

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

January 20, 2022, Meeting

10:00 AM–11:32 AM, 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 November 18, 2021
- Approve the minutes of the meeting of December 20, 2021
- Approve the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2022-26 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment One
- Release the FFYs 2022-26 TIP Amendment Two for public review

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 9.

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 opened her comments with an introduction of two new staff members: Sean Rourke, the new manager of the Outreach and Communications group, and Srilekha Murthy, the new UPWP Manager who will be replacing Sandy Johnston. She noted three additional open positions: a Manager of Projects and Applications; a TIP Manager; and a Senior GIS Programmer/Analyst.

T. Teich then provided an update on her projects outside of CTPS. She shared that she has begun a year-long tenure as a board member of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, a role which will provide the opportunity for deeper collaboration and conversation with other MPOs. T. Teich also shared her participation in the YW LeadBoston Program, which focuses on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)

training for executives and organization leaders. This program aligns with plans to launch an internal DEI committee among staff, which will launch later this fiscal year.

T. Teich further discussed updates on staff work, starting with updates on engagement conducted by the Transit Working Group, including a coffee chat and a forum on microtransit partnerships. T. Teich further discussed meetings with the Inner Core Committee transportation group and informed members that the next meeting of the group will have the MBTA presenting on bus priority toolkits for municipalities. T. Teich then announced the release of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) survey to solicit study ideas for the FFY 2023 UPWP. She encouraged board members to share the survey with their networks.

T. Teich then discussed the selection of corridor studies as part of the FFY 2022 UPWP. These are two annually recurring discrete studies. The selection of study locations is based on a number of criteria including safety, congestion, multimodal significance, regional significance, regional equity, and potential for the implementation of study recommendations. The two corridors selected this year are Route 1 in Norwood and a 1.6 mile stretch of road from Washington Street in Canton to Route 27 in Sharon and Stoughton, at the Cobb's Corner Plaza. For more information, T. Teich directed members to contact Seth Asante and Chen-Yuan Wang.

T. Teich ended her comments by providing a brief overview of the day's presentations and proposing a discussion topic to members on future meeting forums. With the extension of COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency pertaining to the Open Meeting Laws expiring on April 1, T. Teich proposed a hybrid meeting format, which would require an in-person quorum but still allow for virtual participation. T. Teich additionally suggested moving the April meetings of the MPO to the second and fourth Thursdays of the month.

Lenard Diggins (Regional Transportation Advisory Committee) agreed that a hybrid meeting format would be ideal, with an emphasis on developing a system of participation that is as simple as possible.

Amira Patterson (Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority) expressed her agreement with a hybrid meeting format and noted that such a format would make it easier and more accessible for anyone to join.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

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

L. Diggins reported on the last meeting of the Advisory Council, which took place on January 12, 2022, and was attended by Tegin Teich, who spoke about the strategic plan for CTPS and its implications for the Advisory Council, specifically in terms of funding.

7. Action Item: Approval of November 18, 2021, MPO Meeting Minutes—*Róisín Foley, MPO Staff*

[November 18, 2021, MPO Meeting Minutes](#)

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of November 18, 2021, was made by the North Shore Task Force (Darlene Wynne, City of Beverly) and seconded by the MBTA (Amira Patterson). The MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Dennis Giombetti, City of Framingham) abstained. The motion carried.

8. Action Item: Approval of December 2, 2021, MPO Meeting Minutes—*Róisín Foley, MPO Staff*

[December 2, 2021, MPO Meeting Minutes](#)

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 2, 2021, was made by the Inner Core Committee (Tom Bent, City of Somerville) and seconded by Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Tom O'Rourke, Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: Work Scope, Future of the Curb, Phase 3—*Blake Acton, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

[Work Scope: Future of the Curb, Phase 3](#)

Phase 3 of the Future of the Curb study builds on the previous two phases of the Future of the Curb study conducted by MPO staff. Phase 1 provided planners with examples of curb management practices across the country, while Phase 2 resulted in the creation of a guidebook that provides planners with best practices on curb management strategies. Phase 3 aims to develop methodologies for planners to evaluate the impact

of curb management strategies on their communities. The study will draw on examples across the Boston region and result in three case studies, an online guide to summaries, and guidance for data collection and analysis.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked if any study locations had been selected already. B. Acton replied that no locations were selected and that the project team is not limiting itself to a strict number of study locations. L. Diggins responded by stating that determining which strategies will ultimately be chosen should be a collaborative effort.

10. Action Item: Work Scope, MBTA Mobility Integrations—

Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff

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[Work Scope: MBTA Mobility Integrations](#)

CTPS will perform this task for the MBTA. The work is funded with MassDOT-directed PL/3C planning funds—federal funds provided to and directed by MassDOT primarily for the purpose of transit planning. While these funds are included in the FFY 2022 UPWP, this is a contract work program, not MPO work. Paul Christner and Sandy Johnston will be co-project managers, and Rebecca Morgan is serving as the project principal. Lynsey Heffernan will be the client supervisor at the MBTA.

This project addresses the policy questions behind the development of a mobility integration framework for the MBTA. Mobility integration is the concept of integrating existing transit options with other mobility providers, such as transportation network companies and bikeshare providers. This phase of the project aims to build knowledge and data on integration policies peer agencies have adopted, research alternatives, and provide recommendations to guide an MBTA policy.

The work scope consists of three tasks: a peer agency review and case study development; regional gaps and needs assessment; and policy analysis and recommendations. The first two tasks will largely run concurrently, while the third will synthesize the information gathered. The overarching goal of this project is to research how other agencies approach mobility integration, identify gaps in the MBTA's current transit system, and provide recommendations on how mobility integration can close perceived gaps in transit service.

The time period for this work is the remainder of the federal fiscal year, that is, through the end of September, or 8 months. The budget is \$138,384.

Staff requests that the board votes to approve this work program.

Discussion

Ken Miller (Federal Highway Administration) asked what funding sources will be used for this project. S. Johnston replied that this project will be funded using combined Section 5303 and MassDOT-directed 3C PL funds. K. Miller followed up by asking about working with other regional transportation authorities (RTAs). S. Johnston replied that the project will involve working with and researching other providers, but ultimately the MBTA is directing the work so partnership decisions will be left to them.

L. Diggins asked whether the MPO board will have the opportunity to read the final memorandum produced as a result of this project. S. Johnston replied that generally MPO staff do not present on their contract work, but in this case it would be at the MBTA's discretion whether or not to present the findings. L. Diggins asked when the right time would be to request a presentation. Lynsey Heffernan (MBTA) replied that there is no set timeline for reporting back, as the focus currently is on learning about the field of study as much as possible.

L. Diggins followed up to ask the presenters to explain further the goal of the project. L. Heffernan replied that the goal is for the MBTA to develop a policy on partnering with different mobility-focused partners based on a range of criteria, from populations served to revenue and type of transit option. L. Diggins responded by asking what entity within MassDOT oversees RTAs and coordinates their work. D. Mohler responded that the Rail and Transit Administration works with RTAs on service planning and distributing funding, while the Office of Transportation Planning takes on work for the RTAs upon request.

Sarah Lee (Massachusetts Port Authority) asked whether this project will have any impact on existing transit connections. L. Heffernan responded in the affirmative, saying that the goal in the gap analysis is to determine what kind of transit is working and where there is a need for improvement or a different option.

11. Action Item: FFYs 2022-26 Transportation Improvement Program

(TIP) Amendment One -

Matt Genova, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO Meeting Calendar

[FFYs 2022-26 Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\) Amendment One](#)

The Proposed Amendment One to the FFYs 2022-26 Transportation Improvement Program suggests changes to both the highway and transit portions of the TIP. On the highway side, this amendment proposes the addition of three line items: the replacing of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane barriers on the Southeast Expressway in Boston,

Milton, and Quincy, at a cost of \$32,200,000 (#609119); the construction of an office, salt sheds, and park-and-ride reconstruction on Route 9 in Framingham, at a cost of \$3,450,000 (#611951); and the programming and funding of Metropolitan Highway System (MHS) operating costs in the Boston region using approximately \$25 million in Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) funds. The use of CRRSAA funds for MHS operating costs allows other funding to be made available to fund the reconstruction of the Interstate 95 and Interstate 90 interchange in Newton and Weston.

On the transit side, the amendment proposes funding adjustments to MBTA programs to align funding with projected obligations. Most proposed changes will go into effect in FFY 2022, the first year of the active TIP. Many of the MBTA-administered projects funded through the MPO's Community Connections program will formally be added to the MBTA's Capital Program through Amendment One. These projects include carry-over funds from the FFY 2021 transit signal priority projects in Cambridge and Somerville. Projects funded in FFY 2022 through the Community Connections program include wayfinding in Alewife Station, transit signal priority on Main Street in Everett, and new bike racks at a number of MBTA stations. Thus, the funding requested through this amendment focuses on ongoing projects that need to move forward in the current fiscal year.

Vote

A motion to approve Amendment One to the FFYs 2022-26 TIP was made by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Tom O'Rourke, Town of Norwood/Norwood Chamber of Commerce) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (T. Bent, City of Somerville). The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Alison Felix) abstained. The motion carried.

12. Action Item: FFYs 2022-26 Transportation Improvement Program

Amendment Two—*Matt Genova, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO Meeting Calendar

[FFYs 2022-26 Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\) Amendment Two](#)

Amendment Two to the FFYs 2022-26 Transportation Improvement Program proposes the removal of one project from the FFY 2022 Highway Program. The project is a bridge deck replacement and superstructure repair project on Fellsway West over Interstate 93 (#612028). The project was originally initiated by MassDOT for the Bridge Systematic Maintenance Program, but after discussions between MassDOT Highway District 4 and MassDOT headquarters, it was decided that the deterioration of the structure warranted a more extensive scope of work. For this reason, this amendment proposes to move the project from the current fiscal year of the active TIP, with the anticipation of it being rescoped and proposed for programming in the next TIP cycle for FFYs 2023-27.

Discussion

L. Diggins commented that this amendment seems to work around the MPO's policy of reevaluating projects that have been increasing in cost.

Vote

A motion to release Amendment Two to the FFYs 2022-26 TIP for public review was made by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (T. Bent, City of Somerville). The motion carried.

13. Action Item: Transportation Recovery Guidebook for Commercial Business Districts—*Betsy Harvey, MPO Staff* ***Documents posted to the MPO Meeting Calendar***

[Transportation Recovery Guidebook for Commercial Business Districts](#)

The Transportation Recovery Guidebook was developed as a way for municipalities in the Boston region to address transportation access to and from commercial business districts (CBDs). The guidebook contains recommendations for municipalities based on interviews with local nonprofits and business groups across the region, as well as a discussion of the forces driving pandemic recovery. The study behind the formulation of this guidebook relied on a process called exploratory scenario planning, where scenarios are designed to run on certain features to explore all feasible possibilities. In this context, the central question of the study was to see how the Boston region can build resilient transportation infrastructure and processes that allow businesses to recover from COVID-19 and its impact on transportation access to and within CBDs. The guidebook outlines two types of recommendations: systematic and programmatic. Systematic recommendations include flexible public outreach, while programmatic recommendations would include long-term outdoor dining programs, for example. This guidebook demonstrates techniques that many CBDs are already implementing, but the major takeaway from this study is that the way CBD investments are undertaken will change dramatically because of the pandemic and its impacts across every sector.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked whether this presentation will be given to the subregional committees. Betsy Harvey responded that MPO staff are planning to do so.

T. Bent commented that local chambers of commerce and business owners would find this presentation and guidebook very useful and helpful. B. Harvey responded that she is happy to talk in greater detail with anyone who reaches out.

14. Members Items

Ken Miller (Federal Highway Administration) provided an update on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, specifically, the bridge funding formula. This is funding that is made available to repair and rebuild bridges around the country. There is approximately \$5.5 billion dollars over the next five years available; Massachusetts began receiving \$225 million per year with the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and will be required to spend about 15 percent of that money on bridges that are not on the federal highway system but that are still eligible for federal funding. This funding is not in competition with normal federal funding apportionment categories. K. Miller offered to report back with more information about when exactly the money will be available to spend.

Dennis Giombetti (Metrowest Regional Collaborative, City of Framingham) stated that he is happy to be back with the MPO and is looking forward to working with members in the coming weeks.

L. Diggins expressed his appreciation for the depth and detail in the corridor study selection memos.

15. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (T. Bent). 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)	Heather Hamilton
	Todd Kirrane
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	John Bechard
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Jillian Linnell
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	Amira Patterson
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Alison Felix
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
	Denise
	Deschamps
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	Melisa Tintocalis
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Rockland)	Jennifer
	Constable
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Peter Pelletier
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke
	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Joy Glynn	MetroWest Regional Transportation Authority
Rich Benevento	
Ben Muller	MassDOT District 6
Steven Olanoff	
Derek Krevat	MassDOT
Paul Cobuzzi	
Brad Rawson	City of Somerville
Chris Klem	MassDOT
Payl Halkiotis	Town of Norwood
Michael Rosen	Town of Norwood
Michael Garrity	MassDOT
Michelle Ho	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Jeanette Rebecchi	
Timothy Paris, P.E.	
Jon Seward	
Lynsey Heffernan	MBTA
C. Senior	
Aleida Leza	

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Annette Demchur

Róisín Foley

Hiral Gandhi

Jonathan Church

Matt Genova

Sandy Johnston

Anne McGahan

Srilekha Murthy

Michelle Scott

Sean Rourke

Heyne Kim

Matt Archer

Betsy Harvey

Stella Jordan

Seth Asante

Paul Christner

Martin Milkovits

Blake Acton

Mark Abbott

Gina Perille

Rebecca Morgan

Chen-Yuan Wang

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857.702.3702 (voice)

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