



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

January 10, 2018, Meeting

3:00 PM–4:30 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4, 10 Park Plaza,
Boston

Tegin Teich, Chair, representing the City of Cambridge

Introductions

See Attendance, page 8.

1. Chair's Report—*Tegin Teich, City of Cambridge*

T. Teich led the meeting in a moment of silent reflection in remembrance of Frank DeMasi, a longtime member of the Advisory Council, who passed away on December 12, 2017.

A Massachusetts State Rail Plan meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2018, in Worcester.

At the December 21, 2017, Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting, members addressed the project selection process for projects that make it to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Ali Kleyman, TIP Manager, MPO, presented an update of project evaluation criteria to determine which projects are selected for funding in the TIP. Scott Peterson, the MPO's Director of Technical Services, also presented the "Connected and Autonomous Vehicles and the Boston MPO—A First Look" report. The presentation touched on modeling considerations resulting from increased autonomous vehicles on the roadway.

The draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for the Allston I-90 Interchange is open for public comment until February 9, 2018; interested individuals are encouraged to submit comments. Considerable discussion is focused on the lack of transit alternatives in the options being presented.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2017, meeting (*posted*) was made and seconded. The minutes were approved. David Montgomery abstained.

3. Complete Streets Program—*Michelle Danila, Complete Streets Engineer, MassDOT*

M. Danila introduced herself and reviewed her role at Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Complete Streets Engineer. Her design-oriented career has focused on improving streets for pedestrians and bicyclists and developing related guidebooks. She is responsible for reviewing all projects throughout the design process that come to MassDOT through the TIP and coordinates MassDOT's healthy transportation initiatives and the Complete Streets Funding Program. She also works with all departments and committees.

The goal of Complete Streets (CS) is to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and drivers who share the roadways. Some of the benefits of adopting CS are improved safety, equity, health benefits, mode shift, congestion relief, and accessibility for people with disabilities.

The CS Funding Program was launched in 2016 and was aimed at providing funding for local roadways. The program has a tiered framework where Tier 1 focuses on policy, Tier 2 addresses planning issues, and Tier 3 deals with construction. Following the approval of a project at a lower tier, it advances to the next level.

Tier 1 is to train municipal staff on CS. Cities and towns must adopt a CS policy through its representative council. They may submit a letter of intent to adopt a policy within a year.

Tier 2 is to develop a five-year plan to address service gaps and safety improvements and develop a Prioritization Plan, or a hierarchy of funding priorities that align with local plans and roadway work.

Tier 3 involves project construction funding that allows up to \$400K in reimbursement funding for projects that are listed in the Prioritization Plan. MassDOT scores and ranks the applications and then contracts with the local government in a reimbursement program that is similar to the Chapter 90 process. In the most recent round of submissions, MassDOT received 41 applicants requesting more than \$15M worth of projects.

Some examples of eligible projects include shared-use paths, bike lanes, pedestrian safety improvement crosswalks, bike racks at transit stops, bus stop improvements, and improved access to transit.

The CS program operates through an online-based system connected to MassDOT for cities and towns. To date, 180 municipalities have registered for the portal connection, and approximately 300 communities have undergone CS training offered through MassDOT, which suggests more communities will be participating in the program.

The program has received 90 prioritization plans and 46 projects in 2017 and 2018. The program has a \$15M budget over a five-year period.

Other initiatives in which the department is participating include the Statewide Pedestrian Plan, the Statewide Bicycle Plan, training programs and workshops regarding bicycle and pedestrian facilities, road diets, and shared-use path guidance.

Discussion:

Robert McGaw commented on the depiction of parking space relative to the overall complete streets modes. M. Danila explained that curb use and parking issues are always part of the mix in determining best use of the available space. The illustrations of a complete street try to demonstrate the relationship between space consumed by motor vehicles and other modes.

T. Teich asked if there is a theme around the projects being funded, for example, are they bike lanes or sidewalks. M. Danila replied that sidewalk gap connectivity projects are being completed along with intersection improvement projects. Also bike racks, benches, and amenities. Some shared-use paths have been funded but the largest has been crosswalk and pavement marking and striping projects. The projects are spread throughout the Commonwealth.

Lenard Diggins asked if the selection criteria are available to see. M. Danila explained that the components available to date are connectivity, mobility, and safety information. The program is being reviewed for potential changes; information is available on the website.

Laura Weiner asked about the best approach to develop a prioritization plan. M. Danila stated that a number of projects of various sizes will show that a community is orchestrating its planned improvements and may be able to tap into several funding programs to achieve overall connectivity of its assets.

John McQueen noted that approved projects are listed in such a way that helps to identify what the selection criteria are.

Owen MacDonald noted that Weymouth's five-year plan is extensive and is non-constrained. He stated that a Speed Limit Feedback apparatus is being used and is appreciated by the Town.

4. Members Presentation—*Scott Zadakis, Director, CrossTown Connect*

S. Zadakis presented information on the agency's activities and goals. CrossTown Connect (CTC) is a Transportation Management Association (TMA). CTC is a public-private partnership aimed at improving regional transportation options and reducing traffic congestion and air pollution.

The towns of Acton, Littleton, Maynard, Boxborough, Westford, Concord, and Sudbury are the municipal representatives of the TMA while several companies comprise the private sector component of the association.

The service provides a variety of mobility options to better link communities together and to connect people to where they need to go. It addresses first mile/last mile commuting gap issues and reverse commuting service needs. The association creates the access necessary for optimum economic development opportunities in the Route 2/I-495 technology corridor and provides services and promotes initiatives to help meet the environmental goals of employers and communities.

The ongoing focus areas are for "daily needs" trips; suburb-to-suburb commuting; traditional commuting to the Boston area; and reverse commuting from the Boston area.

One of the organizing principles involved in networking the existing services included establishing a central call service that eliminated overlapping service, non-coordinated dispatches, duplicated trips, and an overall confusing network. The public-private partnership between communities and businesses leverages both private and public resources to gain maximum benefits.

CTC provides dispatch services; commuter shuttle services; grants awards to offset costs; assists business partners to meet Rideshare requirements; sponsors "Emergency Ride Home" and "Ride-matching" services; and offers driving alternatives to business partners; public outreach at transportation events, marketing surveys, and data analysis.

The program benefits commuters, employers, seniors, students, people with disabilities, and the general public. Daily services with centralized dispatching and sharing of

Council on Aging (COA) and other community van services in four of the communities. There is also a daily rail shuttle and fixed route service in Acton. The service provides medical trips to Concord, Burlington, and Boston area hospitals, and first mile/last mile shuttles for commuters to and from the Commuter Rail Stations on the Maynard-Acton Commuter Shuttle.

Since outbound service enhancements to the Fitchburg Line that include 7:00, 7:30, and 8:30 AM trains, the reverse commute is now a viable option. To address the need for first mile/last mile connections during rush hour, CTC applied for and received a Community Transit Grant for shuttles. To make the program affordable, commuter shuttles are using existing town vehicles outside of regular service hours and part-time drivers.

The establishment of a working group and subsequent meetings identified four routes: Littleton-Westford, Boxborough, Acton, and Maynard.

Some of the successful advocacy of the organization led to the use of parking fees for shuttle services, early trains arriving from Boston to area train stations, and a central dispatch call center. CTC implemented shared ride services across Regional Transit Authority (RTA) borders and fixed route shuttle services in Acton and Maynard. CTC is in the process of implementing additional shuttle services in Littleton, Westford, Acton, and Boxborough.

CTC has received recognition from several organizations including recognition in the Governor's Community Compact Cabinet in the field of best practice in transportation and being the first TMA in the Commonwealth with a regional focus.

Many keys to the program's success has been through the dedication of leaders working toward a vision of a more connected and accessible region. The next steps include expanding hours of operation to evenings and weekends and adding more partners to provide additional services with the available resources.

Discussion:

J. McQueen asked about the focus on the Sudbury addition. Scott Zadakis stated that the residential areas, including low-income areas, would be served with better connections. A taxi-based ride system is also being considered for this area.

In response to a question from R. McGaw, S. Zadakis said that some of the corporation sponsored shuttles allow for public riders to use the shuttle depending on the contract with the individual town.

5. MPO Freight Program—*Bill Kuttner, Freight Program Manager, CTPS*

B. Kuttner presented a review and discussion of recent research topics on weight and height freight restrictions in the Boston MPO region. The study revealed the extent that weight and height limitations have on truck movements.

Weight limitations are typically posted by axle ton limits and average approximately three and one-half tons per axle. The weight determination depends on many factors including bridge design. The heaviest vehicle that can be on the road in Massachusetts without a special permit is 23 tons gross weight for a two-axle truck. The limit is 36 and one-half tons for a three-axle truck, and a five-axle semi is limited to 49 and one-half tons weight; vehicle weights greater than these require a special permit to operate.

Weight restricted bridges are not structurally deficient; they were merely built to different standards. If there were any question of a bridge failing, it would be closed immediately. Weight restrictions do not harm industrial logistics. B. Kuttner presented photos of various road segments demonstrating vehicle weight restrictions.

R. McGaw asked about weight tolerances on bridges relative to weight limits. B. Kuttner explained that the limits are determined to meet the weight of typical loads.

Bridge clearance limits are set conservatively to take into account bridge expansion and contraction, re-pavement activity, and other impacts that vary over time. There is approximately three inches of “wobble room” built into the height determination, but it is never safe to assume that the height is greater than the posted amount.

There is a database that tracks the number of bridge-hits for all bridges. B. Kuttner displayed several bridges that have been struck over the last several years. Railroad bridges must maintain their elevation as gradient changes for the tracks need to be very gradual. Lowering roadways under the bridges is not always an economically viable action as the roads may cover much infrastructure such as sewer, water, and electrical lines.

Determining the travel demand by trucks for a route that is height restricted requires knowledge about the desirability of the roads that are affected by re-routing due to the imposition of the height restriction. Most professional drivers are aware of the consequences of violating such restrictions and are aware of the need to find drive-around routes to their destinations. People lacking this situational awareness might be more at risk for hitting these bridge decks.

Discussion:

Trevor Laubenstein noted that bridge replacement is already underway on the bridge in Westwood that was shown in the presentation.

R. McGaw questioned the tolerances of the signed bridges in the presentation. B. Kuttner noted that narrow tolerances need to be understood on a case-by-case basis.

6. Members Items

There were none.

7. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion carried.

ATTENDANCE

Members

Representatives and Alternates

Municipalities

Acton	Franny Osman
Belmont	Robert McGaw
Cambridge	Tegin Teich
Marlborough	Walter Bonin
Needham	David Montgomery; Rhain Hoyland
Watertown	Laura Weiner
Westwood	Trevor Laubenstein
Weymouth	Owen MacDonald

Citizen Advocacy Groups

American Council of Engineering Companies	Fred Moseley
Association for Public Transportation	Barry M Steinberg
Boston Society of Architects	Schuyler Larrabee
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	AnaCristina Fragoso
CrossTown Connect	Scott Zadakis
MASCO	Paul Nelson
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
MoveMassachusetts	Jon Seward
National Corridors Initiative	John Businger
Riverside Neighborhood Association	Marilyn Wellons
WalkBoston	John McQueen

Agencies

MassRides	Becca Cyr
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Municipalities Non-Voting

Boston	Tom Kadzis
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Agencies Non-Voting

MassDOT	Bryan Pounds
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC)	Steve Olanoff
US EPA	Eric Rackauskas
