

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

February 14, 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

T. Teich called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 7.)

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

T. Teich discussed the importance of the next four months in the development of the 3C documents for the upcoming federal fiscal year planning cycle. The primary role of the Advisory Council is to offer advice and guidance to the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as it undertakes this annual planning process. The specific work schedule for the Advisory Council's 3C Documents Committee will closely follow the progress of each of the 3C Documents: the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2018, meeting (*posted*) was made and seconded. The minutes were approved. Chris Porter abstained.

3. FFY 2019 UPWP—*Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)*

S. Johnston reminded members that the UPWP lays out the MPO's budget for studies and ongoing program work and activities conducted throughout the upcoming fiscal year. The development of the current UPWP began in fall of 2017 with public outreach meetings. The Universe of Proposed Studies compilation, which is an early task in the development process, consists of identifying new planning studies that are drawn from the public outreach process, staff input, and previous iterations of the Universe. A current task in the development process is to review and revise budgets for ongoing work for the upcoming year. The UPWP Committee meets February 15, 2018, to review the progress of these two tasks. The UPWP will complete a final list of discrete new studies by the UPWP Committee meeting at its planned April 5, 2018, meeting; the

completed draft will be presented to the MPO on May 3, 2018, and then released for a 30-day public review, and will be followed by a mid-June vote by the MPO to endorse the FFY 2019 UPWP.

S. Johnston presented the Universe of Proposed Studies and explained the process by which the studies were evaluated to account for availability of staff, funding, and whether the studies are being undertaken elsewhere. This year there are 15 study concepts presented in the Universe.

S. Johnston explained that at this stage the studies are presented without reference to financial constraint to establish overall priority for funding (in response to a question from Robert McGaw). Some of the projects can be scaled back while others may be slightly repurposed based on the research topic. Once funding is established, the prioritized studies will be selected.

T. Teich noted that page three has a number of recurring studies, including the sub-regional priority roadways and the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Needs Assessment corridors. Recurring studies are those studies that are typically funded on a regular schedule, either every year or biennially. Recurring studies include the study of Express Roadway Bottlenecks and the Safety Improvements at Express Highway Interchanges.

Marilyn Wellons asked if the proposed study of Framingham Freight Movement for Complete Streets Design would collect data on the movement of freight traffic resulting from relocating the intermodal freight yards. S. Johnston explained that there is not a robust regional data source to analyze that, and added that Worcester is not in the MPO region. He noted that the proposed Framingham study is designed to investigate more local impacts.

Schuyler Larrabee asked about the extent and duration of the Framingham freight problem and whether it is related to the relocation of Beacon Park Yard. S. Johnston explained that the Framingham freight study was proposed by a local proponent organization and that the challenges noted by the proponent have been present since before the rail yards were moved.

AnaCristina Fragoso asked about the process used by CTPS in gathering information from other agencies for the purpose of some studies. S. Johnston explained that CTPS works with its partner agencies at the state and federal level. The cost of data collection is often a driving factor in the likelihood of CTPS being able to afford to conduct a study. T. Teich explained that the Core Capacity Constraints Study, which was presented to the Advisory Council several months ago, reviewed system-wide capacity issues.

Currently, the Needs Assessment for the LRTP reveals significant amounts of capacity data on the transportation network.

John McQueen asked about the access of bicycle and pedestrian traffic into rotaries. S. Johnston explained that Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is developing a Rotary and Roundabout Design Guide that should answer those questions.

Chris Porter asked about the split between regional studies versus more localized studies and whether the balance is being maintained. S. Johnston indicated that the UPWP committee has typically preferred funding more regional studies and has tried to find other means of funding the local studies. CTPS has technical assistance programs for smaller efforts, for which municipalities can apply. A short discussion followed regarding a study of Sweetser Circle and its regional impact.

David Montgomery asked about the likelihood of these studies having influence before the work is undertaken. S. Johnston stated that staff is reviewing the results of its work in yielding implementation of recommendations. Advancing projects with likely implementable solutions in the near or intermediate term is desirable.

John McQueen asked about expanding and funding multi-use paths, suggesting that before and after studies of the use of these paths would be helpful for advancing the construction of additional multi-use paths. S. Johnston indicated that the State Bicycle Plan, currently in development, may address these questions.

4. FFY 2019-23 TIP—*Ali Kleyman, TIP Manager, CTPS*

A. Kleyman presented an overview of the TIP project evaluation process and reviewed the TIP schedule. Outreach activities included discussions with municipalities and TIP contacts to seek new projects and to update information for previously programmed and new projects. This information is used to determine if projects are ready to be evaluated and considered for programming.

The Universe of Projects was presented to the MPO in mid-December 2017. Since that time, municipalities submitted their projects' information for evaluation. The initial project evaluations were presented at the February 1, 2018, MPO meeting. The MPO will consider any revisions to the initial TIP evaluation scores at the February 15, 2018, MPO meeting. In addition, the MPO will consider the geographic distribution of past TIP funding, project cost, project readiness, whether there are studies that support a project, and whether a project addresses a need identified in the LRTP. In terms of geographic distribution of TIP funding, CTPS has reviewed the transportation construction projects in the TIP since 2008 to establish how funding has broken down by the percentage

made to each sub-region relative to the sub-region's employment and population statistics.

March 1, 2018, will be the first programming scenario discussion, concluding on March 15, 2018. The Draft TIP is scheduled to be released for public review in April 2018.

A. Kleyman showed members how to access the online information on the TIP development page where all of the data is posted (see [TIP Homepage](#)). A. Kleyman guided the members through the use of the page for tracking the evaluation scores.

Discussion

C. Porter asked which streets are used to determine the Universe of Projects. A. Kleyman stated that for TIP funding consideration, a roadway must be eligible for the Federal-Aid Highway Program, which is designated by functional classification. Furthermore, the TIP is divided between the MPO's Target Funds, which are prioritized by the MPO, and State-prioritized projects. About 90 percent of the State's federal funding is applied toward pavement preservation, pavement maintenance projects, and bridge maintenance. The balance goes to bicycle and pedestrian projects and safety projects.

T. Teich stated that the MPO has its own criteria for selecting projects, which were slightly modified this year, while the State has its own set of criteria. A. Kleyman stated that the two evaluation criteria are similar, but the State conducts its evaluations as part of the Project Review Committee approval process. The MPO would not approve a project that is not approved by MassDOT, which is in charge of overseeing the design-review process of transportation projects. Thus, every project on the Universe of Projects list is an active MassDOT project—that project has been approved to move through its design review process.

J. McQueen noted that the Route 20 and Landham Road project in Sudbury received a lower score in the evaluation process, and he was concerned that the project is being removed from consideration. A. Kleyman pointed out that the safety score for the project changed based on the crash rate measure; the project is fully designed and will be considered for available funding.

5. 3C Documents Committee Discussion—*Tegin Teich, Committee Member*

T. Teich presented a draft meeting schedule of the 3C Committee and asked members to consider involvement on the committee. In the past, the committee has met two or three times throughout the TIP and UPWP development process to discuss details in

the documents. Committee members originate discussion on the Advisory Council's letter to the MPO highlighting the concerns of the Council relating to the 3C documents.

The committee will meet in late March 2108, after the draft scenarios for the TIP are presented to the MPO. The Committee will also meet in late April 2018 (twice if needed) to fully explore the detail required to formulate comments on both the TIP and the UPWP. The Advisory Council will vote on the comment letters in May 2018. T. Teich encouraged members to participate in the committee.

In response from a member question, Lourenço Dantas (CTPS) explained the MPO's 3C process by describing the Continuing, Cooperative, and Comprehensive planning activities that are the underpinnings of the MPO's role in the allocation of federal transportation dollars. The MPO process was developed in the 1960s to involve local decision making in spending federal transportation money in metropolitan areas. Within the process are the Certification Documents, produced by the MPOs, which ensure that the laws related to the 3C process are being followed.

The primary guidance by the Federal government is that the MPOs produce and follow a long-range transportation plan. As a comprehensive plan, it must include the entire metropolitan area and include input from municipalities and state agencies to discern how they intend to address their transportation improvements. This is the comprehensive and cooperative nature of the transportation plan. Continuing means that MPOs do not end their work at one plan; rather, the MPOs continually revisit changes to the infrastructure, changes to travel behavior, changes to priorities, and update their plans on a regular basis.

The LRTP is a 20-year plan that is updated every four years. New infrastructure, development, and new state plans (e.g., Focus 40) are coming out this year and will be reflected in the update to the LRTP.

The TIP and the UPWP certification documents are done on an annual basis. The TIP often undergoes amendments throughout the year, as well.

T. Teich suggested that the Advisory Council schedule an "MPO Primer" prior to the 3C document development cycle in the future. This could act as a refresher for recently elected Advisory Council members and for all members in general.

L. Dantas announced outreach activities undertaken by CTPS where procedural steps for developing funding plans are identified.

D. Montgomery explained that the 3C Documents Committee offers a good opportunity to connect with the MPO staff directly to establish a closer relationship while searching for specific details of the plans and projects that are being considered.

L. Dantas explained that the UPWP is the work program that specifically identifies how the MPO carries out its work, mostly through ongoing programs. The CTPS budget, which comes from the Federal government, allocates funds to many activities that make the MPO function as an entity, both as a decision-making body and as a staff that supports that body. The UPWP offers the opportunity to conduct some discrete studies, from year to year, that often follow themes aimed at the MPO's goals and guidance.

The TIP process is responsible for programming the transportation projects in the coming years that support the LRTP. Some of these projects are major investments in infrastructure, while a host of smaller projects collectively address things like the need for implementing Complete Streets or improving intersections for safety and operations. It is the role of the 3C Documents Committee to put forward the ideas, concerns, and comments to the MPO board members that reflect the considerations of the Advisory Council, which formally adopts its position in the form of a comment letter to the MPO.

The MPO programs approximately \$100M each year in the TIP for the Boston metropolitan area. This is a small portion of what is programmed; the state prioritizes most of the federal dollars for the region, and much of that money is for maintaining highways and bridges.

Although considered illustrative by the federal reviewers, the fifth-year time-band of the TIP can be allocated to new projects or set aside for future investment programs. The Advisory Council can suggest projects for consideration or request to set aside funding for projects that may emerge from the LRTP analysis, scheduled to be conducted later this year.

6. Members Items

T. Teich announced that the Cities of Cambridge and Watertown are collaborating on a Bus Priority on Mt. Auburn Street west of Fresh Pond Parkway. The Watertown section is a TIP project in 2022, which will completely reconstruct its part of Mt. Auburn Street corridor and the Watertown Square area. The MBTA bus routes 71 and 73 carry more than one-half of the people in the roadway corridor as it approaches Fresh Pond Parkway. DCR recently conducted a study to improve the Fresh Pond Parkway intersection at Mt. Auburn Street.

7. Adjourn

Without objection to the Chair's recommendation, the meeting was adjourned.

ATTENDANCE

Members

Municipalities

Belmont
Cambridge
Needham
Weymouth

Citizen Advocacy Groups

Association for Public Transportation
Boston Society of Architects
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)
MassBike
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)
National Corridors Initiative
Riverside Neighborhood Association
WalkBoston

Agencies

MassRides

Agencies Non-Voting

Boston Planning and Development Agency
US EPA

Representatives And Alternates

Robert McGaw
Tegin Teich
David Montgomery; Rhain Hoyland
Owen MacDonald

Barry M Steinberg
Schuyler Larrabee
AnaCristina Fragoso; Paul Moyer
Chris Porter
Lenard Diggins
John Businger
Marilyn Wellons
John McQueen

Leon Papadopoulos

Matt Moran
Eric Rackauskas

Other Attendees

Affiliation

Ed Lowney	Malden Resident
Dee Whittlesey	Boston Resident

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Matt Archer
Lourenço Dantas
David Fargen
Sandy Johnston
Ali Kleyman
Jen Rowe
