



MAGIC November Meeting

Thursday, November 6, 2014; 3:00 – 5:00 pm

141 Keyes Road, Concord, MA

MINUTES

Welcome

Keith Bergman, Littleton Town Administrator, MAGIC Chairman

Discussion of Applications for District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) and Planning for MetroFuture Technical Assistance (PMFTA)

Mark Racicot, Land Use Planning Director, MAPC

- Combined total of about 1 million dollars
 - DLTA Program is about \$625,000 of this
- DLTA has Emphasis on housing and economic development
- Planning for MetroFuture TA has a broader array of uses allowed
- If you have a great idea for a technical assistance project, write up one page and get it to Tanya as well as the MAPC department heads of the project area (environment, regional collaboration, etc.)
- Marc Draisen makes the final decision on which projects get funded
- Don't worry about whether you're apply for DLTA or PMFTA – just apply and we'll allocate your project to one or the other
- Last round of DLTA projects were too small (averaging 15k) – we are looking for slightly bigger projects this time out (30k would likely be an average project, but could be bigger or smaller)
- Projects that cross municipal boundaries are generally rated higher
- Projects that forward MAPC's four new strategic plan priorities are preferred – these are:
 1. Encourage development and preservation consistent with smart growth principles, especially by increasing housing production, promoting innovative transportation solutions, and encouraging mixed-use development near various forms of transit.



2. Partner with our cities and towns to promote regional collaboration, enhance effectiveness, and increase efficiency.
 3. Play a leading role in helping the region to achieve greater equity.
 4. Help the region reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the physical, environmental, and social impacts of climate change and natural hazards.
- We always get more applications than we can fund
 - Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis – submit as soon as possible

Discussion of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) next Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

MAPC Staff:

- *Eric Bourassa, Director of Transportation Division*

Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), Boston Region MPO

- *Anne McGahan, Chief Planner*
- *Natalie Raffol, Transportation Planner*
- *Michelle Scott, Unified Planning Work Program Manager*

- The Long Range Transportation Plan is called Charting Progress to 2040
- The MPO is collecting public feedback on the proposed vision, goals, and objectives
- CTPS and MAPC's Transportation staff are focusing on prioritizing transportation investments for the LRTP.
- Their first step is to prioritize goals
- They want to hear from communities about their local priorities
- Transportation staff manages 3 plans
 - LRTP – every four years
 - TIP - annual
 - UPWP – annual
- The LRTP lays the foundation for the TIP and UPWP and serves as the guide to the MPO
- Charting Progress to 2040 must be complete by June 2015
- Key steps in the creation of the LRTP
 1. Establish Vision, goals, objectives



2. Establish region's transportation needs
3. Determine financing to meet the vision

- **STEP 1**

Establish vision, goals and objectives to set priorities for future transportation investments - will be used by the MPO for multiple purposes including evaluations of projects for the TIP and UPWP

- **Charting Progress to 2040's 7 Draft Goals**

1. Safety
2. System Preservation
3. Congestion Reduction
4. Transportation Options/Healthy Modes
5. Greenhouse Gas (GHG)/Air Pollution/Environment
6. Transportation Equity
7. Economic Vitality and Freight Movement

- **Feedback:**

- Littleton:
 - In MAGIC, reverse commute is a big focus.
 - It's important for us to have transportation policies that help with the reverse commute
 - The region has cross-jurisdictional challenges with transit providers
 - MAGIC also has last mile issues
 - Much of this pertains to economic development because it effects jobs
- Sudbury:
 - Connecting seniors to services (hospitals, groceries) is a priority – more investment in that would be important
- Bedford:
 - Mode shift is the highest priority for the region – providing transportation alternatives
- Oars:
 - How do we know which transportation investments reduce congestion and GHG, etc.?



- Response: We have a great transportation model to help run scenarios. This model is even evolving to be able to show how land use changes will affect the transportation system.
- Concord:
 - Missing from strategy – identifying capacity of our existing modes and making short term goals and long term goals
 - Response: Plan goes out to 2040, but it's broken into 5 year increments. In those 5 year time bands is where specific projects are programmed – this makes some projects more short term and others long term.
 - The TIP is the implementation arm of the LRTP
 - Projects like Crosby's Corner don't take cars off the road – have diverted them to the roads in the town
- Lexington
 - Pays a great deal into MBTA but doesn't get as much from it as they would like
- Acton:
 - Congestion on 495 is a huge issue in this region – public transportation on these congested corridors should be required to cut down on cars
 - Everything radiates from Boston and nothing goes from east to west
 - Response: MPO is looking into adding a goal addressing suburban mobility to the list of goals
- **STEP 2**

Identify Transportation Needs

- Have developed a web based needs assessment tool
- **Feedback:**
 - Acton:
 - A bicycle connection to Concord would be great because once you're in Concord you can bicycle into the center
 - Can we widen roads to add an HOV lane
 - Airport connection to Logan an issue in this region
 - Mass parking at a station would draw people onto transit – last mile problems keep people from using transit more.



- Concord:
 - Preference to a “capillary” transportation network over big throughways (like a large interchange in place of the Concord rotary)
 - Would be wise to bring technology to the problems of last mile and reverse commutes – ride sharing, etc. facilitated by technology.
- Boxborough:
 - Develop east west “arc” connections for transit and not keep prioritizing the radial connections
 - Let’s develop “capillary” connections in several places in MAGIC and see how it goes
 - Parking at the commuter rail stations is a big barrier to using the trains more in this region
 - Cost of commuter rail is an issue. People in this region pretty much have to own a car so the cost of trains is on top of that. If you have a car, you’re not going to take the train because of that additional cost.
- Bedford:
 - How could we get first mile and reverse commute projects on the TIP?
 - Response: It would be a program not a project of the MPO
- Oars:
 - Lives in Cambridge, reverse commutes to MAGIC subregion – benefits Cambridge residents if people in the outer regions leave their cars behind and take the train inbound.

- **Step 3**

- **Consider investment strategies to advance the region’s goals**

- The MPO has a very limited amount of money it receives from the federal government and can allocate to the universe of projects desired.
- MPO’s projects broken down into Major Highway (56%), Transit (1%), and Arterial and Intersection (43%) – the last category does include “complete streets” components
- MPO will use models to create scenarios to help allocate future investments in the region
- This part of the LRTP will help shape the TIP and UPWP
- **Feedback:**
 - Concord:
 - Sustainability and resilience should be focus of future investments



- What about congestion pricing?
- Response: Toll roads are moving to all electronic tolling and this would make it easier to use pricing to combat congestion.
- VMT taxing rather than gas tax could be another option
- Oars:
 - Does this process allow people to think really big – large, non-traditional projects that seem too big to think about.
 - Response: There are less chances of big rail expansions than bus rapid transit or other small, diesel cars running on the rail system thus utilizing our existing rail network. Better utilizing existing infrastructure would be more of a focus than extending the system.
- Bedford:
 - Everyone in this region is trying to drive to Alewife – what is being done to make Alewife area less congested? – very difficult to get to the station
- Littleton:
 - Create direct access to the Littleton commuter rail station from the highway to make it a transit hub for the region
- Boxborough:
 - Study the acceptance of open road tolling – would we be able to study what it would take to entice people to allow this – what are the tradeoffs?
- Acton
 - Proposes a technology based first/last mile para-transit plan
 - Train cars for bikes such as the Cape Cod flyer has
 - Business vehicles vs. personal vehicles when it comes to open road tolling
 - Hanscom air force base as a transportation hub for the region – add parking and run buses
- Eric:
 - MAPC's winter council meeting will focus on the LRTP – that's how we can continue this conversation
- Natalie:
 - There are a number of opportunities for public input in the LRTP process.