



## Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

### March 9, 2022 Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–4:10 PM, Zoom Virtual Conferencing Platform

Lenard Diggins, Chair, representing the Advisory Council

### Meeting Agenda

#### 1. Introductions

Lenard Diggins called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 5.)

#### 2. Priorities for MPO Freight Program—*Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff*

Sandy Johnston, MPO staff, introduced himself as the new Freight Program Manager at the Boston Region MPO. He introduced Uday Schultz as an intern with MPO staff. S. Johnston provided an overview of the MPO freight program and freight stakeholders, including the public, other government entities, municipalities, carriers, and shippers. He noted other freight-planning efforts and timelines, including the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) long-range plan, MetroCommon; the bipartisan infrastructure law; the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Destination 2050*; the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) Freight Plan; and the MPO's Freight Planning Action Plan, which will be updated in 2023 or 2024.

S. Johnston outlined current freight-planning activities and activities planned for the near future. Current activities include data modernization, supporting the LRTP and other planning efforts, working groups, stakeholder engagement, and the identification of future freight study opportunities. Near future activities include supporting truck modeling enhancements, the continuation and development of stakeholder engagement and freight studies, and new freight-planning initiatives. S. Johnston mentioned some topics of interest for future study and planning initiatives, including freight rail, truck counts, curb use, safety, equity, truck parking, and air quality and the environment.

S. Johnston discussed ways the Advisory Council can be involved in MPO freight planning. He encouraged members to suggest and provide feedback on freight topics and activities, and help MPO staff identify stakeholders and relationships to build, work to prioritize, and

information and data to be aware of. S. Johnston asked members to share their feedback on those topics.

***Discussion***

Steve Olanoff, Westwood, mentioned that the MPO's focus and study of freight topics had started at the Advisory Council, which had formed a freight committee and pushed MPO staff to emphasize freight planning and conduct regular freight studies.

L. Diggins, S. Johnston, and S. Olanoff discussed the Advisory Council's historical involvement in promoting MPO freight planning and the historical context of freight planning in the Boston region.

Franny Osman, Acton, asked about the intersection between freight and passenger transportation. F. Osman also asked about how decisions are made regarding track use for freight and passenger trains, citing an issue in Lowell with track jurisdiction. F. Osman also asked about the study of empty trucks and ways to increase efficiency and reduce negative environmental impacts of freight.

S. Johnston replied that historically there were a few examples of mixed-use transportation of passengers and freight, but he is not aware of current instances. He replied that track use decisions are often made with regard to different capacity requirements, and that since freight rail infrastructure is federally regulated, it is difficult for localities to impose restrictions. S. Johnston and F. Osman discussed the efficiency issues related to empty freight vehicles.

Andy Reker, Cambridge, asked about the ability of local and regional governments to regulate freight, and where specifically different levels of government including municipalities can impact change. He also noted safety concerns, particularly in the inner core, and concerns about vehicle size and visibility.

S. Johnston discussed the MPO's interest in continuing the conversation about regulatory jurisdiction and truck size and design, in partnership with other entities studying these issues.

John McQueen, WalkBoston, asked what could be done to address safety and congestion issues related to delivery vehicles such as Amazon trucks and vans.

S. Johnston replied that colleagues at the MAPC have been working on first- and last-mile delivery, which MPO staff is interested in collaborating on. He also mentioned bike use for first- and last-mile delivery, which the City of Boston will be piloting.

Jen Rowe, Boston, asked about the scope of the MPO's definition of freight, noting that it could be very broad.

S. Johnston discussed the definition of freight, and noted that the MPO intends to be on the cutting edge of freight study by including local-level considerations such as first- and last-mile deliveries and curb use in definitions.

S. Olanoff discussed delivery truck size and related issues around road and building size. L. Diggins and S. Olanoff discussed cost and logistical concerns related to the use of larger vehicles for last-mile deliveries.

### **3. Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2023-27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Development—Project Scoring—*Matt Genova, MPO Staff***

M. Genova, MPO staff, introduced himself as the MPO TIP Manager. He stated his intention to discuss the FFYs 2023–27 TIP development timeline, funding and readiness, project scoring results, and next steps. He provided an overview of the TIP development timeline with specific dates for MPO decision-making. He noted that the final TIP will be endorsed by late May. He discussed the FFYs 2023–27 TIP budget and currently planned funding, with the addition of new regional target funding made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

He discussed the results of the annual TIP Readiness Days held by MPO and MassDOT staff, noting that three projects were identified as being at high risk for delays and two projects were recommended for delay. He also noted that three projects had exceeded the MPO's new cost-change threshold of 25 percent. M. Genova discussed the broader six-year programming readiness scenario and available funds for programming in each FFY.

M. Genova discussed the 25 projects MPO staff have scored for funding in the current TIP cycle. He noted that nine projects are new, while 16 carry over from last year. He noted the distribution of projects across investment programs, including 11 Community Connections projects. He noted that new projects will primarily be funded in FFY 2027.

M. Genova discussed the new TIP project policy changes in more detail, including the 25 percent cost-change threshold. He also described the project scoring process using the new (as of October 2020) scoring criteria in more detail.

M. Genova provided a high-level overview of each project scored in the 2023–27 TIP, broken down into each investment program. Detailed descriptions of each project and its scores are posted to the [MPO Calendar](#) for the March 9, 2022, Advisory Council meeting. M. Genova noted the next steps in the TIP development timeline.

L. Diggins noted that more detailed descriptions of scoring for each project could also be found in the recording of the previous MPO board meeting on March 3, 2022, available on the MPO Calendar and [YouTube](#). L. Diggins suggested that the Advisory Council Ad-Hoc or 3C

Committee meet prior to the March 31, 2022, MPO meeting to discuss and provide feedback on the TIP scenario.

AnaCristina Fragoso, Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES), asked about the three projects that were flagged as high risk, and how funds would be allocated to them.

M. Genova noted that the high-risk projects were flagged for timing, not funding issues.

J. Rowe asked if M. Genova could share the TIP presentation. M. Genova agreed.

F. Osman asked how the current TIP scenario compares to the total funding available.

M. Genova noted that total funding available and total funds needed don't necessarily match due to differences in timing across years and differences in project readiness. He noted that there is more funding available in the short term and more projects that are ready will need to be programmed.

F. Osman discussed the disparate efforts on advancing microtransit projects, and suggested that more top-down oversight and coordination, or data gathering, should be done.

M. Genova discussed the trade-offs with funding local microtransit needs and supporting larger-scale coordination.

A. Reker asked about the application of the new equity scoring for TIP projects.

M. Genova noted that this is the first year where projects are being funded using the new scoring system. He noted that the weight of transportation equity considerations was more than doubled in the criteria, and high-scoring projects reflect that. He discussed some differences with scoring for the Community Connections program, which uses raw equity scores instead of equity as a multiplier, and described staff intentions to continue improving the process. He noted that scoring will also be considered as part of the long-range planning process.

A.C. Fragoso asked if and how sustainability considerations were included in TIP scoring.

M. Genova noted that air quality and resiliency are factors that are considered in the criteria.

A.C. Fragoso also discussed the Envision Program and the broader context of holistic sustainability and resiliency considerations, including preservation.

J. McQueen noted that the Advisory Council had lobbied for equity scores for years, and is pleased to see them included. He asked if it would be possible to see the impact of the inclusion of equity scores by comparing how a project scored with them versus how it would have been scored without them. L. Diggins agreed.

L. Diggins asked members to volunteer to convene a TIP Ad-Hoc Committee to further discuss scoring before the March 31 MPO meeting.

#### 4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Staff presented Advisory Council meeting minutes from November 10, 2021, December 8, 2021, and January 12, 2022, for approval. Several members noted that they were having trouble accessing the minutes via the links on the MPO calendar. MPO staff and Advisory Council members decided to revisit and vote on these minutes at the next RTAC meeting.

#### 5. Chair's Report

L. Diggins noted a new transportation equity study that MPO staff are beginning, which explores baseline equity indicators for access to various destinations.

#### 6. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by BSCES (AnaCristina Fragoso) seconded by MoveMass (Jon Seward). The motion carried.

### Attendees

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<b>Member Municipalities</b>	<b>Representatives and Alternates</b>
Acton	Franny Osman
Boston (Non-Voting)	Jen Rowe
Brookline	Todd Kirrane
Cambridge	Andy Reker
Needham	Rhain Hoyland
Westwood (Non-Voting)	Steve Olanoff
Weymouth	Owen MacDonald

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<b>Citizen Advocacy Groups</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
American Council of Engineering Companies	Fred Moseley
Boston Society of Architects	Schuyler Larrabee
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	AnaCristina Fragoso
MoveMass	Jon Seward
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
National Rural Transit Assistance Program	Scott Zadakis
WalkBoston	John McQueen

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**Agencies (Non-Voting)**

**Attendees**

Environmental Protection Agency

Abby Swaine

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**Other Attendees**

**Affiliation**

Barry Steinberg

Association for Public Transportation

Marilyn Wellons

Riverside Neighborhood Association

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**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

Sandy Johnston

Matt Archer

Matt Genova

Uday Schultz

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**Title VI Specialist**

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Boston, MA 02116  
[civilrights@ctps.org](mailto:civilrights@ctps.org)

**By Telephone:**

857.702.3700 (voice)

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