

MPO Meeting Minutes

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

August 29, 2019 Meeting

10:00 AM–10:50 AM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

David Mohler, Chair, representing Stephanie Pollack, Secretary, and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

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

- Endorse the new Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Destination 2040*
- Approve the work program for West Station Area Transit Study

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on pages 7 and 8.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT*

D. Mohler presented an adjustment to the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2019 Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) budget.

Vote

A motion to approve the FFY 2019 CTPS budget adjustment was made by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent) and seconded by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric Bourassa). The motion carried.

4. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

5. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Tegin Teich, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

T. Teich reported that the Advisory Council may reschedule its September and October meetings due to conflicts with events and religious holidays. The September meeting will focus on nominations for elections to be held in October.

6. Executive Director's Report—*Scott Peterson, Co-Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

S. Peterson introduced a new member of MPO staff, Ben Sadkowski. S. Peterson stated that the next MPO meeting would be on September 5, 2019.

7. Long-Range Transportation Plan—*Anne McGahan, MPO Staff*

A. McGahan presented changes to the draft LRTP document following the public review period. A. McGahan reviewed comments received during that time, and asked that the MPO endorse the final LRTP.

The changes to the document include additional information in Chapter 6, the Transportation Equity Performance Report, and Appendix D, Public Outreach. The changes to Appendix D, made after the public review period, included a summary of written comments, a list of outreach events, and online survey results. Staff also addressed comments received from MassDOT and other MPO members.

At the last two MPO meetings, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) expressed concern regarding the equity analysis for the LRTP and requested that MPO staff perform a disparate impact and disproportionate burden (DI/DB) analysis for all regionally significant projects listed in the plan—both MPO-funded and MassDOT-funded. The original analysis included MPO-funded projects only. MPO staff complied with this request, using the travel demand model to analyze 10 metrics for potential future DI/DBs. The original analysis of MPO-funded projects showed no expected DI/DBs for all of the metrics analyzed. The second analysis likewise showed no expected DI/DBs for MPO- and MassDOT-funded projects. Both analyses showed that for most metrics, projected changes fall within the model's forecasting error. Furthermore, the second analysis showed that for two of the metrics, there is a measurable benefit for minority and/or low-income populations' access to health care facilities and jobs.

The public review period ended on Friday, August 23, 2019. MPO staff publicized the availability of the LRTP for comment via email, Twitter, and on the TransReport blog. The public could provide comments through the public involvement page on the MPO website, by sending letters or emails, by commenting in person at outreach events, and

by taking the online survey. Outreach events included Advisory Council, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Rider Oversight Committee, Allston-Brighton Health Collaborative Transportation Committee, and MetroWest Regional Collaborative subregional meetings. Staff also held one-on-one meetings with the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition and the North Shore Community Development Corporation, attended farmer's markets in Dewey Square, Brighton, and Framingham, attended an Alliance for Business Leadership networking event in Boston, and three civic engagement events with Union Capital Boston in Roxbury, Mattapan, and East Boston. At these events, staff informed the public about the LRTP and described the various ways to submit a comment. Many people were not familiar with the LRTP but were interested in the investment programs. Specific interests included more commuter rail parking, more bicycle and pedestrian facilities, more frequency on the Fairmount Line, and pairing land use policy with transportation investments at the MBTA.

Ninety-five people participated in the online survey. The majority of respondents indicated that the Transit Modernization and Bicycle and Pedestrian investment programs were the most important. Respondents also indicated that dedicated bus lanes were important. The survey also asked about the types of projects that could be included under the Transit Modernization program. The majority of respondents indicated that state of good repair, fleet modernization, and accessibility improvements were very important.

Staff received 70 written comments from 33 individuals or organizations. A table showing all comments and staff's proposed responses is posted to the meeting calendar.

Discussion

Tom O'Rourke (Three Rivers Interlocal Council) (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce) noted that respondents to the survey were primarily from the Inner Core subregion. A. McGahan replied that staff sent the survey to the entire email list and conducted outreach throughout the region. T. O'Rourke stated that there seems to be a specific group of people responding, and that it is unclear how representative that group is to the region.

Ken Miller (FHWA) commented that surveys are not always the best vehicle for gathering information and suggested that staff consider focus groups that help staff reach all user types. K. Miller stated that there is a gap in representation from drivers, and staff should try to reach out to different markets.

David Koses (At-Large City) (City of Newton) noted that the Exit 17 project in Newton is not included in the LRTP, and inquired whether it needs to be in the LRTP to be considered for funding. D. Koses stated that while Newton supports the LRTP as presented, Newton's desire for the Exit 17 project's completion has remained consistent. D. Mohler responded that the Exit 17 project does not cost more than \$20 million or add capacity to the system at this time—the threshold for Major Infrastructure projects included in the plan. A. McGahan confirmed this. D. Mohler stated that not having this project in the plan does not stop consideration for funding via other means.

Tom Kadzis (City of Boston) (Boston Transportation Department) suggested that Chapter 4 could include links to MassDOT's Capital Investment Program. A. McGahan responded that links will be included in the final document.

Marie Rose (MassDOT Highway Division) asked if it was too late to include project numbers for programmed projects.

Rick Reed (Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination) (Town of Bedford) stated that the Summer Street project should be labeled as McGuire Road.

Vote

A motion to endorse the LRTP was made by the MBTA (Jillian Linnell) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce) (T. O'Rourke) opposed. The motion carried.

8. Work Program for West Station Area Transit Study—*Ben Sadkowski, MPO Staff*

B. Sadkowski presented the work program for the West Station Area Transit Study. The primary purpose of the study is to improve accessibility in West Allston and to complement MassDOT's efforts. MassDOT is currently planning the replacement of the Interstate 90 (I-90) viaduct in Allston and the existing interchange of I-90 with Cambridge Street and Soldiers Field Road (Exit 20). Included in the interchange project is the addition of a multimodal bus and a commuter rail station within Beacon Park Yards, regularly referred to as "West Station." This study will research which transit services are considered most beneficial for maximizing regional and local non-automobile travel to, from, and throughout the study area under different future development scenarios. The study will also determine the best metrics to determine if particular transit investments, both infrastructure and services, can be successful in improving multimodal accessibility in and throughout the study area. MPO staff will assist MAPC and their consultant with the development of conceptual transit service

plans. This project is expected to take 12 months. The budget is \$17,500, to be funded by contract with MAPC.

Discussion

E. Bourassa noted that MAPC is pursuing a body of work in coordination with the MBTA, MassDOT, Boston, Cambridge, and Brookline to look at the I-90 interchange. MAPC is looking at scenarios in the West Station, Inner Belt, Rail Yard area and also layering different potential transit connections. The team will use a sketch modeling tool, which a consultant will develop. MPO staff will help MAPC to refine that tool.

D. Koses noted that this is a small role for a project that will largely impact transit services for many communities. D. Koses questioned whether CTPS's role is too small for a project this size. E. Bourassa responded stating that CTPS will play a significant role. There will be a conversation with the public, MassDOT, MBTA and municipalities about the operation of potential transportation services.

K. Miller commented that this project is required to have a federal environmental impact process. FHWA will give MassDOT two years to complete this process before permits are issued. K. Miller stated that the state and federal processes are out of sync. With time constraints, there should be a draft environmental impact statement in January 2021. K. Miller asked how the scope interacts with the state and federal processes.

E. Bourassa responded that CTPS and MassDOT will be modelling different things as part of the environmental process. This part of the work is more conceptual, looking at potential growth in the area. The team is looking at different builds that could maximize transit ridership.

K. Miller reiterated the required federal environmental impact process. D. Mohler responded that MAPC's work is scenario planning. They will not select a design, but will show the transit opportunities depending on land use development. D. Mohler agreed that once a specific design future is chosen, it will go through the federal process.

D. Koses asked if the scenarios will be looking into rerouting existing transit services or only focusing on new transit service. E. Bourassa responded that the team is unsure at this time and they are waiting on stakeholder feedback.

K. Miller reiterated that as part of the federal process, FHWA will have to consider all feasible combinations for multimodal connections.

Tom Kadzis asked where Harvard University stands since the university owns most of the land surrounding West Station. E. Bourassa responded that they are working closely

with Harvard. MAPC has developed build and no-build land use for the modelling that CTPS will use for the environmental process. After much discussion, Harvard confirmed development plans, including potential air rights, assumptions about parking ratios, and more. Harvard has conveyed that all plans are subject to change. T. Kadzis asked if MAPC is working with Harvard on mitigation. E. Bourassa responded that they are discussing all scenario planning and costs, including the costs that Harvard could cover.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for the West Station Area Transit Study was made by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent) and seconded by Town of Arlington (Daniel Amstutz). The motion carried.

9. Members Items

There were none.

10. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by At-Large City (City of Newton) (D. Koses) and seconded by the North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) (Tina Cassidy). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
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 Lexington)	Sheila Page
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
	Marie Rose
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Jillian Linnell
Massachusetts Port Authority	Laura Gilmore
MBTA Advisory Board	
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Thatcher Kezer III
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)	Rick Reed
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Tegin Teich
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)	
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees Affiliation

Frank Tramontozzi	City of Quincy
Sara Scully	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Ben Losordo	MBTA
Anne McKinnon	Jacobs Engineering Group
Ben Cares	City of Chelsea
Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Scott Peterson, Interim Co-Executive Director
Betsy Harvey
Róisín Foley
Judy Fung
Hiral Gandhi
Matt Genova
Sandy Johnston
Ali Kleyman
Anne McGahan
Ben Sadkowski
Michelle Scott
Kate White
