

MPO Meeting Minutes

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

October 21, 2021, Meeting

10:00 AM–12:25 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

David Mohler, 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 August 19, 2021
- Approve the minutes of the meeting of September 2, 2021
- Approve the work program for Addressing Priority Corridors from the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Needs Assessment: Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022
- Approve the work program for Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways: FFY 2022
- Approve the work program for Safety and Operations at Selected Intersections
- Approve the work program for Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) 2022 Title VI Program Monitoring
- Release Amendment One to the FFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for a 21-day public review period
- Endorse the Public Outreach Plan (POP)
- Approve the collective purchasing model for capital projects under the Community Connections Program
- Encourage the RTA-centered model for transit operating projects under the Community Connections Program in areas served by a regional transit authority (RTA) other than the MBTA

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 11.

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 provided updates about ongoing staff recruitment and recent public outreach activities, noting that recommendations for addressing Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project cost changes had been released for public review until October 18, 2021. The TIP Project Costs Ad Hoc Committee planned to discuss comments at the meeting immediately following this MPO meeting. The MPO board would review and vote on final endorsement at the MPO meeting on November 4, 2021.

T. Teich reported that MPO staff hosted a second virtual Travel Demand Management (TDM) forum on September 30, 2021, and a Transit Working Group meeting on October 12, 2021. The Transit Working Group planned to host a series of informal virtual “Coffee Chats” in November. T. Teich reminded members about annual MPO staff visits to Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) subregional groups from October to December. MPO staff visited the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) on October 5, 2021, the Inner Core Committee on October 13, 2021, and the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC) on October 19, 2021. Additional meetings were scheduled for the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MWRC) on October 28, 2021, North Shore Task Force (NSTF) on October 28, 2021, South West Advisory Planning Committee (SWAP) on November 9, 2021, South Shore Coalition (SSC) on November 18, 2021, and North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC) on December 14, 2021.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports—*Derek Krevat, MassDOT, Chair, Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee*

Derek Krevat (MassDOT) reported that the UPWP Committee met prior to the MPO meeting and recommended that the MPO board release the draft FFY 2022 UPWP Amendment One for a 21-day public review period. D. Krevat noted that he is now the MPO Liaison at the MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (OTP) and would be coordinating between the Boston Region MPO and MassDOT OTP.

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

L. Diggins reported that the last Advisory Council meeting featured Alexis Walls (Massachusetts Public Health Association) and Enrique Pepén from Transportation for Massachusetts discussing recently filed legislation regarding support for RTAs. L. Diggins also presented the proposed policies regarding TIP project cost increases to the Advisory Council.

7. Action Item: Approval of August 19, 2021, and September 2, 2021, MPO Meeting Minutes—Jonathan Church and Róisín Foley, MPO Staff

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 19, 2021, was made by the At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) (Daniel Amstutz) and seconded by the North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly) (Darlene Wynne). The Massachusetts Port Authority (Sarah Lee) and the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham) (Erika Oliver Jerram) abstained. The motion carried.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of September 2, 2021, was made by MAPC (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly) (D. Wynne). The Massachusetts Port Authority (S. Lee) and the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham) (E. Jerram) abstained. The motion carried.

8. Action Item: Work Scope, Addressing Priority Corridors from the LRTP Needs Assessment for FFY 2022—Seth Asante, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Work Scope: Addressing Priority Corridors from the LRTP Needs Assessment for FFY 2022](#)

S. Asante stated that previous iterations of this study have been well received and many of the recommendations implemented or advanced to project status. S. Asante stated that MPO staff will select an arterial segment from those identified in the LRTP Needs Assessment, identify transportation-related problems within the arterial segment, and develop and evaluate solutions. This project is MPO funded, has a budget of \$145,000, and will take ten months to complete.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for Addressing Priority Corridors from the LRTP Needs Assessment for FFY 2022 was made by MAPC (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: Work Scope, Addressing Safety, Mobility and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways for FFY 2022—Chen-Yuan Wang, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Work Scope: Addressing Safety, Mobility and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways for FFY 2022](#)

C. Wang stated that this study was developed to address safety, mobility, and access on corridors that are of concern but not identified in the LRTP Needs Assessment.

C. Wang stated that previous iterations of this study have been well received and many of the recommendations implemented or advanced to project status. C. Wang stated that MPO Staff will select a corridor, identify transportation-related problems, and develop and evaluate solutions. This project is MPO funded, has a budget of \$133,000, and will take ten months to complete.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for Addressing Safety, Mobility and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways for FFY 2022, was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) (D. Amstutz). The motion carried.

10. Action Item: Work Scope, Safety and Operations at Selected Intersections for FFY 2022—Seth Asante, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Work Scope: Safety and Operations at Selected Intersections for FFY 2022](#)

S. Asante stated that this study will build on recommendations generated by the MPO's Congestion Management Process (CMP), evaluation of crash data, and input from the MPO's outreach process to address safety and operations problems at intersections in the Boston region. Previous iterations of this study have been well received and many of the recommendations have been constructed or advanced to project status.

S. Asante stated that this study will identify improvements that address operational and safety problems at as many as three intersections in the Boston Region MPO area. This project is MPO funded, has a budget of \$82,000, and will take ten months to complete.

Discussion

Brad Rawson (Inner Core Committee) (City of Somerville) expressed support for this study.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for Safety and Operations at Selected Intersections for FFY 2022, was made by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (B. Rawson) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

11. Action Item: Work Scope, MBTA 2022 Title VI Program Monitoring—Bradley Putnam, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Work Scope: MBTA 2022 Title VI Program Monitoring](#)

B. Putnam stated that every three years the MBTA is required to submit a report to the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Office of Civil Rights detailing the MBTA's efforts

to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For years in which the MBTA does not submit a triennial report, the FTA requires the MBTA to complete annual Title VI monitoring and internal reporting to identify and address problems early and to ensure ongoing Title VI compliance. CTPS has performed data collection and analysis for MBTA Title VI reporting for decades. This work program outlines the monitoring that will be completed in calendar year 2022, which will provide some of the data for the analyses that will be reported in the 2023 triennial report. This work is funded by the MBTA, has a budget of \$79,700, and will cover two years of work.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for MBTA 2022 Title VI Program Monitoring was made by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

12. Action Item: FFY 2022 UPWP Amendment One—*Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Technical Memorandum: Recommended Revisions to Certain 3C Budgets \(FFY 2022\)](#)
2. [FFY 2022 UPWP Amendment One: Redlined](#)
3. [FFY 2022 UPWP Amendment One: Clean Copy](#)

S. Johnston presented Amendment One to the FFY 2022 UPWP and asked that the MPO vote to release the amendment for a 21-day public review period. Amendment One extends some unused FFY 2021 funds into the new fiscal year to be used for professional development and direct costs. The amendment also makes a number of minor corrections to the UPWP document and inserts project ID numbers for tasks where they had not been identified before endorsement.

Vote

A motion to release Amendment One to the FFY 2022 UPWP for a 21-day public review period was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried.

13. Action Item: MPO Public Outreach Plan (POP)—*Jonathan Church, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Draft Public Outreach Plan](#)
2. [Public Outreach Program Guidebook](#)
3. [Public Comments Received on Draft Public Outreach Plan](#)

J. Church stated that the draft POP was released for a 45-day public review period at the MPO meeting on August 19, 2021. The POP guides the MPO's efforts to ensure everyone has access to the transportation planning process. Recognizing the impact of COVID-19, the updated plan focuses on virtual public involvement opportunities and guidelines. In addition to the POP, the new POP Guidebook provides quick, easy access to information on how to engage with the MPO. J. Church reported that MPO staff received three public comments on the draft document, which are posted to the MPO meeting calendar, and described the comments. J. Church noted that following endorsement, the POP would go to the MPO's federal partners for approval.

Discussion

L. Diggins responded to one of the public comments, from Stephanie Groll (City of Cambridge), which suggested that the MPO differentiate between American-born Black people and recent Black immigrants in demographic questions, stating that he felt the suggestion was apt. He noted that when he had asked in the past about expanding demographic questions, he was told that the MPO was limited to using designations from the US Census and, therefore, only asked questions about sex and not gender identity. He asked if this was still the case. Róisín Foley (MPO staff) clarified that when tracking public outreach, MPO staff does ask questions about gender identity, allowing respondents to choose to identify as a "man," "woman," or "non-binary," or to self-describe.

D. Amstutz asked whether the MPO would be updating the name of the plan to address S. Groll's suggestion to use "engagement" rather than "outreach." J. Church responded that MPO staff would be updating the name of the plan to reflect this suggestion.

Vote

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

14. Action Item: Community Connections Program Update—Matt Genova, MPO Staff

M. Genova provided an update on the future of the MPO's Community Connections (CC) Program, continuing a discussion from the MPO meeting on September 2, 2021. M. Genova stated that since the last discussion, MPO staff have spoken with key stakeholders and any decisions made would not impact projects that have already been selected for funding. M. Genova reiterated that the current structure of the program places a heavy administrative burden on staff to manage contracting paperwork and that funding multi-year transit operating projects limits the amount of funding in the program for additional projects in those fiscal years. MPO staff have recommended

simplifying the application process, moving to a collective purchasing model through MAPC, and either requiring that shuttle and microtransit projects be administered directly by RTAs or removing them from eligibility.

MPO staff met with six RTAs that have service in the Boston region to outline the basics of the CC Program and the proposed changes. The meetings focused on understanding how well the proposed approach to transit operating projects would work for each RTA. M. Genova reported that, in general, RTAs were supportive of the requirement that they directly administer and have oversight over shuttle and microtransit projects. Uniquely, however, the MBTA stated that taking on new operating projects through the CC Program may not be a good fit for the agency at this time because the MBTA is in the midst of a multi-year service planning effort through the ongoing Bus Network Redesign project and has staffing constraints.

Given this feedback, M. Genova stated that MPO staff recommend implementing the requirement that transit operating projects be administered directly by RTAs and instituting a one-year pause on the funding of new transit operating projects in parts of the region only served by the MBTA. In the meantime, the Bus Network Redesign effort will advance, which will help to identify gaps in service that could be filled by future CC grants.

M. Genova noted that applications for the next round of funding will be due in December, making swift decision-making on the future of the program paramount.

M. Genova asked the board to decide the following: support for the adoption of a collective-purchasing model for capital projects and an RTA-centered approach to the administration of transit operating projects.

Discussion

D. Amstutz asked whether proponents would have to use collective purchasing or if it would be possible for them to use some other method of acquiring materials.

M. Genova stated that the intention is to streamline the overall process by having proponents of small capital projects select from the menu of options on the collective procurement list.

D. Amstutz asked whether there are communities that are served by both the MBTA and another RTA and whether transit operating projects would still be eligible for multiple years of funding. M. Genova replied that there are municipalities served by both the MBTA and another RTA and the intention is that any community served by an RTA that is not the MBTA could apply for an operating project in partnership with that RTA.

M. Genova stated that the decision to fund projects over multiple years is ultimately up

to the board, knowing that projects funded over multiple years must show a net greenhouse gas reduction in their first year of operations to receive the additional years of funding.

David Koses (At-Large City) (City of Newton) asked whether requiring an RTA to administer a transit operating project would change the process for a microtransit project like NewMo in Newton, which is already funded. M. Genova stated that currently the burden for administering a project like NewMo is on the MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning. Since this is not a sustainable model long-term, the proposal is to shift to the RTA-centered model. D. Koses suggested that this change might remove the possibility of funding a project like NewMo in an area that only has MBTA service.

Jim Fitzgerald (City of Boston) (Boston Planning & Development Agency) asked whether the MBTA would be allowed to contract with a private operator. Jillian Linnell (MBTA) stated that the proposal is that the MPO would not accept applications for operating projects for locations that are only served by the MBTA for this funding round, and that the MPO would return to this question following the completion of the Bus Network Redesign. J. Fitzgerald asked if a project in a future year service could be operated by a transportation management association (TMA) that uses a private operator if the policy is to require administration by the MBTA. J. Linnell stated that she did not have the answer at this time. J. Fitzgerald expressed concern about approving both the collective purchasing and RTA models.

L. Diggins asked M. Genova to clarify the policy regarding air quality benefit. M. Genova clarified that the board is not required to obligate three years of funds to any given operating project. To receive the second and third years of funding, under the federal funding program used for the CC Program, the project must show a greenhouse gas reduction resulting from its first year of operations.

Jennifer Constable (South Shore Coalition) (Town of Rockland) asked how this proposal would impact communities not served by any RTA. M. Genova replied that the proposal would initiate a one-year pause on transit operating projects in these communities. J. Constable stated that she was not ready to support this recommendation.

D. Koses agreed and suggested finding a different way to address the staffing concerns.

Ken Miller (FHWA) noted that while projects must show an air quality benefit, that benefit can be small. He suggested not using this factor as the sole criterion for approving additional funding.

D. Krevat stated that there could be a middle ground, in which funds are flexed to FTA for projects in RTA service areas. For projects in the MBTA service area, the funds could continue to come from FHWA and be administered by OTP.

D. Mohler clarified that the MPO has two options. The board can 1) pause the funding of transit operating projects in communities only served by the MBTA for a year, or 2) solicit transit operating projects in communities only served by the MBTA without the certainty that they can be implemented due to staff capacity at MassDOT.

J. Linnell supported D. Mohler's point, adding that the MBTA could consider projects on a case-by-case basis but wants to make sure that projects are set up for success given limited staff capacity.

D. Mohler asked whether any board members object to the collective purchasing proposal. There were no objections. D. Mohler asked whether any board members objected to the RTA proposal. There was some additional discussion of this proposal.

L. Diggins and J. Linnell expressed support for the RTA proposal.

Vote

A motion to approve the collective purchasing model for capital projects under the Community Connections Program was made by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

A motion to approve the RTA-centered model for transit operating projects under the Community Connections Program was made by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins). There was no second. The motion failed.

A motion to encourage the RTA-centered model for transit operating projects under the Community Connections Program in areas served by an RTA other than the MBTA was made by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce) (Steve Olanoff) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency) (J. Fitzgerald) abstained. The motion carried.

15. Long-Range Transportation Plan Kick-Off—Anne McGahan, MPO Staff

A. McGahan introduced the development process of the next LRTP, *Destination 2050*. The LRTP is one of three federally required certification documents the MPO must develop. The LRTP must be updated every four years, have a vision of at least 20 years in the future, and be fiscally constrained. The LRTP establishes the vision and goals of the MPO, which guide investment decision-making. The current plan, *Destination 2040*,

was adopted in 2019. *Destination 2050*, will be adopted in 2023. MPO Staff will continue to implement the recommendations of *Destination 2040* until *Destination 2050* is adopted. To develop *Destination 2050*, MPO staff will identify the region's transportation needs, conduct exploratory scenario planning, and support the board in revisiting the vision, goals, and objectives and prioritizing investments before adopting a final plan.

A. McGahan reviewed the implementation of *Destination 2040*. Revisions to the goals and objectives have been used to update the TIP project selection criteria. The MPO's Complete Streets investment program was revised to add dedicated bus lane projects. A new Transit Modernization program was established. The MPO also established a dedicated resiliency program and made changes to the Major Infrastructure program and policies.

A. McGahan stated that MPO Staff is currently in the process of updating the Needs Assessment and conducting scenario planning. In the spring, staff conducted a number of focus groups with the public to elicit their ideas for potential scenarios to explore as part of *Destination 2050*. The MPO will hear the results of these "Big Ideas" focus groups at the meeting on November 4, 2021. A. McGahan noted that MPO staff are currently attending MAPC subregional meetings to gather information on transportation needs, and she encouraged MPO members to attend meetings in their subregions.

16. Members Items

E. Bourassa reminded members that there would be a TIP Project Costs Ad Hoc Committee meeting following this MPO meeting and that voting is open for the MPO elections.

17. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins). 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 Brookline)	Todd Kirrane
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	William Conroy
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Brad Rawson
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
MassDOT Highway Division	John Bechard
	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Jillian Linnell
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	Amira Patterson
	Brian Kane
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Erika Oliver
	Jerram
	Eric Johnson
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	Austin
	Cyganiawicz
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)	Jennifer
	Constable
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke
	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Paul Cobuzzi	
Aleida Leza	Belmont resident
Derek Krevat	MassDOT OTP
Todd Blake	City of Medford
Ben Muller	MassDOT District 6
Joy Glynn	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Wesley Lickus	MassDOT
Russell Findley	
Ben Cares	City of Chelsea
Chris Klem	MassDOT
Michael Garrity	MassDOT
Josh Klingenstein	MBTA
Jon Seward	
Chris Senna	
Karen Freker	
Michelle Ho	MassDOT OTP
Derek Shooster	MassDOT OTP
David Kucharsky	City of Salem
Andrew Reker	City of Cambridge
Cassandra Ostrander	FHWA

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Mark Abbott

Matt Archer

Seth Asante

Paul Christner

Jonathan Church

Annette Demchur

Julie Dombroski

Róisín Foley

Hiral Gandhi

Matt Genova

Betsy Harvey

Sandy Johnston

Anne McGahan

Marty Milkovits

Gina Perille

Bradley Putnam

Michelle Scott

Chen-Yuan Wang

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Title VI Specialist

Boston Region MPO
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By Telephone:

857.702.3702 (voice)

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