

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



Regional Transportation Advisory Council

February 10, 2016, Meeting

3:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

Meeting Summary

Introductions

T. Bennett, Chair (Cambridge) called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 6)

T. Bennett introduced the new CTPS Outreach Coordinator, Jennifer Rowe who will be the public participation specialist concerned with public involvement relating to MPO activities.

Chair's Report-Tegin Bennett, Chair

T. Bennett reported on the recent Boston MPO meeting discussions. She explained that at the January 21st meeting TIP Manager, Sean Pfalzer, presented the results of the analysis of the new TIP selection criteria. The analysis reviewed a set of projects based on the new criteria and compared to the old rating system. The study showed some shifting of projects throughout the region, but each region ended up with the same number of projects under the two rating systems. Some of the bike paths and trails scored slightly lower on the new criteria as a result of a large number of Complete Streets type projects, which includes bicycle and pedestrian improvements on streets. The MPO was supportive of the new criteria while adding more clarity and level of detail to them. S. Pfalzer is currently working on applying the new criteria to the Universe of TIP Projects. The MPO also reviewed issues related to Everett truck freight traffic.

Minutes - January 13, 2016

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 13 meeting was made and seconded. The minutes were approved as amended.

FFY 2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Workshop: Considering ideas for new planning studies - Alexandra Kleyman, UPWP Manager, CTPS

A. Kleyman provided an introduction to ongoing activities along with important dates coming up and a brief look at some of the projects that are in the Universe of Planning Projects. She introduced the workshop as a session to get ideas on possible planning projects.

The MPO's UPWP Committee will meet next week to discuss the draft universe. Staff will gather more budget information and set project priorities in March and April. The staff recommendation is scheduled to be reviewed and discussed by the MPO in April. The recommendation will be approved by the UPWP committee and then advanced to the MPO for approval in early May. The MPO will release the draft UPWP document for public review and comment in May and will, upon review and consideration of public comment, approve the UPWP document.

Projects that are currently in the Universe of Projects came from MAPC sub-regions, MPO Outreach meetings, the UPWP Committee, last year's unfunded projects from the UPWP Universe of Projects, comments from the Federal Certification Review Process and new ideas from MPO staff. Some of the categories include active transportation; safety and security; transit; land use; environment and economy; roadway network performance; transportation equity and accessibility; and other technical support. Some of the projects are ongoing in nature and have been welcomed by local partners such as the project titled "Addressing Safety, Mobility and Access on Sub-Regional Roadways."

Several projects that went unfunded last year include municipal pedestrian network studies and one study on closing gaps in the bicycle network. There are also new projects that result from ongoing work including an on-street parking utilization study; prioritizing streets for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and reviewing resulting parking demand for BRT; a before-after study to consider project impacts. Other new ideas include a low-cost complete streets project; a project to review para-transit travel patterns in the region. It is possible there will be seven or eight completely new planning projects this year.

A. Kleyman distributed a "brain-storming" guide to help the discussion format.

Questions and Comments:

T. Bennett asked if the value of the ongoing planning projects were being critically

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assessed to determine if they are competitive with newer projects. A. Kleyman explained that some ongoing projects incorporate new ideas that have much community interest like the Livable Community Workshops which incorporate newer concepts while operating under an ongoing framework.

A. Kleyman listed several new studies currently in the Universe in response to a question from M. Wellons. The projects are still being developed, so definitive planning studies are not complete at this time.

M. Gowing asked if a study is being undertaken on how the UPWP planning studies advance to TIP level funded projects. L. Dantas explained program areas of staff activity that have led to local project implementation. Many of these programs have been popular with municipalities and tend to be requested.

David Ernst asked if there are any bicycle studies reviewing bicycle gap studies. A. Kleyman explained that three study areas for the gap analysis studies have been selected. T. Bennett added that one of the locations is in Cambridge at Central Square. CTPS staff is underway implementing this study.

D. Ernst expressed an interest in seeing not just follow-up as a means of qualifying the success of a project, but also mentioned the validity of securing improvements in methodology, with regard to bicycle data collection and analysis.

B. McGaw asked about the discrete boundaries of the fiscal years in which studies are undertaken. A. Kleyman explained that some studies take less than a year, but some are completed after the end of the fiscal year. B. McGaw also expressed interest in the follow-on value of staff studies and asked if the studies are being implemented. A. Kleyman explained that the project proponent typically takes the responsibility to implement the study findings. As previously mentioned, studies are underway to do just that. One study will look at the before and after conditions of several projects to determine if they are being implemented.

L. Dantas indicated that one recent study was presented as a topic at the Transportation Research Board Conference this year. He explained that some of the studies are used to inform internal decision-making process in model development or that are used in building up to the next long range plan.

M. Wellons was interested in finding out about specific data sources including origin-destination studies for bicycle paths. T. Bennett indicated that there were no specific origin-destination studies but that MassDOT has conducted data collection on some general path and roadway characteristics.

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L. Dantas indicated that one of the considerations in developing projects concerns emerging data needs and whether there is data to support analytical tools and the travel demand model. Much comes from the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Statewide Travel Survey. Hubway has good origin-destination (O-D) data which, if available, may help in future project selection.

T. Bennett mentioned the availability of certain apps that track bicycle trips of the user. Bike capital infrastructure investment is not so much data driven as it is more of a gravitational consideration (build it and they will come). One proposed new study would look into protected bike lanes and would gather data to determine before and after conditions and public perceptions and greenhouse gas considerations.

A. Kleyman asked if there additional themes or specific project ideas from members. L. Dantas explained that an internal (CTPS) Data Committee meets to understand the available data resources and what may be needed in the future. M. Gowing asked if MassBike has data and was informed by D. Ernst that they do not have a formal data source but it participates in data collection for some studies.

T. Bennett suggested that a study to review the best utilization of parking is undertaken. Such a study might consider the use of space by active transportation or exclusive priority bus lanes. L. Dantas added that emerging technologies are making parking optimization possible. There is also potential planning study to consider land use planning and zoning requirements for attaining desired outcomes.

S. Olanoff mentioned a study of MBTA lot pricing study. A. Kleyman explained that the study will be altered somewhat and will be considered in the Universe this year. He felt fare structure and low-threshold ridership should be studied as the non-rush hour use is so low. Olanoff asked if marketing studies could be considered to inform MBTA's marketing strategies.

B. McGaw expressed an interest in studying the impact of open-ended development on the transit system. He felt a capacity study of the transit system should be considered in assessing the impact of new development. He also suggested that a study could ask how to make the area better in light of transit capacity constraints. All transportation modes need to be reviewed in terms of growth and development.

J. Rowe asked about a study of bicycle-pedestrian improvements and measuring their impacts. She explained how low-cost measures using case studies could be undertaken to determine project effectiveness and aid in longer-term investments.

B. Steinberg asked if inventories for parking are available and advocated that a full study should involve all private parking.

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P. Nelson suggested a study on how winter conditions affect bicycling and the occasional impact on transit ridership. The study might identify specific details of rider preferences.

D. Ernst expressed a concern about defining research points too narrowly. He felt studies within the context of the UPWP may all share common elements including quality of service, schedule, marketing, weather conditions and mode shift and all of these elements can be addressed in proposed studies.

T. Bennett summarized some of the broader themes that were mentioned including data availability, smart parking, transit priority, bicycles (facilities and winter cycling), before-after studies, marketing, and information.

S. Ringler expressed concern about the scale of the studies being considered. She feels that expanded transit service is the key to meeting future needs.

J. McDougal expressed a need to look outside the Boston region. Other MPOs and cities abroad could be contacted to share best practices when trying to solve given transit and transportation problems. L. Dantas explained the most study work scopes conducted by CTPS include literature review as well as citations from other comparable MPOs in other areas for identifying best practices.

A. Kleyman mentioned that the next step in the process is the Committee meeting on February 18 where the Draft Universe will be reviewed. March and April will be time for refining the projects in the universe and advancing a staff recommendation to the Committee. Public comment on the UPWP will start in early May.

Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

T. Bennett relayed that C. Porter, 3C Documents Committee Chair, plans to meet before the next Advisory Council meeting on March 9, to review the UPWP Universe of Projects.

T. Bennett mentioned that public comment period on MBTA Schedule Changes, Late Night Service, and Fare Increases will end on February 12. Links to these proposals are available on the email sent last week and at the MBTA's webpage.

M. Gowing announced that the new Acton train station and the commuter rail double-tracking projects are now open. Acton now also has a town financed fixed-route bus service.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:20 PM.

Attendance

Agencies (Voting)

MassRides

Gary St. Fleur

Municipalities (Voting)

Acton

Mike Gowing

Belmont

Robert McGaw

Brookline

Dan Martin

Cambridge

Tegin Bennett

Millis

Ed Chisholm

Needham

David Montgomery

Weymouth

Owen MacDonald

Citizen Groups (Voting)

AACT

Mary Ann Murray

American Council of Engineering Companies

Fred Moseley

Association for Public Transportation

Barry M Steinberg

Boston Society of Architects

Schuyler Larrabee

Massachusetts Bus Association

Mark Sanborn

MassBike

David Ernst

MASCO

Paul Nelson

National Corridors Initiative

John Businger

Riverside Neighborhood Association

Marilyn Wellons

WalkBoston

John McQueen

MPO Municipalities, Agencies & Other Non-Voting

Boston

Tom Kadzis

MassDOT - Aeronautics Division

Steve Rawding

TRIC

Steve Olanoff

Guests

MassDOT - Aeronautics

Mike Garrity

Malden Resident

Ed Lowney

Wellesley Resident

Damaris Whittlesey

350 Mass

John MacDougall

350 Mass

Susan Ringler

ACE

Christopher Blackler

Staff

Lourenço Dantas

Aly Kleyman

Matt Archer

David Fargen