

MPO Meeting Minutes

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

July 1, 2021, Meeting

10:00 AM–11:01 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Steve Woelfel, Chair, representing Jamey Tesler, 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 April 29, 2021
- Approve the minutes of the meeting of May 6, 2021
- Approve the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022 Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) Operating Budget
- Approve the work plan for Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Review of Fare Structure, Tariffs, and Policy for SFY 2023

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on pages 6–8.

2. Chair's Report—*Steve Woelfel, MassDOT*

There was none.

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

T. Teich reviewed recent MPO staff outreach events, including two Inner Core Committee transportation meetings, an MPO Pilot Transit Working Group meeting, and a webinar hosted with the American Planning Association (or APA) Massachusetts Transportation Committee. T. Teich noted that the state legislature has extended Governor Baker's suspension of certain aspects of the Open Meeting Law to continue to allow for virtual public meetings until April 1, 2022. T. Teich stated that staff are operating under the assumption that meetings will continue to be entirely virtual until the extension expires, but that the board should discuss whether, how, and when to shift to allow staff time to plan logistics.

4. Public Comments

State Representative Christine Barber (34th Middlesex District, Somerville and Medford) advocated for the MPO to program funding for the Green Line Extension (GLX) Phase II. Representative Barber stated that when GLX Phase I was facing financial difficulties, the MPO voted to reprogram funding from Phase II to Phase I. At that time, MassDOT committed by letter to start the environmental review process for Phase II by 2016. Representative Barber stated that this has not been completed and advocated for the MPO to once again program funding for GLX Phase II in the Long-Range Transportation Plan to help ensure the restart of the environmental review process.

Ken Krause (Medford Resident) advocated for the resumption of the environmental review process for GLX Phase II.

Olivia Nichols (GreenRoots) advocated for the MPO to fund a proposed congestion pricing study in the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). O. Nichols stated that congestion pricing could mitigate the effects of air pollution from congestion on environmental justice (EJ) populations, particularly those in East Boston and Chelsea. O. Nichols advocated for the study to analyze strategies to mitigate impacts of a potential congestion pricing program on low and moderate income drivers, invest revenues in public transportation routes that provide alternatives to driving, and quantify the benefits and burdens to EJ populations.

Sarita Ramakrishna (Conservation Law Foundation) advocated for the MPO to fund a proposed congestion pricing study in the FFY 2022 UPWP. S. Ramakrishna also stated that the fare equity work program on the agenda should consider changes in travel patterns as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports—*Benjamin Muller, MassDOT, Chair, UPWP Committee; Eric Bourassa, MAPC, Chair, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project Costs Ad-Hoc Committee*

B. Muller stated that the UPWP Committee met prior to the MPO to discuss proposed discrete studies for FFY 2022. B. Muller stated that the discussion largely centered on the proposed congestion pricing study. B. Muller stated that the committee would meet next on July 15, 2021, prior to the MPO meeting, to review the final draft UPWP for potential recommendation to release for public comment.

E. Bourassa stated that the TIP Project Costs Ad-Hoc Committee had met twice to discuss issues driving cost increases for MPO funded projects, focusing on the large increases that occur between Project Review Committee (PRC) approval and the 25 percent design stage. E. Bourassa stated that the committee is narrowing down

potential policy recommendations to bring to the board in September, and will meet on July 8, 2021.

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

L. Diggins stated that the Advisory Council met on June 9, 2021, and heard a presentation on research regarding the benefits of active transportation. L. Diggins stated that Anne McGahan (MPO staff) and Emily Torres-Cullinane (MAPC) would present at the next Advisory Council meeting on the Long-Range Transportation Plan and its relationship to MAPC's regional plan, *MetroCommon*.

7. Action Item: Approval of April 29, 2021, and May 6, 2021, MPO Meeting Minutes—*Kate White and Ariel Patterson, MPO Staff*

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of April 29, 2021, was made by the At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) (Daniel Amstutz) and seconded by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham) (Thatcher Kezer III). D. Amstutz suggested the addition of one clarification to Item 9 in the April 29, 2021, minutes. With that change, the motion carried.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 6, 2021, was made by the North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly) (Darlene Wynne) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent). The motion carried.

8. Action Item: SFY 2022 CTPS Operating Budget—*Brian Kane and Tina Cassidy, MPO Board Members, and Hiral Gandhi, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Recommendation to Approve the Draft SFY 2022 CTPS Operating Budget](#)

B. Kane presented the recommended draft SFY 2022 CTPS Operating Budget. B. Kane stated that the proposed budget is balanced—with revenue and expenses of \$6,679,650, a three percent increase from FFY 2021. B. Kane stated that this budget will support 58 staff positions, supports salary increases, and fully funds a computer plan to support hybrid and remote work.

Vote

A motion to approve the SFY 2022 CTPS Operating Budget was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: Equity Analysis for MBTA SFY 2023 Fare Changes—*Emily Domanico, MPO Staff*

E. Domanico stated that this analysis will forecast ridership revenue and equity impacts for MBTA fare structure and tariff changes for SFY 2023. E. Domanico stated that the work is expected to take seven months, with an additional five months in the schedule for ongoing technical support. The project budget is \$52,000, and will be funded by the MBTA.

Discussion

D. Amstutz asked whether this work would include any analyses related to possible alternative fare structures for telecommuting. E. Domanico stated that this work would focus primarily on scenarios and fare changes that the MBTA currently plans to implement.

E. Bourassa asked whether the MBTA is considering fare changes for increasing revenue or about fare changes designed to increase ridership, expressing concerns about a general fare increase for revenue. *There was no MBTA representative available to comment on this.*

B. Kane stated that public MBTA documents currently indicate that the MBTA is not seeking a fare increase prior to 2025.

Paul Christner (MPO Staff) stated that staff will have a number of conversations with the MBTA. There are any number of fare changes that could happen, including reductions, but no option is currently final.

S. Ramakrishna asked what the data source would be for conducting the equity analysis. E. Domanico stated that the primary data source will be the most recent systemwide ridership survey, but staff may use the MBTA's ongoing customer survey panels and other sources.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for Equity Analysis for MBTA SFY 2023 Fare Changes was made by the At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) (D. Amstutz) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

10. Members Items

There were none.

11. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members

Representatives and Alternates

At-Large City (City of Everett)	
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Daniel Amstutz
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)	Todd Kirrane
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Bill Conroy
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
	Cassie Ostrander
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Steve Woelfel
MassDOT Highway Division	John Bechard
	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	
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)	
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Rockland)	
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
Benjamin N.W. Muller	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Cheryll-Ann Senior	MassDOT Highway District 5
Colette Aufranc	Wellesley Select Board
Derek Krevat	MassDOT OTP
Gus Norrbom	MassDOT OTP
Louise Baxter	MBTA Riders' Union
Michael Garrity	MassDOT Highway District 6
Michelle Ho	MassDOT OTP
Olivia Nichols	GreenRoots
Representative Christine Barber	34th Middlesex District, Somerville and Medford
Saritha Ramakrishna	Conservation Law Foundation
Schuyler Larrabee	Advisory Council
Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken	City of Gloucester
Steve Rawding	MassDOT Aeronautics
Todd Baldwin	Town of Saugus
Eric Johnson	City of Framingham
Joe Blankenship	Boston Planning & Development Agency
Joe Collins	Town of Norwood
Ken Krause	Medford resident
Matt Moran	Boston Transportation Department
Steven Olanoff	TRIC Alternate

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Mark Abbott

Matt Archer

Paul Christner

Jonathan Church

Annette Demchur

Emily Domanico

Róisín Foley

Hiral Gandhi

Matt Genova

Betsy Harvey

Sandy Johnston

Anne McGahan

Marty Milkovits

Rebecca Morgan

Ariel Patterson

Gina Perille

Michelle Scott

Kate White

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Title VI Specialist

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By Telephone:

857.702.3702 (voice)

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