

# **MPO Meeting Minutes**

## **Memorandum for the Record**

### **Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting**

#### **June 3, 2021, Meeting**

10:00 AM–12:05 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

David Mohler, Chair, representing Jamey Tesler, Acting Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

#### **Decisions**

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreed to the following:

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of March 25–April 1, 2021
- Approve the minutes of the meeting of April 8, 2021
- Approve Amendment Six to the federal fiscal years (FFY) 2021–25 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Endorse the FFY 2022–26 TIP

#### **Meeting Agenda**

##### **1. Introductions**

See attendance on page

##### **2. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT***

There was none.

##### **3. Executive Director's Report—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)***

T. Teich reminded MPO board members to respond for the memorial service for former CTPS Executive Director, Karl Quackenbush.

T. Teich provided an update on recent CTPS hires and promotions.

T. Teich provided an update on recent MPO staff outreach activities.

T. Teich reminded members that the TIP Project Costs Ad-Hoc Committee would meet following the MPO board.

#### **4. Public Comments**

Johannes Epke (Conservation Law Foundation) advocated for the MPO to reject the draft FFY 2022–26 TIP and allocate MPO funds to projects that make the transportation system more equitable. J. Epke stated that MPO investments should be required to prioritize emissions reductions and investments for transportation equity populations, noting that the draft TIP shows equity populations continuing to experience less of an absolute decrease in emissions than their non-equity population counterparts. J. Epke noted bus electrification on routes that serve transportation equity populations or fully funding the Red/Blue Connector as possible projects to prioritize.

Wig Zamore (Somerville resident) advocated for changes to project #606528 (I-93 Corridor Improvements in Somerville) to address air and noise pollution and improve pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. W. Zamore stated that the health effects from exposure to emissions in the corridor result in one thousand times as many deaths as the pedestrian and bicycle crashes. W. Zamore stated that studies show large increases in lung cancer mortality, childhood asthma, and cardiovascular disease mortality in people who live closest to highways.

#### **5. Committee Chairs' Reports**

There were none.

#### **6. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Lenard Diggins, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council***

L. Diggins provided an overview of the recent Advisory Council meeting and stated that the next meeting would take place on June 9, 2021, and feature researchers on the mortality implications of the regional Transportation and Climate Initiative.

#### **7. Action Item: Approval of March 25—April 1, 2021, and April 8, 2021, MPO Meeting Minutes—*Róisín Foley, MPO Staff***

A motion to approve the minutes of the two-part meeting of March 25—April 1, 2021, was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane) and seconded by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric Bourassa). The motion carried.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of April 8, 2021, was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) (Tina Cassidy). The motion carried.

## **8. Action Item: FFY 2021–25 TIP Amendment Six—Matt Genova, MPO Staff**

### ***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

1. [FFYs 2021–25 TIP Amendment Six](#)

M. Genova stated that Amendment Six proposed cost and description updates for three highway projects currently programmed in FFY 2021. Amendment Six also proposed changes to the FFYs 2021–25 transit program, including the alignment of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority’s FFYs 2021–25 programming with its proposed FFYs 2022–26 programming, and the addition of a state funding match to a federally funded maintenance project in FFY 2021 for the Cape Ann Transportation Authority. The 21-day public comment period for Amendment Six began May 10, 2021, and extended until May 31, 2021. MPO staff received no public comments on the amendment.

### ***Vote***

A motion to approve Amendment Six to the FFY 2021–25 TIP was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried.

## **9. Action Item: FFYs 2022–26 TIP—Matt Genova, MPO Staff**

### ***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

1. [Draft FFYs 2022–26 TIP](#)
2. [Public Comments Received on the Draft FFYs 2022–26 TIP](#)
3. [Summary of Public Comments and Draft Responses](#)

M. Genova provided a summary of the contents of the draft FFYs 2022–26 TIP and public comments received during the 21-day public review period. M. Genova stated that the draft TIP includes \$4.75 billion in investments in highway and transit projects throughout the Boston region, detailing all of the investments proposed using MPO Regional Target funds and investments proposed by MassDOT, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), Cape Ann Transportation Authority, and MetroWest Regional Transit Authority using federal funding. Regional Target funds represent roughly 11 percent of all federal and state matching funds in the region.

M. Genova stated that MPO staff received 600 public comments during the public comment period, in addition to the more than 500 comments received during the development of the TIP.

M. Genova stated that, pending endorsement, MPO staff would submit the final TIP to MassDOT for incorporation in the Statewide TIP, which is then submitted to the MPO's federal partners for approval. The new TIP will go into effect on October 1, 2021.

***Discussion***

Jillian Linnell (MBTA) responded to M. Genova's summary of public comments advocating for funding for improvements to Newton Commuter Rail Stations, clarifying that design funding is currently included in the MBTA's Capital Investment Plan and the project was included in the TIP as a potential project funded by future federal loans.

David Koses (At-Large City) (City of Newton) asked that the draft response to Newton residents who commented be edited to reflect this clarification and the fact that the MPO has not voted to remove funding for this project.

E. Bourassa asked staff to respond to earlier public comments regarding the equity analysis. E. Bourassa asked specifically whether the results of the equity analysis largely reflect the air quality impacts of the Green Line Extension.

M. Genova stated that part of the reason the MPO is limited in making progress on the equitable distribution of funds to projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions for environmental justice populations is because the MPO chose not to program any new projects in the new TIP because of cost increases, meaning the distribution of funds reflects a status quo of the last TIP. M. Genova noted that the MPO did add funding for center-running bus lanes on Columbus Avenue in Boston to FFY 2021, but this is not reflected in the draft TIP because it occurred 2021.

Betsy Harvey (MPO Staff) stated that the equity analysis for the TIP is conducted by analyzing each project individually using Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality data and then aggregating the data at the regional level. The analysis reflects the distribution of air quality impacts across the entire system. B. Harvey stated that the Green Line Extension would have improved air quality overall but there was limited change over the last TIP because of the lack of new projects.

L. Diggins asked whether the volume of public comments was up compared to last year. M. Genova stated that controlling for the fact that most comments were submitted on a few specific projects, comments were slightly up from last year.

D. Mohler asked whether the equity analysis showed that air quality is improving across the region for both equity populations and non-equity populations, but it is not improving as much for equity populations or is air quality actually deteriorating for equity populations and improving for non-equity populations.

B. Harvey stated that for most equity populations the decrease in emissions was greater for the equity population than their non-equity counterparts. However, this does not reduce existing disparities. B. Harvey noted that part of the challenge is that the MPO does not have good data on existing baseline disparities for the region. MPO staff are conducting a study next year to determine this baseline to better measure performance.

J. Epke clarified the concern that while air quality is getting better everywhere, it is getting better faster where it needs to the least. Communities with the best air are getting the greatest reductions, which widens the gap.

B. Harvey noted that there was an improvement over last year but that certainly for some populations MPO investments are not addressing existing inequities.

L. Diggins asked whether the disparity between the reductions for equity populations versus non-equity populations would be considered statistically significant. B. Harvey replied that more analysis would be needed to determine this.

#### **Vote**

A motion to endorse the FFY 2022–26 TIP was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane). The motion carried.

### **10. FFY 2020 Subregional Priority Roadways Study: Route 53 Corridor in Norwell—Chen-Yuan Wang, MPO Staff**

#### ***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

1. [Route 53 Corridor Study in Norwell](#)

C. Wang presented the findings of the Route 53 Corridor Study in Norwell. This report identifies specific transportation issues and concerns in the Route 53 corridor in Norwell; presents an in-depth analysis of multiple transportation-related factors, such as accommodations for people who walk and bike and safe access to adjacent businesses; proposes short- and long-term improvements to address the problems; and provides a vision for the corridor's long-term development.

#### **Discussion**

L. Diggins asked whether 217 responses to the community survey conducted as part of the study indicates strong community engagement, and whether the survey asked for demographic information. C. Wang stated that based on MPO staff experience, this is a relatively strong response rate for a corridor with about 4,000 households. C. Wang stated that demographic questions were not asked on this survey, but standard demographic questions have been instituted for corridor studies going forward.

L. Diggins asked about the potential for mixed-use development on the corridor. E. Bourassa stated that MAPC was involved in the study and is working with the South Shore Coalition on improving last-mile connections in the subregion. Mark Abbott (MPO Staff) noted that MAPC first introduced the possibility of a corridor study to Norwell as part of a rezoning process, and the town is considering the possibility of mixed-use development along the corridor.

**11. CTPS Five-Year Strategic Plan—Tegin Teich, Executive Director**  
***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

1. [CTPS Draft Strategic Plan as of 2021.05.24 Prepared by Navin Associates and Claremont Consulting](#)

T. Teich presented the draft CTPS Five-year Strategic Plan. T. Teich stated that this strategic plan is for CTPS as an organization, and not for the Boston Region MPO. The CTPS strategic plan was intended to be completed before the MPO decides how to progress in developing an MPO operations plan as recommended in the 2019 federal certification review report. T. Teich stated that following the meeting, staff would finalize the strategic plan document, including the creation of an evaluation dashboard and estimates of resources needed for certain actions.

The consultant team facilitated a research process, extensive engagement, and the development of the plan. The bulk of engagement was with a steering committee of 20 members representing a cross-section of CTPS personnel and stakeholders from the MPO Board. The process consisted of an organizational assessment, interviews and focus groups with almost 100 stakeholders, and a two-day retreat with the steering committee to develop a revised mission, vision, goals, and objectives.

The revised vision statement parallels the MPO vision and is grounded in themes and values around leadership, collaboration, diversity and equity, climate resiliency, transparency, and integrity. Goal 1 is focused on Sector Leadership. Goals 2 and 3 are focused on Programs and Services. Goal 4, Governance, is mostly deferred except for an objective to improve training for new and existing Board members. Goal 5 is focused on Organizational Structure and Staffing. Goal 6 includes objectives related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Goal 7 is Marketing and Public Presentation. Goals 8 and 9, Funding and Operations, are partially deferred and involve considering the feasibility of accessing additional funding sources. The timeline for implementation is to develop plans, processes, or materials related to objectives in the first two years of the plan, SFYs 22 and 23, with implementation in the final three years, SFYs 24 through 26.

***Discussion***

D. Amstutz expressed support for the inclusion of Goal 6 and asked whether this goal would also be integrated into the other goal areas. T. Teich agreed that DEI should be integrated into everything the agency does, but also needs its own dedicated space to ensure the attention it needs.

**12. Members Items**

D. Mohler stated that the next MPO and an Administration and Finance Committee meeting were scheduled for June 17, 2021, but that the MPO meeting would possibly be canceled. D. Mohler noted that Governor Baker's Executive Order allowing remote participation in meetings was set to expire on June 15, after which a quorum would need to be present in-person to hold meetings. D. Mohler stated that legislation had been filed to extend the order, but it had not yet been extended.

**13. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried.

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## Attendance

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<b>Members</b>	<b>Representatives and Alternates</b>
At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Daniel Amstutz
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)	Heather Hamilton
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Bill Conroy
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	John Bechard
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Jillian Linnell
Massachusetts Port Authority	
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Thatcher Kezer III
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Rockland)	
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Peter Pelletier
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke

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<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Aleida Leza	Belmont resident
Benjamin N.W. Muller	MassDOT OTP
Bonnie Friedman	
Bryan Pounds	MassDOT OTP
Cheryll-Ann Senior	MassDOT
Colette Aufranc	
Constance Raphael	MassDOT
Eric Johnson	City of Framingham
Garrett Wollman	
Jarrold Goentzel	
Joe Blankenship	Boston Transportation Department
Johannes Epke	Conservation Law Foundation
Jon Seward	
Joy Glynn	MWRTA
JR Frey	Town of Hingham
Kate Bowen	
Matt Moran	Boston Transportation Department
Michelle Ho	MassDOT OTP
Owen MacDonald	Town of Weymouth
Paula Doucette	
Rich Benevento	WorldTech Engineering
Schuyler Larrabee	
Steve Olanoff	TRIC Alternate
Todd Blake	City of Medford
Todd Kirrane	Town of Brookline
Wig Zamore	

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**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Mark Abbott

Matt Archer

Annette Demchur

Róisín Foley

Hiral Gandhi

Matt Genova

Betsy Harvey

Sandy Johnston

Anne McGahan

Marty Milkovits

Rebecca Morgan

Ariel Patterson

Gina Perille

Barbara Rutman

Michelle Scott

Chen-Yuan Wang

Kate White

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