



December 12, 2016 | 9:00 – 11:30 am

10 Park Plaza | Boston Common Conference Room, MassDOT Suite 4150

MEETING SUMMARY

Review of public engagement activities:

Carri Hulet (CBI) shared with the Working Group an analysis of public feedback gathered from the November 2016 public meeting as well as the online survey. Overall, the synthesis of public feedback indicated that the Working Group was on the right track with the infrastructure and policy ideas that it has been considering. Public engagement provided some insight into the priorities and emphasis the public placed on various problems and potential solutions. Particularly, Ms. Hulet highlighted comments on the importance of safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists alike; the priority placed on improving the livability of the study area and not the efficiency of routes traveling through it, and the problems of congestion on local roads.

Ms. Hulet also reviewed the public engagement subcommittees next steps, including plans to engage some of the surrounding municipalities as well as interest groups during January and February. Ms. Hulet sought feedback from the Working Group on groups that should be invited to be part of these discussions, and asked if any Working Group members wanted to reach out to the invitees on behalf of the Working Group.

Review of alternative scenarios:

Scott Peterson (CTPS) provided a review of the proposed alternatives developed by the project staff.

Alternative 1: Planned Growth: Mr. Peterson briefly reviewed Alternative 1, which is consistent with the modified LRTP transportation network and the MAPC land use assumptions. The group had already approved the staff to beginning modeling the Planned Growth Alternative.

Alternative 2: Sullivan Square/Rutherford Avenue: Jim Gillooly (Boston) explained that Boston is running a concurrent study on the Rutherford Ave. area. Boston's study is working towards a final proposal in June and is studying multiple options at this point. He asked Erik Maki (Tetrattech) to present a baseline possible scenario for underpasses in the Sullivan Square/Rutherford Ave. area for the group to consider. Mr. Maki presented several iterations of options for redesign of traffic flow in the area¹. The group agreed to model an Austin Street

¹ Slides of the options reviewed can be found here:

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/transportation/rutherford-avenue-sullivan-square-design-project>

underpass with two lanes in each direction and a Sullivan Square underpass with two southbound lanes and one northbound lane, as presented by Mr. Maki.

Fred Salvucci commented that in the Sullivan Square area at peak hours, congestion could drive behaviors more than the addition of two-way tolling on the Tobin Bridge (which is being implemented currently), but that the impact of the casino traffic on peak hour travel was not certain.

Alternatives 3 and 4: Transportation Demand Management/Infrastructure Light: Mr. Peterson provided a more detailed review of Alternatives 3 and 4 following the introduction of the scenario at the Working Group's November meeting. Alternative 3 includes bike/pedestrian improvements achieved by improving infrastructure on existing roadways according to MassDOT's Complete Streets Initiative, flexible work policies developed by MAPC, and bus improvements.

Mr. Peterson clarified that CTPS would model Complete Streets in the study area by improving (lowering) the pedestrian environment variable (PEV) in given TAZs. A lower PEV indicates more features and variables that promote walking and biking, and in the model should shift more local trips to a walking mode. He stated that MassDOT had not yet empirically tested the effects of changes as measured by the PEV, but that FLDOT had done some work on it on which MassDOT's work was based. Mr. Peterson also clarified that changes to the variable in an area did not imply specific projects, but rather indicated the potential of the area and then gave communities the opportunity to make upgrades as they decided. Some Working Group members expressed concern that the modeling effort might not show a large change in mode-share by improving the PEV, but that it was a necessary improvement to make in any case. Others acknowledged that improving the pedestrian environment was already a priority for communities.

Mr. Peterson included a detailed chart listing the improvements to existing bus routes and new bus routes that would be included in the scenario. Mr. Peterson clarified that proposals for bus improvements were drawn from recent studies, including the Everett Transit Action Plan and the Kendall Square study. Mr. Gillooly expressed interest in adding a local Charlestown circulator bus route to the improvements in the alternative and agreed to provide more detailed plans for the staff to add to the scenario.

Alternative 4 builds on Alternative 3, but adds variations of commercial and residential parking restraints (controlled by price and availability, respectively) to the other components of the model. MAPC developed recommendations for parking constraints partly based on its Perfect Fit parking study. MAPC recommended that the model apply a \$22/day parking fee to TAZs in Union Square, Brick Bottom, Assembly, Sullivan Square, and the Everett Commercial Triangle.

Mr. Salvucci emphasized the value of the Orange Line and encouraged weighing the value of investments in buses compared to investments improving the Orange Line. He distinguished the value of feeder buses that are a necessary component to provide access to subway transit, longer-distance buses in corridors without subway transit, and buses used to go downtown, and suggested that over time investments in each would have varying returns. He also

encouraged considering where MBTA land might be available to make bus routes more effective. The Working Group agreed that Alternatives 3 and 4 were very close to approval to model. The Group requested the staff make minor revisions based on the discussion and planned to review them for final approval at the January 23 Working Group meeting.

Alternative 5: Ramps and Lanes. Mr. Peterson reviewed Alternative 5, which includes a new I-93 on ramp at City Square, an extended I-93 off ramp at Exit 28 to by-pass Sullivan Square, and converts the southbound HOV lane to a general purpose express lane. The alternative aims to make improvements in capacity and connectivity and allow traffic an option to bypass Sullivan Square, thereby reducing local traffic as well as increasing efficiency on the highways.

Alternative 6: Buses and Trains. Mr. Peterson reviewed Alternative 6, which includes an Urban Ring-like Silver Line connection from Chelsea through Everett, Medford, Somerville, and Cambridge to the Red Line, a Commuter Rail stop at Sullivan Square, and the Green Line Extension to Route 16. Mr. Peterson clarified that this alternative prioritized increasing connectivity to provide better access to existing transit lines, as opposed to creating new capacity, and to improve one-seat options for frequent routes.

Jay Monty (Everett) stated that modeling of an Orange Line spur would be helpful as a comparison to know the impact relative to the cost. Other Working Group members supported examining the option. Some Working Group members pointed out that an Orange Line spur could further decrease headways. Mr. Monty supported improved headway speeds, and also suggested examining where on the Line faster headways were most needed in case a decrease in headways for part of the line could be managed. Mr. Salvucci stated that costs to improve the Orange Line via automatic train operation (ATO) and other improvements should be shared among the communities. Chris Osgood (Boston) stated that Boston strongly supported Orange Line improvements and proposals for 2-minute headways on the Orange Line. Paul McMorrow (EOHED) pointed out that some of the more ambitious improvements could compete for resources aimed to maintain good repair and increase capacity on existing services, as well as fulfill legally binding requirements. Mr. Salvucci suggested the group examine the option of including a transit crossing on the proposed bike/pedestrian bridge as part of this alternative.

Alternative 7: Ride, Walk, and Bike. Mr. Peterson reviewed Alternative 7, which includes separated bike/pedestrian facilities through parts of the study area connecting to regional trails, pedestrian bridges over the Mystic and Malden Rivers, and the addition of an infill “Rivers Edge” Orange Line Station to increase modal connectivity.

Pat Field (CBI) reviewed the next steps for the Working Group. Group members agreed to give final review to Alternatives 3-7 and discuss further the option of modeling an Orange Line spur at the January 23, 2017 meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30.