concept is years too late to be implemented. (Bill Deignan and Tom Kadzis)*

TIP

Sam Snead briefed the Advisory Council on the process used to date to develop the Draft FYs 2007-2010 TIP.

The TIP public outreach program involves communication with each municipality in the MPO region to identify TIP contacts, local-priority projects, and to gather detailed information on those projects. Two TIP How-to Seminars and a Municipal TIP Input Day were conducted. Staff has also attended MAPC subregion meetings to provide briefings and to ask for subregion priorities.

Additional steps in the process to date have been:

- Identification of funds available for programming
- Incorporation of new and updated project information into the MPO TIP database
- Providing municipalities an opportunity to review their updated project information forms
- Adding the most current MAPC-developed land use and economic development information
- Developing project evaluation matrices and rating projects based on the TIP criteria

The next major step in this year's process is a decision by the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee to release the TIP and the UPWP for public review and comment. This is currently scheduled for June 29.

For more information, contact Sam Snead at (617) 973-7129 or ssnead@ctps.org.

Points and Issues Raised During Discussion

When does the public review and comment period begin? When will the draft TIP be available to the Advisory Council? When is the next Advisory Council meeting? (Richard Canale and Marcy Crowley) *The public comment period is currently scheduled for July 10 to August 17. Draft TIPs will be available the week of July 10 in. (Sam Snead) An e-mail will be sent to Advisory Council members at that time with information on how to access a copy of the draft TIP. The next Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for July 12. (Bill Moore)*

Where is the Green Line Extension to Medford Hillside Project located in the draft TIP? (Vincent Dixon) *This information comes from the MBTA's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and will be available on June 29. (Sam Snead)*

How does a transit project get into the TIP? (Romin Koebel) *Transit projects must first be part of the CIP before they can be included in the TIP. (Mary Ellen Sullivan, Sam Snead, Bill Deignan, and Steve Olanoff)*

6. Advisory Council Committees

Freight - *Domenic D'Eramo & Frank DeMasi - Co-Chairs*

The Freight Committee will be on vacation during the months of July, and August, so there was no activity to report. Their next meeting will be held on September 13. Members are eagerly awaiting the release of the Regional Freight Study.

Regional Transportation Plan (Plan) - *Sherri Walker and Caroline Connor, Co-Chairs*

There was no activity to report.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - *Jeff Levine, Chair*

While there was no activity to report, Advisory Council members were invited to attend Transportation Planning and Programming Committee TIP development sessions.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) - *Steve Olanoff, Chair*

Steve Olanoff has been attending the meetings of the UPWP Subcommittee. They have been looking at the possibility of funding another freight study, but that appears unlikely at this time since the Regional Freight Study has not yet been released.

Membership - *Frank DeMasi, Chair*

There was no activity to report.

Program / Executive - *Richard Canale, Chair*

There was no activity to report.

Nominating - *Jeff Levine, Chair*

Members are still needed for this committee. It is planned that this committee will start meeting in July in order to set a slate of candidates by the August Advisory Council meeting and elect new officers at the September meeting. Steve Olanoff announced his intention to seek another term as Chair of the Advisory Council and noted Frank DeMasi's intention to remain the Vice Chair.

7. Member Items for Discussion

Romin Koebel suggested that the MPO consider hiring Northeastern University to perform UPWP-type studies, which would be conducted as part of students' course work. Mary Ellen Sullivan stated that those types of studies are typically performed and funded by the Volpe Center.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Richard Canale and seconded by Rick Arena. The motion passed, unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 PM.

Attachment: Attendance List for June 14, 2006

CTPS/WAM/wam

ATTACHMENT 1: *Attendance List for June 14, 2006*

**Attendance List
June 14, 2006**

Cities and Towns

Boston: Tom Kadzis

Cambridge: Bill Deignan

Revere: John Squibb

Wayland: Marcy Crowley

Westwood: Steven Olanoff, Advisory Council Chair and UPWP Committee Chair

Agencies

MassRIDES: Davida Eisenberg

MetroWest Growth Management Committee: John Stasik

Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC): Richard Canale,
Advisory Council Program, Executive and Nominating Committees Chair

Citizen Groups

Association for Public Transportation (APT): Romin Koebel

Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE): John T. Gillon

Guests and Visitors

Jim Baecker - DCR

Carl Haglund - DCR

Vincent Laurence Dixon - COGNET

Stephen Kaiser

Ed Lowney

Cheryl Ravalli

Staff (Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization / CTPS)

Jared Fijalkowski

Bill Moore

Sam Snead

Mary Ellen Sullivan