

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting Summary for August 14, 2002

Chairman's Report – Marcy Crowley

Marcy Crowley opened the meeting at 3:05 PM.

Cathy Lewis, CTPS, discussed the MPO's application to the Walkable Communities program, which would bring experts from the National Center for Bicycling and Walking to our region to lead a series of eight planning workshops. A motion was made, seconded, and voted unanimously to authorize M. Crowley to send a letter supporting the application.

The MPO is conducting workshops throughout the region to solicit public comments on the draft certification documents now in circulation: the FY 2003 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), FY 2003-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Environmental Justice Addendum to the 2000-2025 Regional Transportation Plan, and the Amendment to the 2002 TIP. Council members are encouraged to participate. The documents will be adopted by the MPO in September.

The Council decided to hold its September 11th meeting as scheduled. This will ensure that full discussions on the TIP will take place prior to Planning and Programming Committee's decisions on the documents, so that the M. Crowley can submit the Council's comprehensive views.

The Membership committee is hard at work.

Stuart O'Brien, Somerville, volunteered to serve as the Council's representative on the MPO's Environmental Justice Committee.

Approval of Meeting Minutes, June 12, 2002 and July 10, 2002

Motions to approve each set of minutes as submitted were made, seconded, and voted unanimously.

Unified Planning Work Program

Robert Sturgis, Chairman, presented the recommendations of the committee. The committee approved of the UPWP but suggested that it should be revised to include expanded scopes for:

- The Braintree Split study, focusing on sources of congestion outside the immediate study area, perhaps as far away as Kingston, Route 53, and I-95.
- The Assembly Square study to include Route 28 issues.
- The Fitchburg Line improvements to include access and parking.

The committee suggested the Council strongly support the Suburban Transit study, and, if funding is constrained, use the MetroWest area as the focal point, and the Green Line to Medford Hillside study.

A motion was made, seconded, and voted unanimously to adopt the committee's recommendations, including the Council's request to be involved in the development of work programs.

Points Raised During Discussion:

- The UPWP is fiscally constrained and adding or expanding projects would require adjusting the current list.
- Members wish to ask the Planning and Programming Committee to allow UPWP committee review of work programs prior to their adoption.
- The committee will continue its work throughout the year, and will look for progress reports on some studies, particularly Suburban Transit.
- If the UPWP budget is too constrained, one way to accommodate funding the recommended expanded worksopes is to phase the studies over several years.
- The UPWP Committee should be open to additional members.
- The Suburban Transit study is very important. At least one other transit authority is able to provide these services.
- The region needs more publicly-available transportation. Transit does not seem to be reaching more destinations, although there are many roadway and parking improvements.

Transportation Improvement Program

Malcolm Davis, Chairman, reported that he has attended many meetings discussing the FY 2003-2008 TIP and the pilot TIP criteria and that he is impressed with the knowledge and dedication of the MPO members, the Council Chairman and Vice Chairman, and staff in preparing the TIP. It is a difficult, complicated process. There is a significant amount of information generated to support the selection of projects and, in some instances, communities chose to attend and advocate for their projects. The Planning and Programming Committee then has more information for its selection process. The Council Chairman and Vice Chairman have worked hard in this process and have represented the Council extremely well.

The Planning and Programming Committee developed draft criteria for use as a pilot for guiding selection of projects for the TIP. The selection process uses both subjective information and quantitative data. The Planning and Programming Committee would like the TIP process to start earlier and use more objective criteria. There should be outreach to the communities on the criteria prior to the development of the next TIP.

The Council will vote on the FY 2003-2008 TIP and the FY 2002 TIP Amendment at its September meeting.

Ken Goff, Executive Director of the South Shore Tri-Town Development Corporation reported that the Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs issued a Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) certificate to the Tri-Town Commission allowing it to proceed with its development activities. The certificate said that there were not significant environmental impacts and that the development program met the MEPA criteria. It instructed the Commission to expand the multi-modal components of the project and look at alternatives to new Route 3 access. There are several related Route 18 improvement projects in the FY 2003 TIP.

Points Raised During Discussion:

- The TIP selection criteria should be integrated into the MassHighway Project Review Committee process.
- If the region becomes non-compliant regarding its air quality, will the region's transportation funding be affected, either by being penalized or eligible for additional CMAQ funding?
- Please provide an explanation for how the Route 2A project in Arlington, at 100% design and included in the previous TIP's FY 2003 element, has been dropped from the FY 2003-2008 TIP's 2003 element to the supplemental list. Arlington has spent \$350,000 in design and has completed the utility work with an expectation that it would be included in an upcoming TIP. The road is now patched.
- There should be more description of the Regional Enhancement Program listed on page 3 of the FY 2002 TIP Amendment.
- Would it be possible to shift funds from highway projects to bicycle, traffic calming, or pedestrian projects?
- The Planning and Programming Committee has scheduled a meeting to discuss the Route 128 Improvement Project.
- It is a big challenge to program new projects when there are serious financial constraints and when much of the funding is taken out of the total available for MPO programming.
- The transit portion of the TIP is primarily from the MBTA's Capital Investment Program. The Advisory Council should comment on that document, since that is where the decisions on the TIP originate. The MBTA should be invited to the next meeting to discuss the transit projects in the TIP.
- The MBTA's interest in expanding its bus service to include coach service should be discussed in the TIP.

Environmental Justice Addendum to the Regional Transportation Plan

The MPO has established a permanent Environmental Justice Committee to provide low-income and minority perspectives and views on the region's transportation planning. There is representation from a broad geographic area.

A motion was made, seconded, and voted to approve the Environmental Justice Addendum with a request that outreach to the low-income and minority communities continue and include the communities of Milford, Hudson, and Marlborough.

Points Raised During Discussion

- There should be continuing efforts to reach out to low-income and minority communities. Milford, Hudson, and Marlborough are communities to be considered for representation.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Bill Deignan reported that the committee has met and will prepare a letter proposing nominations that will be sent to members with the next monthly mailing. The candidates will be asked to prepare a short paragraph on what they feel they can contribute. The committee will nominate candidates for Chairman and Vice Chairman. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the September meeting.

Points Raised During Discussion:

- The current Vice Chairman was elected under the Joint Regional Transportation Committee bylaws that provided for automatic transition from Vice Chairman to Chairman. A member thought that these rules should remain in force this year. Others said that the new bylaws supercede.

Report of the Membership Committee

Richard Canale, Chairman of the Membership Committee, reported that the next meeting would be August 22nd, 10:00 AM, at 10 Park Plaza. The meeting is open to the entire Council. The committee will have recommendations prior to the next meeting.

There were twenty-eight responses to the survey. Some members talked about their organization and its needs; others talked about the need to develop a regional perspective.

Member Items and Announcements

Marvin Miller announced the birth of his grandson. The Council extended its congratulations.

The Association for Public Transportation is holding its directors meeting on August 14th at Faneuil Hall.

A future site visit to downtown Lynn was suggested, hosted by the Mayor and the Lynn Business Partnership.

Other Business/Adjourn

No other business was raised.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM.

Meeting Action Items:

- Request Planning and Programming Committee's agreement to provide the UPWP committee the opportunity to review and comment on draft study worksopes.
- Find out if non-attainment status has an effect, either positive or negative, on the region's funding.
- Provide an explanation for how the Route 2A project in Arlington, at 100% design and included in FY 2003 of the previous TIP, has been changed in the FY 2003-2008 TIP to the supplemental list.
- Invite the MBTA to the September meeting to discuss the transit portion of the TIP.

**Regional Transportation Advisory Council Attendance
August 14, 2002**

Cities and Towns

Arlington, Alan McClennan
Boston, Tom Kadzis
Braintree, John Maximuk
Cambridge, Bill Deignan
Framingham, Arnold Pinsley
Somerville, Stuart O'Brien
Wayland, Marcy Crowley
Westwood, Steve Olanoff

Agencies

Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Jim Gallagher
Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission, Denise Garcia
MetroWest Growth Management Committee, Phil Hodge and Charles Gaffney
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination, Richard Canale
South Shore Coalition, Jeff Lewis

Citizen Groups

American Council of Engineering Companies, Marvin Miller
American Planning Association/Massachusetts, Bill Reyelt
Association for Public Transportation, Fred Moore
Boston Society of Architects, Robert Sturgis
MASCO, Andrew Lenton
New England Bus Transportation Association, Thomas Lenthall
Walk Boston, Malcom Davis

Visitors

Ed Lowney, Malden
Ken Goff, South Shore Tri-Town Development Corporation
Anne Fanton, Central Artery Environmental Oversight Committee
Kent Stasiowski, Boston Resident
Wig Zamore, Mystic View Task Force
Cheryl Ravalli, AACT
Herbert Pence, Gulbankian Bus

Staff

Cathy Lewis, CTPS
Mary Ellen Sullivan, CTPS
Jonathan Church, CTPS
Pam Wolfe, CTPS