



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

June 14, 2023, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–3:55 PM, Zoom

Lenard Diggins, Chair, representing the MBTA Rider 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. Coordinated Public Transit—Human Services Transportation Plan Development—*Betsy Harvey, MPO Staff*

Betsy Harvey, MPO staff, presented information about the development of the MPO's Coordinated Public Transit—Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan), which documents the transportation needs and priorities of seniors and people with disabilities, and strategies and actions to address those needs.

B. Harvey explained that the Coordinated Plan is a federally required document, and applicants to the Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Grant program (or Community Transit Grant Program, in Massachusetts)—which awards funds for vehicles, mobility management, operating costs, and other projects that meet the mobility needs of seniors and people with disabilities—must reference needs included in their region's Coordinated Plan. She noted that the current Coordinated Plan was finalized in 2019, and the plan currently under development will take effect in the fall of 2023.

B. Harvey stated that the Coordinated Plan being developed was shaped by robust public engagement, including through the following activities:

- Metropolitan Area Planning Council subregional group meetings (fall 2022)
- Transit Working Group Coffee Chats (fall 2021 and 2022)
- Regional Coordinating Council meetings (spring and summer 2023)
- Human Services Transportation Coordination Workshop for Councils on Aging and transit providers (spring 2023)
- Advisory Council discussions
- Coordinated Plan public survey

B. Harvey also mentioned several additional sources of feedback from other MPO engagement efforts, including engagement for the development of the *Destination 2050* Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that helped inform the development of the Coordinated Plan. She shared several high-level human services transportation needs that staff have been documenting in the Coordinated Plan, including coordination of existing services across boundaries; expansion of existing services; funding support; and education and training.

B. Harvey also shared high-level feedback about several strategic priorities to meet the documented needs, including broad regional planning and operational coordination; funding coordination and expansion; eligibility expansion; and the inclusion of riders and other stakeholders in planning. She and Stella Jordan, MPO staff, led an activity to explore and discuss strategies, actions, and priorities to include in the Coordinated Plan with members and attendees. The activity placed strategies, actions, and priorities along two axes: more important and less important on the x axis, and short term and long term on the y axis.

Discussion

Abby Swaine, Brookline resident, and S. Jordan discussed the nuances and challenges of improving accessibility for various types of transit stops, from rapid transit to bus stops across different municipalities. B. Harvey identified addressing disparities in the quality of transit stop infrastructure as a short-term, important action.

AnaCristina Fragoso, Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES), S. Jordan, and Andy Reker, City of Cambridge, discussed on-demand travel and non-medical (for example, social) travel needs for people with disabilities, which B. Harvey identified as important longer-term priorities. A. Reker discussed challenges related to coordination across several different human services transportation services available within and between municipalities.

L. Diggins and B. Harvey discussed the availability (and knowledge of the availability) of funding for human services transportation projects. L. Diggins suggested that the MPO can play a coordinating role in sharing information and connecting various stakeholders.

A. Reker, B. Harvey, and A.C. Fragoso discussed labor challenges that human services providers face. B. Harvey identified hiring practices to attract more transit workers as a more important long-term priority.

A. Swaine discussed trip planning in the chat. Amira Patterson, MBTA Advisory Board, supported L. Diggins' suggestion regarding the MPO's role as a coordinator, which B. Harvey identified as a medium-term strategy of slightly less importance.

Susan Barrett, Town of Lexington, discussed workforce and service coordination challenges, including duplication of services across many providers, and stated that many coordination challenges extend beyond the MPO region and must be addressed at the state level. She

suggested that a shared public service should be a priority to address the various challenges identified. B. Harvey identified this as a long-term priority of medium importance. A. Swaine supported S. Barrett's comments, and she and B. Harvey discussed medical-specific services available in the Boston region. Franny Osman, League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, supported these ideas and noted the importance of coordination across different types of communities within the region and their existing service networks.

A. Reker asked about the availability of revenue from the recently passed Massachusetts Millionaires Tax as well as federal funding opportunities that could be used for human services transportation operating expenses.

L. Diggins noted that the Advisory Council will discuss this topic further in the future.

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

L. Diggins noted that the Advisory Council's comments on the Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2024–28 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) had been accepted and included in the TIP documentation. He noted that the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee had voted to recommend the release of the draft FFY 2024 UPWP for public comment, and the MPO board will vote on the release of both the FFY 2024 UPWP and the *Destination 2050* LRTP at the June 15, 2023, meeting.

4. 3C Committee Planning—*Lenard Diggins, Chair*

L. Diggins and S. Jordan discussed the expected dates for the UPWP and LRTP public comment periods. L. Diggins suggested that the Advisory Council discuss and approve its LRTP comment letter at the July Advisory Council meeting, and hold 3C Committee meetings beforehand to draft and approve the UPWP comment letter and begin drafting the LRTP comment letter.

L. Diggins, A.C. Fragoso, and F. Osman discussed participating in the 3C Committee to develop both letters and suggested the Advisory Council meet on July 5 to finalize and approve the UPWP comment letter. L. Diggins requested that other members volunteer to participate in the 3C Committee discussions.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes—*Lenard Diggins, Chair*

Advisory Council members discussed the meeting minutes presented, abstentions, and voting procedures.

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2023, meeting was made by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (F. Osman) and seconded by the BSCES (A.C. Fragoso). The minutes were approved.

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2023, meeting; the March 8, 2023, meeting; the March 10, 2021, meeting; the December 9, 2020, meeting; the November 4, 2020, meeting; the September 9, 2020, meeting; the August 12, 2020, meeting; and the July 22, 2020, meeting was made by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (F. Osman) and seconded by the City of Cambridge (A. Reker). The minutes were approved.

S. Jordan stated that MPO staff had completed the backlog of past meeting minutes going back through 2020, pending the approval of a few more minutes at the next Advisory Council meeting. She also shared a message from David Montgomery, Town of Needham, who requested that the Advisory Council revisit the discussion documented in the August 12, 2020, meeting minutes regarding the expansion of Advisory Council membership. L. Diggins supported this suggestion.

6. Future Meeting Topics—*Lenard Diggins, Chair*

L. Diggins led a discussion of potential topics for future Advisory Council meetings, including follow-ups on past meeting discussion topics. A.C. Fragoso suggested following up on a previous discussion about microtransit pilots. S. Jordan and Ethan Lapointe, MPO staff, offered to convene proponents of microtransit projects and discuss MPO funding for microtransit. A.C. Fragoso, A. Reker, L. Diggins, and S. Jordan also spoke about the possibility of a future discussion on freight, including small-scale freight distribution and mode shift options, and MPO freight work. A. Reker suggested a discussion on vision zero safety work. A.C. Fragoso suggested discussing autonomous deliveries and drones.

L. Diggins stated his preference for skipping the August Advisory Council meeting, and suggested the possibility of a field trip instead. He noted that the Advisory Council must convene an Elections Nomination Committee to solicit nominations for Advisory Council leadership positions.

7. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the BSCES (A.C. Fragoso) and seconded by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (F. Osman) The motion carried.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
Cambridge	Andy Reker
Needham	David Montgomery
Weymouth	Owen MacDonald

Member Citizen Advocacy Groups	Attendees
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	AnaCristina Fragoso
League of Women Voters of Massachusetts	Franny Osman
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
National Rural Transportation Assistance Program	Scott Zadakis

Agencies (Non-Voting)	Attendees
MBTA Advisory Board	Amira Patterson
MetroWest Regional Transit Authority	Tyler Terrasi
MetroWest Regional Transit Authority	Joy Glynn
Federal Highway Administration	Chris Timmel

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Abby Swaine	Brookline resident
Susan Barrett	Town of Lexington

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff
Stella Jordan
Betsy Harvey
Ethan Lapointe
Erin Maguire

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