

# REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

## Summary of June 13, 2007 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 and Town of Westwood, called the meeting to order at 3:15 PM.

Steve introduced John Hersey, the new MPO staff liaison to the Advisory Council. Members, guests, visitors, and staff introduced themselves. See the attached attendance list.

Steve reminded the Council to refer to the group as the Advisory Council, not RTAC, and that the group is a council, not a committee.

FHWA has submitted comments on the regional transportation plan, JOURNEY TO 2030, and the MPO will need to address them.

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee will meet on June 21 to prepare a proposed amendment to the FFY 2007 element of the FFYs 2007-2010 Transportation Improvement Program, and a Draft 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program. It is also scheduled to discuss the FHWA recommendations for JOURNEY TO 2030 and to adopt a revised Public Participation Program.

### **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of April 11, 2007 were revised as directed, but were not included in members' packets. They were tabled for the July meeting.

The minutes from May 9, 2007, were approved unanimously.

### **3. Announcements**

S. Olanoff distributed information regarding the 2007 New England Truck Show and Rodeo and the Fuel Saving Equipment Showcase, two events sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Richard Arena, Association for Public Transportation, informed the Council about the upcoming Association for Public Transportation annual meeting on June 25, 2007. Robert Yaro, president of the Regional Plan Association, will present the keynote address.

Marilyn Wellons, Riverside Neighborhood Association, briefed the Council about recent discussions of with the Storrow Tunnel Advisory Committee (STAC). Committee meetings have addressed transportation and landscape issues, and STAC has moved the deadline of the comment period to the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of July. Each meeting includes a significant amount of transportation data from CTPS, and she would like some help collecting and considering the information.

*The Advisory Council should form an ad hoc subcommittee to help Marilyn review the several recommended alternatives in order to develop a position that supports the public good. (F. DeMasi)*

*J. Hersey should coordinate with Marilyn and to help her keep Advisory Council members updated on STAC meetings and information. (S. Olanoff)*

#### **4. Selection of Advisory Council Nominating Committee**

S. Olanoff spoke about Advisory Council annual election of officers coming up in September. Interested members should speak to Jeff Levine, head of the nominating committee. S. Olanoff announced that F. DeMasi would not be seeking chairmanship, providing a change in traditional succession to the chairmanship. Consequently, Steve outlined a number of possibilities that the nominating committee would have to consider.

#### **5. Post-natural Disaster Public/Private Partnerships in Transportation – *Presentation on disaster relief-based transportation partnerships – Chris Caplice, Executive Director, Master of Engineering in Logistics Program, Massachusetts Institute of Technology***

Center for Transportation and Logistics (CTL) offers a program with three components: work toward a master's degree in engineering and logistics; research in the classroom; and outreach to public and private partners. The Center is mostly involved in supply-chain models and often examines shipping congestion, limited capacity on existing infrastructure and understands the issues of limited funding from state government to resolve these issues.

C. Caplice highlighted discrepancies between operational concerns in the private sector and long-range infrastructure funding issues in the public sector. He pointed to a lack of dialogue between these parties and a limited understanding of the other party as a critical challenge to developing improvements in shipping and carrying. CTL holds conferences and speaks at meetings to encourage greater communication among all parties.

The Waterfront Coalition, a group of concerned business interests representing shippers, transportation providers, and others in the transportation supply chain committed to educate policy makers and the public about the economic importance of U.S. ports and foreign trade and to promote the most efficient and technologically advanced ports for the twenty-first century, organizes retail shipping in other cities and aims to alleviate port demand utilizing congestion pricing. Although the Coalition is active in Washington State and Southern California, C. Caplice is unaware of its involvement in Boston.

C. Caplice offered a case study of CTL's work with Washington State to identify emergency response and economic recovery strategies. Washington Department of Transportation includes a Freight Systems Division and supports a diversified freight network based both on redundancy (e.g. many highway lanes) and on flexibility (high-occupancy vehicle lanes) to maintain effective freight traffic in the case of an emergency. The State's transportation system distinguishes between international throughput freight, outbound freight (e.g. apples), and interstate inbound freight in order to classify its freight network.

Like most states, Washington has an emergency response plan, but it has no economic recovery plan; traditionally, economic recovery is seen as the responsibility of the business community. C. Caplice encouraged state governments to establish quarterly forums with private sector leaders to encourage public-private partnerships, to develop credible, reliable and accessible communication between the groups, and to consider legislative mechanisms that could quickly implement measures, such as temporary suspension of some regulations, during states of emergency to facilitate recovery.

C. Caplice pointed to difficult political decisions about prioritized access on limited infrastructure. For instance, during a recovery period when only two lanes of I-90 are open, who could use the highway to access Boston and when could they access it? Who would make that decision? Also, is it better to focus recovery on economic centers like ports and cities, or should the state assist its communities uniformly? To further the discussion about these political matters, CTL is identifying other states with emergency response and economic recovery policies and is holding a symposium at MIT in November with shippers, carriers and public officials.

C. Caplice offered to provide copies of CTL's presentation to the Advisory Council and a recent report about these issues to any member who requested them.

### **Points and Issues Raised During Discussion**

Chan Rodgers, Town of Medway, commented that congestion on the interstate highway system in the Boston region is going to continue to increase if we don't improve rail connections to the port.

*Inefficient and outdated trucks and non-unionized truckers decrease the region's competitive opportunities. Boston is not alone; development around the Port of Los*

*Angeles has limited rail expansion to better accommodate shipping. Meanwhile, the Ports of Tacoma, Savannah and Oakland have taken significant steps to connect rail to port, and Caribbean nations have found success with short shore shipping. (C. Caplice) Boston could not compete with regional ports like Halifax that offer double-stack rail-to-port connections. (Romin Koebel, Fenway Community Development Corporation)*

Marcy Crowley, Town of Wayland, asked how and with whom should Massachusetts' leaders begin a dialogue about disaster recovery.

*Washington State identified shippers and carriers with the greatest revenues in its three freight classifications (throughput, inbound and outbound). Policy leaders in Massachusetts could speak with the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals about future roundtable discussions about emergency response and economic recovery. (C. Caplice)*

M. Wellons expressed concern about the absence of electronic communication in an emergency situation.

*CTL's experiences have not addressed this lack of infrastructure, because the primacy of this infrastructure would warrant its immediate repair. CTL takes the state's interest in repairing communication infrastructure for granted. Observing exceptional recovery efforts in California after a truck fire on the Oakland's highway network disabled regional freight for a week, public officials in Massachusetts should aim to have similar mechanisms in place for suspending certain regulations in order to facilitate immediate recovery. (C. Caplice)*

M. Crowley asked how leaders in Washington State determine who would respond and assume direction during an emergency. *First response personnel and direction relates to the type of emergency presented. Different emergencies generate different responses. (C. Caplice)*

F. DeMasi asked how Washington State public safety officials prepare for emergencies. *The Department of Homeland Security performs annual simulation analyses at Fort Lewis to train for these responses and commented that most of the Department's efforts focus on port security. (C. Caplice)*

Richard Arena, Association for Public Transportation, commented that Massachusetts drivers would struggle with congestion pricing and/or closing an interstate corridor altogether, because there is an expectation to use the highway at any point for an expected cost. *Has CTL has considered a prioritization procedure for emergency response that may involve closing interstate corridors? CTL has looked at the issue in Washington State but was unaware of similar policies in Massachusetts. (C. Caplice)*

Michael Abend, American Planning Association/Massachusetts Chapter, asked how long congestion pricing typically extends into recovery phases. *This question points to*

*political policy that both is different in each state and is beyond the interest of CTL at this time. (C. Caplice)*

R. Koebel asked if CTL offers recommendations to or coordinates with the Transportation Research Board (TRB). *Previous involvement with TRB has been ineffective, because the members are generally academics and legislators with little practical interest in shipping and carrying matters. (C. Caplice)*

## **6. Development of Draft Certification Documents**

### **a. Unified Planning Work Program**

Mary Ellen Sullivan, MPO staff, provided an overview of the development of the FY 2008 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and she and Efi Pagitsas, MPO staff, reported on the subregional outreach conducted for the development of the Fiscal Year 2008 UPWP and requested input from the subregion. Staff has worked with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council subregions to get ideas about mobility and other transportation needs around the region. (See the attached handout for a summary of ideas and locations of safety and mobility concerns identified by each subregion).

### **Points and Issues Raised During Discussion**

F. DeMasi was concerned that the recommendations of the Freight Subcommittee were not being addressed. Some of the subcommittee's recommendations involved access to ports, MBTA improvements, economic viability of public/private partnerships, and double-stack capabilities.

*Several agencies (MBTA, Massport and EOT, specifically) share concern for these issues. (R. Arena)*

*The UPWP will consider the subcommittee's recommendations at its next meeting. (S. Olanoff)*

M. Abend was concerned that the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is not involved in the MPO even though some of the projects in front of the Advisory Council involve properties owned by DCR. *The MPO structure is determined in its Memorandum of Understanding. (M.E. Sullivan)*

M. Abend asked which organization was responsible for prioritizing projects as they may pertain to local (e.g. Rte. 2/Elm St.) or regional (e.g. I-93/I-95) planning issues. *The UPWP Subcommittee evaluates regional concerns appropriate for the MPO to consider. (M.E. Sullivan)*

### **b. Transportation Improvement Program**

Hayes Morrison updated the Advisory Council about TIP changes. The MPO will revise the 2007 draft due to cost estimate increases that have occurred since '07 TIP

was approved, leading to an inability to program sufficient funds for the projects listed.

H. Morrison informed the Advisory Council that prior to the upcoming TPPC meeting a draft table would be distributed to help the evaluation of projects. Municipal TIP contacts will receive emails about the meeting before Thursday and about the meeting's results on Friday.

*There will be very limited opportunity for public input. (S. Olanoff)*

## **7. Advisory Council Committees**

Storrow Tunnel and Nominating Subcommittees were discussed earlier in the meeting.

## **8. Member Items for Discussion and Other Business**

C. Rodgers commented that DCR should be a part of the MPO  
*MassHighway would assume responsibility for DCR roadway projects in the future. (S. Olanoff)*

*Federal authorities review MPO practices every four years and request public input about MPO policies at that time, suggesting that these comments would be best suited for that federal review period. (M.E. Sullivan)*

## **9. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm.

### **Attachment:**

1. Attendance List for June 13, 2007

### **Cities and Towns**

Marcy Crowley, Wayland  
Frank DeMasi, Wellesley  
Bill Dryer, Cambridge  
Kristina Johnson, Quincy  
Steve Olanoff, Westwood  
Laura Wiener, Arlington

### **Agencies**

Romin Koebel, Fenway Community Development Corporation  
John D. Marr, Town of Needham  
Chan Rodgers, Town of Medway

### **Citizen Groups**

Michael Abend, American Planning Association, Massachusetts Chapter

Richard Arena, Association for Public Transportation

Marilyn Wellons, Riverside Neighborhood Association

John McQueen, WalkBoston

### **Guests and Visitors**

Marilyn MacNab

Robert Sturgis

### **MPO Staff**

John Hersey

Anne McGahan

Hayes Morrison

Efi Pagitsas