



# BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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Stephanie Pollack, MassDOT Secretary and CEO and MPO Chair  
Tegin L. Teich, Executive Director, MPO Staff

## ***TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM***

**DATE:** November 7, 2019  
**TO:** Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)  
**FROM:** Michelle Scott, MPO Staff  
**RE:** MPO Transit Committee Outreach Results and Staff Recommendations

This memorandum describes outreach that Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff conducted with transit providers and other stakeholders in the Boston region regarding the possible creation of an MPO transit committee. It discusses the approaches staff used to engage potential participants, and it summarizes their feedback. The memorandum also outlines staff's recommendations for piloting a transit working group during federal fiscal year (FFY) 2020, which have been informed by feedback from the outreach process. Staff requests that the MPO begin to discuss this feedback and staff's recommendations for a pilot at its November 7, 2019, MPO meeting.

### **1 BACKGROUND**

The MPO last discussed options for a proposed transit committee at its April 11, 2019, meeting, which was part of a broader discussion on whether and how to expand public transportation provider representation on the MPO board. This discussion originated in response to a 2015 federal certification review recommendation that the MPO should work with the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA) and the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) to ensure that these providers of public transportation are represented on the MPO board in a way that is satisfactory to all parties and satisfies relevant Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act requirements (more details included in Appendix A).<sup>1</sup> During the April 11, 2019, meeting, MPO staff presented initial recommendations regarding an MPO transit committee and its potential role in public transportation provider representation. These recommendations were made in response to a motion the MPO adopted at its November 8, 2018, meeting, which stipulated that

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<sup>1</sup> More background on these discussions is included in the April 11, 2019, memorandum titled "Recommendations for an MPO Transit Committee," available at [www.ctps.org/data/calendar/pdfs/2019/MPO\\_0411\\_Memo\\_MPO\\_Transit\\_Committee.pdf](http://www.ctps.org/data/calendar/pdfs/2019/MPO_0411_Memo_MPO_Transit_Committee.pdf).

- the MPO would amend its memorandum of understanding (MOU) to add a seat to the MPO board that would represent a transit committee; and
- that the MWRTA would serve as the committee's representative on the MPO board for an initial three-year term beginning upon execution of an updated MOU.

At that meeting, MPO staff proposed a transit committee mission that included the following elements:

- Represent public transportation providers that serve the Boston region on the MPO board
- Advise the MPO on matters pertaining to public transit to inform MPO transportation planning and decision making
- Provide a forum for the region's public transportation providers to discuss topics of mutual interest and concern

As part of staff's original April 11, 2019, proposal, the committee would include a set of designated members, including the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), MWRTA, CATA, and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Rail and Transit Division. Other members, who would potentially have fixed terms, would include representatives from regional transit authorities besides MWRTA and CATA that operate in the MPO region; transportation management association (TMAs); and municipal-level transit providers. In this April 11, 2019, proposal, MPO staff recommended that the committee be represented on the MPO board by either MWRTA or CATA.

The MPO board discussed several related aspects of this proposal at its April 11, 2019 meeting. For example, a challenge that might affect the ability of staff's initial proposal to MWRTA and CATA representation is that representatives of MWRTA and CATA reported in March and April 2019 that they would no longer find a seat on a transit committee to be a satisfactory solution for their representation, and they have communicated support for direct representation on the MPO board.<sup>2</sup> In addition, as part of its initial set of recommendations, MPO staff suggested that the MPO invite potential committee participants to an event during which MPO members and staff would describe the MPO's plans to create a transit committee and share current proposals for structuring the committee. The goal of this outreach activity would be for the MPO to gauge the interest of potential participants and collect their feedback to inform the MPO's decision

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<sup>2</sup> Boston Region MPO Staff. "Recommendations for an MPO Transit Committee." April 11, 2019.  
[www.ctps.org/data/calendar/pdfs/2019/MPO\\_0411\\_Memo\\_MPO\\_Transit\\_Committee.pdf](http://www.ctps.org/data/calendar/pdfs/2019/MPO_0411_Memo_MPO_Transit_Committee.pdf), pages 4–6.

making. The MPO ultimately directed staff to conduct such outreach and bring feedback to the MPO board to support future discussions.

## 2 OUTREACH REGARDING A PROPOSED MPO TRANSIT COMMITTEE

### 2.1 Outreach Process

MPO staff followed a two-step approach to collect feedback about the proposed committee. The first step involved conducting preliminary interviews with transit providers about their interest in a committee. The second step involved hosting a meeting so that (1) transit providers could discuss the proposed committee as a group, and (2) members of the public could attend and provide their feedback.

#### *Preliminary Interviews*

MPO staff sent out an introductory email about the proposed transit committee to representatives of five RTAs besides MWRTA and CATA that operate in the Boston region, 10 TMAs that provide transit service, and six cities, towns, or volunteer organizations that provide transportation services in Boston region municipalities. (MPO staff did not interview CATA and MWRTA during this part of the process because they had been involved in the MPO's earlier discussions.) MPO staff interviewed respondents by phone or emailed them a short survey, depending on their preference and availability, to collect their feedback. To support these interviews, MPO staff distributed a fact sheet that included background information on the committee (see Appendix B). The interview discussion topics generally included

- whether and why these providers would be interested in participating on an MPO transit committee;
- the types of issues they would like to address in a group format, and the types of organizations with whom they would like to coordinate; and
- factors or barriers that might affect their ability or desire to participate on a committee, including representation on the MPO policy board.

If a transit provider was a current member of the MPO's Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council), staff asked about (1) the organization's current or recent experiences participating in Advisory Council meetings, (2) factors or barriers affecting involvement with the Advisory Council, and (3) whether it would prefer to participate in a more transit-focused MPO-related group.

Between May 17 and June 6, MPO staff interviewed representatives the Brockton Area Transit Authority and the Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority; nine TMA representatives; and four municipal staff or

volunteers responsible for providing public transportation services at the neighborhood or municipal level.

### *MPO Transit Committee Outreach Meeting*

MPO staff invited transit providers and members of the public to an MPO-hosted meeting on June 4, 2019, to discuss the proposed committee. A combined 21 representatives of transit providers and members of the public attended this outreach meeting (see Appendix C). Participants included representatives of RTAs, TMAs, municipalities that provide transit services, local advocacy or advisory groups, MassDOT, and the Advisory Council, among others. At the meeting, staff presented general information about the proposed transit committee along with a summary of input that MPO staff collected during the preliminary interviews. Transit providers were given an opportunity to respond to the interview questions at the meeting if they were not able to participate in a preliminary interview; the group also discussed possible transit topics around which they could coordinate. Members of the public were given a dedicated time during the meeting to share their thoughts, reactions, and ideas.

## 2.2 Feedback Summary

Key themes from transit provider and public feedback from this process include the following:

- Nearly all transit provider representatives that staff contacted for interviews expressed some interest in participating in a committee.
- Transit providers generally identified opportunities for coordination with other providers as their top reason for being interested in an MPO transit committee, compared to opportunities to learn more about MPO processes, decisions, and resources or opportunities to provide input on MPO decisions.
- Some transit providers noted it is important that the outcomes of a transit committee's activities be useful. Others noted that it is important to establish proper channels and clear processes to communicate information to the MPO policy board.
- Topics of greatest interest for coordination between transit providers and the MPO include
  - funding availability and opportunities for transit services, or ways to increase the funding that is available; and
  - planning assistance for transit providers, such as technical assistance for service planning, analysis of transit demand trends, and communication of findings from data analyses to customers.

- Outreach meeting participants suggested other entities that could provide valuable input to a transit committee's discussions. These include, but are not limited to, other municipalities, employers, education and housing providers, for-profit carriers, and the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport).
- Several transit provider representatives suggested piloting the committee for approximately one year to see how it progresses and what it can accomplish.

Appendix D provides detail on transit provider and public feedback on topics including, but not limited to, possible areas for coordination among transit providers; meeting logistics; and transit provider involvement in the Advisory Council.

### **3 UPDATED MPO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING A TRANSIT COMMITTEE**

#### **3.1 Recommended Approach: Conduct an MPO Transit Working Group Pilot**

After reviewing and considering the feedback from the outreach process, MPO staff recommends that the MPO pilot a transit working group for a period of approximately one federal fiscal year as a first step toward creating a potential permanent committee or working group. Continuing to explore the creation of such a group may be advantageous to the MPO for several reasons irrespective of transit provider representation on the MPO board:

- The feedback from outreach participants indicates that various transit providers and other stakeholders in the transit space would find it valuable to connect with one another through such a body. A group supported by the MPO would be a way to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders to discuss issues and ideas.
- Input received by the MPO during outreach for *Destination 2040*, the MPO's current long-range transportation plan, indicated a need across the region for better coordination of transit services across agency and municipal boundaries, and this group could provide a venue to begin discussions on such coordination efforts.
- Input from this group could inform MPO investment strategies intended to support transit services and non-single-occupant-vehicle travel. For example, ideas generated by these discussions could help shape projects ultimately funded by the MPO's Community Connections program, or they could inspire the MPO to develop new programs, studies, or initiatives.

A pilot would enable the MPO to test a transit coordinating body before making a formal, long-term commitment to it through modifications to the MPO's MOU. During the pilot, the MPO would learn more about how this group could function, who attends its meetings, and what it is able to accomplish in terms of generating feedback for MPO consideration and advancing action on other topics of interest to committee participants. Both the MPO and transit working group participants would learn whether the group would likely be a productive use of their respective time and resources. The pilot would also give the MPO and participating transit providers opportunities to learn about ways they could structure the group to maximize its benefits.

The MPO has approved \$46,300 in planning funds to support a transit committee's activities during federal fiscal year (FFY) 2020. During the pilot period, MPO staff would report regularly to the MPO about transit working group activities and discussions and participant feedback. At the conclusion of the pilot period, staff would provide recommendations for how a transit working group or committee could proceed going forward.

The sections that follow outline staff's recommendations for various aspects of the working group pilot, including the group's activities, participants, and relationship to the MPO board. MPO staff uses the term "working group" throughout the remainder of this memo because it may best characterize how this group might function.

### 3.2 Recommended Pilot Working Group Activities

Based on feedback from potential participants and prior MPO discussions, MPO staff recommends that transit working group pilot meetings include time for each of these activities:

1. Presentation and discussion of upcoming MPO activities and decisions related to transit to gather feedback from transit providers and affiliates.
2. Information sharing among transit providers and affiliates about their upcoming projects and initiatives.
3. Focused discussion of issues and possible solutions shared among transit providers and affiliates. Appendix D provides a list of possible topics that MPO staff collected during the outreach process, and MPO staff could work with transit working group participants to identify a subset of topics to focus on before working group meetings begin. Ideally, these would be issues that the MPO could help address through its planning and programming activities, although they may not need to meet this criterion if

they are particularly important to transit providers. MPO staff would also try to structure discussions so that they result in clear action steps or outcomes.

4. Discussions that affirm expectations surrounding the transit working group pilot and consider the pilot's progress and potential outcomes.

### 3.3 Recommended Participants

During preliminary interviews and at the outreach meeting, potential transit working group participants suggested a variety of individuals and organizations that could participate in group discussions and support coordination on transit issues. During the pilot, the MPO could apply a relatively informal structure or flexible approach to involve participants in the transit working group's discussions and activities. This flexible approach may help the MPO gather valuable information about how to maximize the group's long-term effectiveness, should the MPO choose to continue it after the pilot.

MPO staff suggests the following set of categories for organizing potential participants, which are based on previous MPO staff proposals and findings from the outreach. While these categories are fungible and may not have a strong influence on how participants interact during the pilot, they could lay the groundwork for a transition to a more formal structure in the future, should the MPO decide to create one.

#### *Core Transit Providers and Related Agencies*

These entities support the core transit services provided in the Boston region and may be able to act most directly on transit issues discussed by a pilot transit working group and/or that relate to MPO activities. Should the transit working group continue past the pilot period and take on a formal structure, these entities may be the most likely to become official members and/or have voting privileges. This group would likely include representatives from the following organizations or agencies:

- RTAs (including MWRTA and CATA and others that who operate only partially in the MPO region)
- TMAs that provide transit service
- Municipalities or volunteer organizations that operate or are planning to operate transit service for the general public
- MBTA
- MassDOT Rail and Transit Division
- Massport

### *Affiliate Organizations, Providers, and Participants*

Participants in this group may not be as directly involved in addressing solutions to transit issues identified by the working group or that relate to the MPO, but they could provide ideas and feedback during transit working group discussions, or they may have some roles in taking action on identified solutions. This group may include representatives from the following agencies or organizations:

- Municipalities that regularly interact with transit agencies (but that do not provide service for the general public)
- TMAs that do not operate transit service
- The MBTA Advisory Board
- The Human Service Transportation Office of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services
- Human service transportation organizations focused on providing service to seniors and/or people with disabilities
- The Advisory Council
- For-profit transit providers, such as intercity bus companies
- Advocacy groups
- Interested members of the public

### *Visiting Experts and Participants*

Participants in this group may attend or may be invited to attend specific meetings of a pilot transit working group to provide insight on topics of interest, but they are not expected to be regular attendees. These visiting participants may include representatives from chambers of commerce, MassDOT's Highway Division, or transportation network companies, among others.

MPO staff would track participation in each of these categories during the pilot phase to see what level and types of participation a future transit working group may be able to sustain. This tracking would also help MPO staff suggest how to best organize governance of any future group.

### *Participant Group Organization*

During the pilot phase, the MPO may not need to establish a formal leadership structure for the transit working group. This recommendation differs from the proposed set of designated and fixed-term members that MPO staff presented on April 11, 2019; however, it would be in keeping with a more flexible and open approach to participation as the MPO and participants explore how the group could function. One option for organizing the group's activities could be that MPO staff takes general responsibility for meeting logistics and facilitation. Staff could also invite participants, particularly those in the Core Transit Providers and Related Agencies category, to support facilitation efforts or lead discussions on



particular topics if they are interested. At the conclusion of the pilot, MPO staff could summarize discussions held by the working group, analyze how these processes functioned and make recommendations to the MPO on how to establish a more formal committee structure, if desired. At this point, the MPO could work with Advisory Council leadership to determine how the MPO's transit working group could relate to the Advisory Council, particularly in terms of membership and voting privileges.

### 3.4 Pilot Working Group Relationship to the MPO Board

As discussed in Section 1, the MPO's explorations of a transit committee began in response to a federal certification review recommendation that the MPO expand representation for CATA and MWRTA on the MPO board. In addition, as previously mentioned, representatives of MWRTA and CATA have reported that they would no longer find a seat on a transit committee to be a satisfactory solution for their representation and have communicated support for direct representation on the MPO board.<sup>3</sup> Staff also found during the outreach process that other transit providers generally seemed to be more interested in opportunities for coordination relative to opportunities to provide input on MPO decisions. At this time, there does not appear to be a strong demand for representation on the MPO board from potential participants besides MWRTA and CATA.

Given these factors and the exploratory nature of the pilot, MPO staff recommends that the MPO *not* provide a seat on the board for the transit working group during the pilot period. During this period, the MPO could see if a demand for representation on the MPO board increases among transit providers and affiliates as they meet and work together in this group. The MPO may find this to be the case and may wish to institute a more formal membership and representation structure for the group in the future, should it continue. Alternatively, the MPO may find that that it may be better to keep the group focused on coordination and to maintain a more flexible structure to encourage diverse participation. The pilot would also provide information about whether the group would have sufficient attendance to support transit provider coordination or input for MPO activities, or for the MPO to consider representing it on its board.

If the MPO decides to proceed with staff's proposals, staff requests that the MPO review its existing motion from November 8, 2018, (described in Section 1) and then determine whether to create a new or modified motion regarding to pilot a

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<sup>3</sup> Boston Region MPO Staff. "Recommendations for an MPO Transit Committee." April 11, 2019.  
[www.ctps.org/data/calendar/pdfs/2019/MPO\\_0411\\_Memo\\_MPO\\_Transit\\_Committee.pdf](http://www.ctps.org/data/calendar/pdfs/2019/MPO_0411_Memo_MPO_Transit_Committee.pdf), pages 4–6.

transit working group for one year, in accordance with staff's recommendations. These recommendations include keeping the pilot working group's structure relatively flexible and not representing the group on the MPO board during the pilot period. A new or modified motion could help provide clear direction to staff as it proceeds with pilot activities.

### **3.5 Recommended Pilot Transit Working Group Mission**

Given MPO staff's recommendations for a pilot transit working group's activities, participants, structure, and relationship to the MPO board, staff recommends removing the first statement from the mission proposed on April 11, 2019 ("Represent public transportation providers serving the Boston region on the MPO board"). Staff proposes maintaining the two remaining statements:

- Advise the MPO on matters pertaining to transit to inform MPO transportation planning and decision making
- Provide a forum for the region's transit providers to discuss topics of mutual interest and concern

At the conclusion of the pilot, the MPO could consider whether it would incorporate representation-related or other elements into the group's mission, should the group continue.

### **3.6 Post-Pilot Transit Working Group Activities**

At the end of the pilot period, staff would summarize information about the pilot's progress and participant feedback and provide a final update to the MPO board. In addition, staff would provide recommendations for how a transit working group could function in the future. At that point, the MPO could decide to establish an ongoing transit working group with a flexible structure that is primarily focused on coordination, or it could create a group with a more formal membership structure and possibly grant it representation on the MPO board. The MPO could also end the pilot and choose not to support a transit working group in the future.

### **3.7 MWRTA and CATA Representation**

Whether the MPO adopts staff's recommendations for the pilot or takes another approach, it will eventually need to consider how to address the related question of MWRTA and CATA representation. The MPO could choose to defer discussion of this issue until further along in the pilot period or after the pilot is complete, which would likely be in the fall of 2020. Alternatively, the MPO could discuss and take action on the question of MWRTA and CATA representation on the MPO board, separate from the transit working group pilot, at an upcoming MPO meeting.

#### 4 REQUESTED ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

At the November 7, 2019, MPO meeting, MPO staff requests that the MPO begin to discuss the results of staff's outreach regarding an MPO transit committee and staff's recommendations for creating a transit working group pilot. Should the MPO ultimately decide to proceed with staff's recommendations, staff requests that the MPO consider modifying its existing (November 8, 2018) motion or create a new motion to pilot a transit working group for a year, in accordance with these recommendations.

If the MPO proceeds with conducting a transit working group pilot, staff will contact potential transit committee participants to inform them of the MPO's decision and about initial activities that will be involved in setting up the committee. These will include establishing an initial meeting date and identifying a process or plan to guide transit working group meeting agendas. In addition, staff will modify the Transit Committee Support project description in the FFY 2020 UPWP to make it more reflective of work needed to support the transit working group pilot, as needed.

## APPENDIX A: FEDERAL RECOMMENDATION REGARDING PUBLIC TRANSIT PROVIDER REPRESENTATION ON THE MPO BOARD

The Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) recent discussions regarding public transportation provider representation began in response to a recommendation from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in their 2015 certification review report to the Boston Region MPO.<sup>1</sup> In that document, FHWA and FTA noted that the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act requires MPOs that have been designated or redesignated after December 18, 1991, to include public transit representatives on their boards.<sup>2</sup> They noted that the Boston Region MPO board includes direct representation for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), the region's major transit provider, but does not include direct representation for the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) or the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA). MWRTA and CATA operate entirely within the Boston region and are the only regional transit authorities (RTA) in Massachusetts not represented on an MPO board. The FHWA and FTA note that these two agencies have expressed concern that, given the difference in scale between them and the MBTA, the MPO board's current representation arrangement may not fully represent the needs of these agencies.<sup>3</sup> In their final report, FHWA and FTA made the following recommendation:

“The MPO should work with the MetroWest and Cape Ann Regional Transit Authorities (MWRTA and CATA) to ensure that these providers of public transportation are represented on the MPO board in a way that is satisfactory to all parties and satisfies the MAP-21 requirement for transit representation on MPO boards. The particular form of this representation should be determined cooperatively by the interested parties. Possible examples include: full or fractional representation on the board for each RTA; a single seat that rotates between the RTAs; a transit or intermodal ‘functional sub-region’ representative similar to the geographical sub-region representatives already on the board; indirect representation through another MPO board member (e.g., MBTA or

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<sup>1</sup> US Department of Transportation—Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. “Transportation Planning Certification Review of the Metropolitan Planning Process for the Boston Transportation Management Area: Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization.” Final Report—May 2015.  
[www.ctps.org/data/pdf/about/mpo/Boston\\_Region\\_MPO\\_Recert\\_2015.pdf](http://www.ctps.org/data/pdf/about/mpo/Boston_Region_MPO_Recert_2015.pdf), page 20.

<sup>2</sup> These provisions have been continued under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

<sup>3</sup> US Department of Transportation—Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. “Transportation Planning Certification Review of the Metropolitan Planning Process for the Boston Transportation Management Area: Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization,” Final Report—May 2015.  
[www.ctps.org/data/pdf/about/mpo/Boston\\_Region\\_MPO\\_Recert\\_2015.pdf](http://www.ctps.org/data/pdf/about/mpo/Boston_Region_MPO_Recert_2015.pdf), page 20.

MassDOT) supplemented by voting membership for both RTAs on the Regional Transportation Advisory Council; or some other form of representation agreed upon by all parties.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> US Department of Transportation—Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. “Transportation Planning Certification Review of the Metropolitan Planning Process for the Boston Transportation Management Area: Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization,” Final Report—May 2015.  
[www.ctps.org/data/pdf/about/mpo/Boston\\_Region\\_MPO\\_Recert\\_2015.pdf](http://www.ctps.org/data/pdf/about/mpo/Boston_Region_MPO_Recert_2015.pdf), page 20.

## APPENDIX B: FACT SHEET: PROPOSED BOSTON REGION MPO TRANSIT COMMITTEE (MAY 29, 2019)

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is exploring whether to create a transit committee, which could (1) support coordination among different types of transit providers in the Boston region, and/or (2) enhance the representation of transit interests in MPO activities.

### Background

The Boston Region MPO began exploring ways to expand transit provider involvement and representation on the MPO board in response to a recommendation from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. This recommendation focuses on increasing representation for the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) and the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA) on the MPO board; however, discussions among the MPO board members about this recommendation inspired conversations about how to increase transit provider involvement in MPO activities in general.

One option to address this recommendation would be for the MPO board to create a standing MPO transit committee, where various transit providers in the region could discuss the board's decisions, MPO activities, and other topics of interest. The board considered a proposal for a committee at its April 11, 2019, meeting (see materials at [www.bostonmpo.org/calendar/day/2019-04-11](http://www.bostonmpo.org/calendar/day/2019-04-11)), and is now seeking feedback from the region's transit providers on whether they would be interested in participating on a committee.

### Proposed Transit Committee Features

#### *Mission*

Under the current proposal, the purpose of this transit committee would be to

- represent public transportation providers serving the Boston region;
- advise the MPO board on matters pertaining to public transit to inform transportation planning and decision making; and
- provide a forum for the region's public transportation providers to discuss topics of mutual interest and concern.

Given this mission, the committee could discuss MPO activities, planned or proposed programming of transportation funds, or ways for transit providers to coordinate with one another.

## *Members*

The current proposal for the committee provides for two types of member seats:

- **Designated seats:** Some seats would be reserved for agencies that would participate consistently in the committee over time. These agencies would include MWRTA, CATA, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Rail and Transit Division.
- **Other seats:** Other seats would have fixed terms, and the organizations that hold them would likely change over time. Organizations that would hold these seats could include (1) other regional transit authorities that operate in the Boston region, (2) transportation management associations that provide transit service, or (3) municipalities that provide transit service (excluding council on aging services). A specific number of seats would be established for each type of organization.

The committee, which would be supported by MPO staff, would likely meet several times during a calendar year. Organizations that hold member seats would be able to vote on formal actions the committee might take. Committee meetings would be open to the public, so other interested parties, such as transportation advocates, could attend and participate in discussions.

## *Structure and Representation*

Under the current proposal, either MWRTA or CATA would represent this transit committee on the MPO board, though the board may explore other approaches to represent the committee or include its input in the board's discussions. The committee chair would be responsible for developing meeting agendas and facilitating discussions. Members of the transit committee would not have voting privileges at the MPO's Regional Transportation Advisory Council, although they would be able to attend and participate in meetings of both groups.

## **How to Be Involved**

The MPO board would appreciate your feedback about the proposed transit committee. Opportunities to provide feedback include the following:

- The MPO plans to hold a public meeting to discuss this committee in the evening on June 4, 2019, at the State Transportation Building in Boston (more details to come).
- MPO staff also will be contacting transit providers to collect feedback prior to this event.

If you would like more information or to share your thoughts about the proposed transit committee, please contact a member of the MPO staff:

- Michelle Scott (857.702.3692, [mscott@ctps.org](mailto:mscott@ctps.org))
- Sandy Johnston (857.702.3710, [sjohnston@ctps.org](mailto:sjohnston@ctps.org))

General information about the Boston Region MPO is available at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org).



## APPENDIX C: TRANSIT COMMITTEE OUTREACH MEETING ATTENDEES AND OTHER INTERVIEWEES

### Transit Committee Outreach Meeting Attendees

- Susan Barrett (Town of Lexington)\*
- Jeff Bennett (128 Business Council)
- Paul Christner (Medical Academic and Scientific Community Association [MASCO])
- Stephanie Cronin (Middlesex 3 Transportation Management Association [TMA])\*
- Lenard Diggins (Regional Transportation Advisory Council/Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority [MBTA] Rider Oversight Committee)
- Lucia Dolan (Newton Transportation Advisory Group)
- Marc Ebuña (Boston resident)
- Sophia Galimore (Watertown TMA)
- Glenn Ann Geiler (Brockton Area Transit Authority)
- Astrid Glynn (Massachusetts Department of Transportation [MassDOT])
- Sarah Hamilton (MASCO)\*
- David Kucharsky (City of Salem)
- Kristiana Lachiusa (LivableStreets)
- Andrea Leary (North Shore TMA)\*
- Andrew McFarland (Office of Boston City Councilor Michelle Wu)
- John McQueen (Regional Transportation Advisory Council)
- Matt Moran (Boston Transportation Department)
- Alyssa Sandoval (Town of Bedford)
- Tom Schiavone (MassDOT)
- Felicia Webb (Cape Ann Transportation Authority)
- Scott Zadakis (CrossTown Connect TMA)\*

\* *Preliminary interview participants*

### Other Interviewees

- Aaron Clausen, MPO Representative for the North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)
- Maggie Cohn (Mission Hill LINK)
- Karen Dumaine (Neponset Valley TMA)
- Jim Gascoigne (Charles River TMA)
- Frank Gay (Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority)
- Stephanie Hirshon (Metrowest 495 TMA)
- Michael Lambert (Brockton Area Transit Authority)

- Rick Reed, MPO Representative for the Minuteman Advisory Group for Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)
- Sarah Stanton (Town of Bedford)
- Monica Tibitts-Nutt (128 Business Council)
- Melissa Zampitella (Alewife TMA)

## APPENDIX D: SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK ON A PROPOSED MPO TRANSIT COMMITTEE

This appendix summarizes feedback collected via phone, in-person conversations, email, and at the Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) June 4, 2019, outreach meeting on a proposed transit committee. Feedback has been summarized by topic area.

### *Transit Provider Interest in an MPO Transit Committee*

Nearly all transit provider representatives that staff contacted for interviews expressed some interest in participating in a committee. Several representatives noted that staff availability could affect their organization's ability to participate.

### *Provider Reasons for Interest in an MPO Transit Committee*

When conducting interviews, MPO staff asked transit providers to identify which of the types of opportunities listed below interested them about the MPO's proposed transit committee. These types are listed in order of importance to respondents, based on MPO staff's assessment.

1. Opportunities to coordinate with other transit providers
2. Opportunities to learn more about the MPO's processes, decisions, and resources for transit providers (tied with #3)
3. Opportunities to provide input on MPO decisions (tied with #2)

### *MPO Representation of Input from the Proposed Committee*

Transit providers were asked about how much the nature of the committee's representation on the MPO board, if any, might influence their decision to participate. Several transit provider representatives shared feedback on this question (comments marked with an asterisk were mentioned by multiple people).

- Committee representation is valuable, but opportunities to coordinate on transit topics with other providers are of the most interest.\*
- It is important that the outcomes of committee activities are useful.\*
- It is important to establish proper channels and a clear process to communicate information to the MPO.
- The results of committee activities need to be meaningfully conveyed to the MPO.

During the June 4, 2019 meeting, one attending member of the public mentioned that it would be valuable for an MPO transit committee to have a seat on the MPO's policy board.

### *Feedback Pertaining to the Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

A limited number of the transit provider representatives that MPO staff contacted prior to the June 4, 2019, meeting were current or relatively recent members of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council. Several of those that met this criterion noted that they appreciated the broad range of transportation-oriented topics that are discussed during Advisory Council meetings. One person mentioned that limited staff capacity affected their organization's ability to participate in the Advisory Council. Another mentioned that their organization is interested in research support, which is not provided by the Advisory Council. Several representatives mentioned that they or others in their organization might be interested in participating in a body that is more focused on transit.

### *Topics for Transit Provider/MPO Coordination and Engagement*

Some transit provider representatives noted that they have had limited interaction with the MPO or that becoming familiar with the MPO can be challenging. Transit providers expressed interest in engaging with the MPO on several topics (those noted with an asterisk were mentioned by multiple people):

- Funding availability and opportunities for transit services, or ways to increase the funding that is available\*
- Planning assistance for transit providers, including technical assistance for service planning, analysis of trends in transit demand, and communicating findings from data to customers\*
- Funding to address transportation needs (which could include access and parking improvements) in transit service areas
- Representation of transit providers beyond the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and Regional Transit Authorities (RTA), and the transit demand they help service, in transportation planning and modeling
- Inclusion of transit interests in transportation project design
- Prioritization of transit-friendly projects

### *Topics for Coordination Among Transit Providers*

Transit provider representatives suggested a range of topics for coordination with other transit providers, as well as other people and organizations involved in transit-related issues. An MPO transit committee might include information and

coordination as part of its activities. (Topics with an asterisk were mentioned by multiple people.)

- First-mile and last-mile needs\*
- Suburban transit needs\*
- Municipal transit service needs\*
- Improved coordination with the MBTA\*
  - Connections to and from commuter rail service
  - Coordination and communication to support first-mile and last-mile shuttle service to MBTA service, including to respond quickly to MBTA service delays
  - Inter-suburban and intra-suburban bus route planning
- Coordination among transit providers (of various types) that serve a particular portion of the Boston region (such as the North Shore or MetroWest)\*
- Transit mobility needs, such as transit signal priority, snow removal, or high-occupancy vehicle lane opportunities\*
- Traffic and how it affects transit operations, particularly at identified bottleneck locations (such as near Alewife Station)\*
- Leveraging school transportation resources and opportunities to meet transit needs\*
- Street design features that affect transit operations
- Strategies to support small-scale shuttle service
- Coordination between RTAs and transportation management associations (TMA) on route planning and service changes
- Coordinating schedules and sharing information between services that may connect with one another
- Overcoming barriers between jurisdictions to better help customers get from one area to another
- Coordination among service providers operating at similar scales (such as between TMAs and large RTAs)
- Identifying short-term approaches to address planning needs
- Coordination with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, particularly on transportation maintenance and improvement projects happening on transit routes

- Coordination with human service transportation organizations
- Needs of “tweener” communities that straddle the borders of multiple RTAs, regional planning areas, or career service providers
- Use of technology (including software applications) across transit service providers
- Fare interoperability
- Transition to electric-powered buses
- Addressing liability issues common to multiple agencies

Several members of the public that attended the June 4, 2019, meeting suggested other topics, including the following:

- Opportunities for joint resource procurement
- Needs and opportunities for collaboration on garages and other facilities.

### *Suggestions for Other Participants*

When conducting outreach and planning for the June 4, 2019, meeting, MPO staff specifically reached out to representatives of (1) other RTAs operating in the MPO region besides MWRTA and CATA, (2) TMAs operating in the region, and (3) municipalities that are now operating or exploring transit service. Staff also advertised the meeting using its website, Twitter, and its email distribution list. Staff asked attendees of the June 4, 2019, meeting to identify other people or entities that should be involved in MPO transit committee discussions and activities. (Replies listed with an asterisk were mentioned by multiple people.)

- More municipalities\*
- Employers of various sizes\*
- Education providers
- Housing providers
- For-profit carriers, such as intercity buses
- Massport
- Other entities using Federal Transit Administration funds in the Boston area
- Transportation contractors, such as Keolis
- Representatives of the MBTA’s Better Bus project
- Representatives of highway agencies, depending on the discussion topic

Members of the public at the June 4, 2019, meeting also mentioned involving advocacy groups and companies developing connected and autonomous vehicles.

### *Transit Provider Feedback on Committee Meeting Scheduling and Structure*

MPO staff explained to outreach participants that the MPO's current proposal for the committee anticipates that this group would meet four to six times per year. During preliminary interviews, transit provider representatives provided feedback on meeting features that would support their attendance. (Replies listed with an asterisk were mentioned by multiple people.)

- Action-oriented meetings that make progress on addressing issues\*
- Meetings held during the workday\*
- Predictable meeting schedule\*
- Ability to access meetings via phone or internet\*
- Meetings held in the middle of the week
- Variable meeting location, with meetings not always held in Boston
- Meetings held near the beginning or end of the workday

### *Other Transit Provider Feedback*

Several people suggested piloting the committee for approximately one year to see how it progresses and what it can accomplish. One transit provider representative suggested exploring ways that the committee could serve as a pipeline for developing transportation projects. Another asked what relationship an MPO transit committee might have with the MBTA Advisory Board.

### *Other Public Feedback*

Several members of the public that attended the June 4, 2019, meeting emphasized the importance of accounting for transportation equity issues in the work of the committee. One noted that TMA-provided services are not necessarily open or transparent to the public, and that these services may be too costly for the public to use. Another mentioned that information sharing between transit providers across common platforms could provide customers with alternatives when MBTA services are disrupted. Another person suggested that an MPO transit committee could hold joint meetings with other transportation-related organizations in the region, especially if MPO staff would be presenting the same information to both groups. A member of the public who did not participate in the June 4 outreach meeting expressed support for the transit committee and said that its focus should be on expanding transit parking.