



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

January 11, 2023, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–4:30 PM, Zoom

Lenard Diggins, Chair, representing the MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

L. 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. Discussion of Local Transit Funding Challenges—*Franny Osman, Vice Chair, Susan Barrett, Town of Lexington*

Franny Osman, Acton Transportation Advisory Committee, and Susan Barrett, Town of Lexington, led a discussion of local transit funding and coordination challenges. F. Osman discussed the Advisory Council's role as an advisor to the MPO board on regional transportation planning, and provided an overview of the various funding sources from the MPO and other entities that are used for various types of local transit services throughout the region.

F. Osman and S. Barrett discussed several gaps and challenges to local transit operations, including redundancy across multiple transit providers in overlapping service areas, siloed transit services with gaps in between, and particular challenges for vulnerable transit users.

S. Barrett discussed examples from several communities of attempts to coordinate local transit services and operations to address the identified gaps and challenges. She outlined several constraints and challenges for coordination, including funding, operations, and regional boundaries, and discussed the importance of addressing these challenges.

Discussion

AnaCristina Fragoso, Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES), discussed operational costs and the benefits of electrification.

L. Diggins discussed the Advisory Council's role in exploring and advocating for this issue. He expressed interest in reviewing other sources of information, including a 2019 report on regional transit agencies and regional transportation funding and performance.

S. Barrett encouraged the Advisory Council and other interested parties, such as members of the Transit Working Group, to explore ways to create a plan for filling gaps in the existing transit services in the region.

Lilian Hartman, Town of North Reading, described North Reading's experience with overlaps and gaps in transit services, and discussed the benefits of coordination with other towns on funding and operations.

Jen Rowe, City of Boston, suggested looking at federal and state policy and connecting with legislators as well as considering the MPO's regional role in funding and coordinating transit services.

Amira Patterson, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Advisory Board, agreed with previous comments. A. Patterson, L. Hartman, S. Barrett, F. Osman, and L. Diggins expressed interest in continuing to explore these issues and promote regional collaboration at the Advisory Council as well as through a working group, potentially via the existing MPO Transit Working Group forum.

Katie Malkin, Via Transportation, discussed long-term funding challenges to addressing transit gaps, including examples from Newton and Salem, and suggested exploring more potential funding opportunities available through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), such as Carbon Reduction Program and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds.

Michelle Scott, MPO Staff, noted that staff have been considering new opportunities in the IIJA as part of the MPO's long-range planning process, including the use of CMAQ and other funds and their applicability to existing MPO investment programs.

J. McQueen described challenges in tackling the broader coordination issues, and noted that equitable and safe transportation and access should be considered a fundamental right.

3. Chair's Report—*Lenard Diggins, Chair*

There was none.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Minutes for the October 12, 2022, and March 9, 2022, meetings were presented. Members decided to postpone a vote on these minutes until the next Advisory Council meeting on February 8, 2023.

5. Public Comments

There were none.

6. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

There was none.

7. *Destination 2050* Planning Framework Workshop—Michelle Scott, MPO Staff

M. Scott, MPO Staff, discussed updates in the development process of the MPO's next Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Destination 2050*, and led a workshop to collect feedback from the Advisory Council members on updates to the *Destination 2050* planning framework, which details the MPO's long-range vision, goals, and objectives. She discussed how the planning framework is used to convey MPO values to stakeholders and the public, guide investment programs, and inform project and study selection criteria.

M. Scott noted areas of emphasis in the draft *Destination 2050* planning framework, including equity, resiliency and carbon reduction, and safety, and outlined the various aspects of the planning framework in detail. She shared some inputs that staff used to shape the *Destination 2050* planning framework, including a set of guiding principles; plans and policies of regional partners; and preliminary results from a public survey that staff used to collect feedback about visions, goals, and objectives. She asked the Advisory Council to share feedback on the draft planning framework.

Discussion

L. Diggins and S. Barrett reflected on connections between the *Destination 2050* planning framework and the previous discussion of local transit funding challenges. S. Barrett asked how the planning framework could incorporate the design of an ideal, coordinated, regionwide transit system that fills current gaps. M. Scott discussed the Needs Assessment component of the LRTP, and how staff collect feedback on needs such as coordination and filling service gaps to inform the LRTP. She noted that the Advisory Council and the Transit Working Group are useful forums to discuss and provide input for the Needs Assessment.

L. Diggins and Betsy Harvey, MPO Staff, also discussed the Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan), and its connection to the LRTP and the local transit coordination discussion. B. Harvey noted that the Coordinated Plan outlines transportation needs and service gaps for seniors and people with disabilities and supports municipalities' applications for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Community Transit Grant Program. L. Diggins noted that the Advisory Council would discuss the Coordinated Plan in more detail in the future.

J. Rowe approved of the *Destination 2050* planning framework and its many inputs, including feedback from the Advisory Council. She and J. McQueen supported the integration of equity across all of the goal areas in addition to being its own goal. J. Rowe provided some

feedback on graphics used in the presentation and on language used in the objectives, including ways to emphasize the prioritization of vulnerable road users.

F. Osman and S. Barrett discussed the intersections between safety, transportation access, and public health. S. Barrett and J. McQueen highlighted the importance of coordination and comprehensive planning for all types of transportation services in the region. They discussed how the coordination strategies outlined in the Coordinated Plan, and the goals and objectives in *Destination 2050*, could be operationalized. B. Harvey noted that this year's Coordinated Plan could include more concrete priorities and actions that could be useful for stakeholders.

J. McQueen and A. C. Fragoso suggested that technological advancements be strongly considered.

L. Diggins discussed how to structure the planning framework in consideration of different priorities and ways the goal areas are interconnected.

M. Scott thanked members and attendees for their feedback.

S. Jordan shared a link to the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) study ideas survey and encouraged members to submit study proposals and share the survey with their networks. She noted that the Advisory Council will be involved in the study selection process after staff collects ideas.

8. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by BSCES (A. C. Fragoso) and seconded by WalkBoston (J. McQueen). The motion carried.

Attendees

| Member Municipalities | Representatives and Alternates |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Weymouth | Owen MacDonald |

| Citizen Advocacy Groups | Representatives and Alternates |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC) | Lenard Diggins |
| Acton Transportation Advisory Committee | Franny Osman |
| American Council of Engineering Companies | Fred Moseley |
| Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES) | AnaCristina Fragoso |
| National Rural Transit Assistance Program | Scott Zadakis |
| WalkBoston | John McQueen |

| Agencies (Non-Voting) | Attendees |
|--|--------------------|
| Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Office of Transportation Planning | Derek Krevat |
| Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Rail and Transit Division | Rachel Fichtenbaum |
| Metropolitan Area Planning Council | Travis Pollack |
| MetroWest Regional Transit Authority | Tyler Terrasi |
| MBTA Mobility Center | Bianca Lightfoot |

| Other Attendees | Affiliation |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Jen Rowe | City of Boston |
| Daniel Martin | Town of Brookline |
| Susan Barrett | Town of Lexington |
| Amira Patterson | MBTA Advisory Board |
| Lilian Hartman | Town of North Reading |
| Alice Sapineza | Resident |
| Katie Malkin | Via Transportation |
| Sheila Page | Town of Lexington |
| Anna Jacobs | Resident |
| John Monacelli | City of Boston |
| Julie | Resident |

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Stella Jordan
Michelle Scott
Ethan Lapointe
Logan Casey
Betsy Harvey
Sean Rourke
Heyne Kim
Sam Taylor

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