

# REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

## Meeting Summary of August 11, 2004

### 1. Chair's Report – Phil Hodge, Chair

Phil Hodge called the meeting to order at 3:10 PM. Members, invited guests, visitors, and staff introduced themselves. (See the attached attendance list.) Jeff Levine was unable to attend this meeting and so no update on the last Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting held on August 5 was available. Pam Wolfe, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), shared one item from that meeting. The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee voted to circulate a draft adjustment to the FY2004-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) selecting two projects for the Suburban Mobility Program. The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee is scheduled to take action on this at their September 2, 2004, meeting.

No comments have been received yet on the drafts of the FY 2005-2009 TIP and FY 2005 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Comments are due August 30. If anyone has any comments, please send them to Phil Hodge at [Phil@pjhodge.com](mailto:Phil@pjhodge.com) or Bill Moore at [bill.moore@ctps.org](mailto:bill.moore@ctps.org).

The National Highway Institute of Federal Highway Administration will hold a freight planning training course on August 30 and 31 in the State Transportation Building. Council members Frank DeMasi and Arnold Pinsley are scheduled to attend. If anyone else is interested, they should contact Phil Hodge at (508) 485-8790, Arnie Soolman with CTPS at (617) 973-7146 or Bill Moore at CTPS at (617) 973-7144.

### 2. Approval of Meeting Minutes of July 14, 2004

Fred Moore asked to add to the minutes text on his question and Herb Pence's answer from the Rose Kennedy Greenway Streetcar Concept discussion on the impact to ridership of a switch from rubber-tire to fixed-rail operation.

In response to a question by Arnold Pinsley, Herb Pence confirmed that the Rose Kennedy Greenway Streetcar Concept would be powered by an overhead 600V DC trolley wire.

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made, seconded, and passed, unanimously.

### 3. Announcements

John Businger of the National Corridors Initiative announced an upcoming seminar in New Brunswick that will be held on September 18, 2004, that will feature former

Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis and include a 19-minute train ride on an historic train set. The purpose of the seminar is to explore possible ways of using the gas tax to finance alternative modes of transportation.

#### **4. Briefing on the 2004 Congestion Management System (CMS) Report – Lourenço Dantas, CMS Manager, CTPS**

Lourenço Dantas, CMS Manager, CTPS, led a discussion on the 2004 Congestion Management System (CMS) Report. The CMS is a federally required monitoring program that is designed to identify mobility concerns, provide timely information on transportation systems performance, and recommend actions to the MPO to address these mobility concerns.

A mobility concern occurs when a transportation system is not operating at its full potential. The monitoring is conducted on roadways, public transit, park-and-ride lots, HOV lanes, travel demand management (TDM) systems, bicycle use and pedestrian access. Some of the factors that are monitored for roadways include traffic delay and speed, daily volume to capacity analysis, and past-present comparison. For transit, on-time performance and passenger crowding are monitored. Utilization and the time a lot reaches capacity are monitored for park-and-ride lots. For HOV lanes, time-savings over general-purpose lanes are monitored. For TDM monitoring, current TDM programs are analyzed and described. Using the perspective of bicyclists and pedestrians, the CMS monitors access to transit, the suitability of the roadway network for on-street bicycle use and the viability of the off-street bicycle network. CMS monitoring is conducted using various forms of data collection and analysis of that data. Some of the results from the monitoring conducted by the CMS showed the following: traffic on 40% of roadways is traveling below maximum speed limits, traffic is experiencing delays at 50% of traffic signals, 70% of park-and-ride lots fill up, and 50% of park-and-ride lots fill up before the last peak morning train departs. The CMS provides input for the three Federal certification documents, the UPWP, the TIP and the Plan. It is also used in the Travel Demand Model and in various other transportation studies. Some recommendations for the next CMS cycle are to continue systematic monitoring, provide CMS data on-line, and incorporate additional areas of mobility concern.

#### **Point and Issues Raised During Discussion:**

- Does the CMS include analysis of curb cuts or access management? (Malcolm Davis) *No, not at this time, but perhaps will be in the future.*
- Do communities support this effort and use this information to do a better job in the future? (Malcolm Davis) *Generally, communities are supportive of this effort, but react to the information provided in different ways.*
- Is there a program to assess pedestrian and bicycle access to transit stations? (Malcolm Davis) *Yes, both MassHighway and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority are involved with these assessments and will be making recommendations to the MPO on ways to improve that access.*

- Is the MPO doing anything to promote intermodalism and regionalism in their activities? (John Businger) *Yes, these issues are addressed in the Regional Transportation Plan, the document that looks ahead twenty-five years into the future.*
- Can the views and experiences of the members of the New England Bus Transportation Association and other bus service providers be included in future CMS Reports? (Herb Pence) *Yes, bus service providers can be contacted in the future.*
- Lower speeds are not necessarily a bad thing. They can also be indicative of higher capacities. (Herb Pence) *Agreed and it was not the intent of that CMS finding to draw that conclusion.*
- What is the methodology used to determine the suitability of the CMS arterial roadway network for on-street bicycle use? (Ted Hamann) *The suitability index was created using generally available and accepted reference materials.*
- Are there any bicycle counts available and, if so, are they used in the CMS? (Ted Hamann) *No, not at this time, but it is something that is being worked on for future CMS Reports.*
- Was trucking studied as part of this CMS Report? (Frank DeMasi) *It was not covered in this study, but may be in the future.*
- Can the CMS be used to educate communities on alternative ways, other than simply widening roadways, to increase the capacity of the transportation network? (Fred Moore) *Yes, this information is available for anyone working to improve mobility in the region. The report provides information on various transportation modes.*
- Is there any measure in the current CMS methodology that points out lack of connections in the current system? (Phil Hodge) *This is beyond the scope of the current CMS Report, but it may be examined in future.*

**5. Presentation on Massachusetts Seaport Development Policies and Activities – Mr. Richard Armstrong, Director of Port Development/Executive Secretary of the Governor’s Seaport Advisory Council**

Richard Armstrong, the Director of Port Development and the Executive Secretary of the Governor’s Seaport Advisory Council (SAC), led a discussion on SAC’s mission and the policies and activities that are underway at the Port of Massachusetts. The Port of Massachusetts is made up of the ports of the cities of Gloucester, Salem, Boston, Fall River and New Bedford. The membership of SAC consists of the Lieutenant Governor, the mayors of all five port cities, the Secretaries of the Environmental Affairs, Transportation, and Finance Departments, the Director of MassPort, and representatives of the port users. Reporting to the Lieutenant Governor, SAC was created during the Weld administration by executive order as both an advisory body to keep the Governor apprised of issues affecting the Port of Massachusetts and as a promoter of the ports, especially the four non-Boston ports, which had suffered some neglect up to that time. Other mission areas include port security, “short sea” or coastal shipping initiatives, which are designed to alleviate congestion from truck freight shipments moving up and down Interstate 95, adherence to Coast Guard regulations, fishing, relationships with the

Coastal Coalition, the North Atlantic Corridor Association, the North Atlantic Ports Association, the I-95 Corridor Coalition and the Short Sea Cooperative Program.

SAC funding comes from the Seaport Bond Bill, a \$300 Million spending authorization passed in 1996, managed by the Environmental Affairs Department. Seaport Bond Bill funds have been divided up among three areas; rail, coastal improvements, and dredging. To date, SAC has spent about \$55 million on various port improvement projects, including those performed in support of the fishing industry. Since MassPort has its own bonding capacity and takes care of the Port of Boston, this development and improvement work primarily occurs at the other four ports.

The \$100 million earmarked for rail freight improvement projects, primarily consisting of the raising of bridges to allow transport of railroad flat cars carrying double-stacked shipping containers, remains unspent due to transition issues remaining from the dissolution of Conrail. Mr. Armstrong invited anyone with questions or comments to contact him at (508) 999-3030 or check out the SAC website at [www.state.ma.us/seaports](http://www.state.ma.us/seaports).

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

- What has happened to the \$100 million that was to be spent to allow double-stack trains to operate along the CSX line from Worcester to the Boston pier? (Malcolm Davis and Fred Moore) *This money could not be spent due to unresolved transition issues between Conrail and CSX, the lack of rail lines into Boston's Conley and Moran terminals, the lack of a rail yard in South Boston, the sale of the Allston Yard, uncertain economics, public/private partnerships, and other outstanding issues. Spending authority has since lapsed. Once these issues are resolved, this money will have to be re-authorized. It is not clear when or if this will occur.*
- Are the South Coast connections contained in the new Transportation Bond Bill likely to go forward? (Frank DeMasi) *Yes, it appears that these have a good chance of moving forward.*
- Has anyone looked into the City of Lynn as a potential port? (Fred Moore) *Yes, but it requires extensive dredging of highly contaminated material to make it a viable port. This makes it uneconomical at this time.*
- Will city-to-city, inter-coastal packet shipping ever come back? (Arnold Pinsley) *Yes, due to congestion and other issues, the economics of inter-coastal, or as it called today, "short sea" or "coastal" shipping is making it attractive again.*
- What's the turn-around time on the trip to Iceland? (Herb Pence) *It's about 36-48 hours.*

#### **6. Advisory Council Committees**

Regional Transportation Plan (Plan) - *Sherri Walker and Caroline Connor, Co-Chairs*  
There was no activity to report.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - *Phil Hodge, Acting Chair*  
There was no activity to report.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) - *Steve Olanoff, Chair*  
There was no activity to report.

Membership - *Jeff Levine, Chair*  
There was no activity to report.

Environmental Justice - *Tuck O'Brien, Chair*  
There was no activity to report.

Freight – *Domenic D'Eramo, Acting Chair*  
There was no activity to report.

Nominating Committee - *Richard Canale, Chair*  
A slate of candidates will be presented at the September meeting. Anyone desiring to run should contact Richard Canale.

## **7. Member Items for Discussion**

Fred Moore inquired about possible bike path projects in the TIP. The Chair responded that he believes that there were some included as part of the mitigation agreements of the Central Artery/Tunnel Project and that this question would be forwarded to the CTPS TIP Manager for a response.

Tom Lenthall shared his comments on the MBTA Program for Mass Transportation, which he will submit to the MBTA. He asked about the level of funding for trackage, signals and switch improvements in the Lawrence/Andover area. He asked whether the affected carriers had been notified. He said there has been no discussion about the future operator for the MBTA Silver Line to the airport. He noted that there are six private bus carriers that are members of the New England Bus Transportation Association that should be considered when assessing impacts to private carriers, as, he said, is required by Federal statute.

Romin Koebel, Fred Moore, Herb Pence and Phil Hodge discussed the possibility of and supported the inclusion of the Rose Kennedy Greenway Streetcar Concept as presented by Herb Pence at the July Advisory Council meeting in the FY 2005 or a future Unified Planning Work Program.

## **8. Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **9. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 PM.

**Attachment:** Attendance, August 11, 2004

## **Attendance**

### **August 11, 2004**

#### **Cities and Towns**

Boston: James McCarthy - BTD  
Needham: John Marr  
Revere: John Squibb  
Wellesley: Frank DeMasi

#### **Agencies**

Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission: Denise J. Garcia  
Metropolitan Area Planning Council: Jim Gallagher  
MetroWest Growth Management Committee: Philip J. Hodge  
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination: Richard Canale

#### **Citizen Groups**

American Planning Association/Massachusetts Chapter: Susan Lynch  
Association for Public Transportation: Fred R. Moore  
Boston Society of Civil Engineers Section ASCE: Nick Rubino  
Institute of Transportation Engineers: John Gillon  
MassBike: Ted Hamann  
MassRIDES: Donna Smallwood  
Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization, Inc.: Christine Apicella  
National Corridors Initiative: John Businger  
New England Bus Transportation Association: Herb Pence  
*Walk Boston*: Malcolm M. Davis

#### **Visitors**

Rick Armstrong – Seaport Advisory Council  
Tricia Christello – Massachusetts Motor Transportation Association  
Romin Koebel  
Thomas Lenthall  
Ed Lowney  
Anne Lynch – Massachusetts Motor Transportation Association  
Arnold Pinsley

#### **Staff (CTPS)**

Lourenço Dantas  
Anne McGahan  
Heather Ostertog  
Efi Pagitsas  
Pam Wolfe  
Patricia Davis  
Bill Moore