

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



Wednesday, May 18, 2022

Boston Region MPO Board
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA, 02116

Dear members of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board:

The Regional Transportation Advisory Council (the Advisory Council) reviewed the MPO's Federal Fiscal Year 2023 to 2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). We would like to offer the following comments for your consideration.

Overall assessment

We appreciate that the MPO decided to allocate the additional federal funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) according to the goals defined in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The Advisory Council is pleased that the Commonwealth also increased funding for urgently needed repairs of bridges, highways, and streets, noting the long-deferred need to rehabilitate the Western Avenue and River Street bridges over the Charles River. In addition, we highly value that the TIP retains a strong focus on projects to create "complete streets", modernize transit, and improve conditions for bicycling and walking around our region.

We welcome the use of the MPO's transparent and consistent project evaluation process. We noted that many of the Commonwealth's projects are not scored using this evaluation process, including two late entries for transit modernization projects. The Advisory Council anticipates the MPO's confirmation that all unscored projects will achieve all relevant LRTP goals and objectives. We believe that the best TIP would have the MPO evaluate all projects. An alternative could be for agencies to provide evaluation information, such as, the project's ranking within the agency's own prioritization or similar.

Finally, we are glad that the MPO has begun to use a cost-benefit analysis to select projects, even when they are for small amounts. Specifically, we appreciate that the MPO funds low-cost, and high-scoring projects equally as regularly as major infrastructure projects.

Looking toward future years

The Advisory Council would like to take the opportunity to share our thoughts for future TIPs. We understand that, as a result of new funding from the federal government and Commonwealth, more projects are in this TIP than is typical. Thus, fewer projects are soon to be ready for TIP evaluation or may meet LRTP goals. The Advisory Council recommends that

Providing transportation policy advice to the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

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the MPO deploy new technical assistance resources and staff in accordance with LRTP goals. With the MPO's focus on the entire region, we hope that municipalities in the MPO region with limited financial or technical resources can take advantage of these additional resources. We note that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) states that the success of its Shared Streets and Spaces program was, in part, the technical assistance that came with the program.

Thank you all very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

3C Committee of the Advisory Council

Andrew Reker, City of Cambridge

John McQueen, WalkBoston

John Seward, MoveMass

Len Diggins, Regional Transportation
Advisory Council, Chair

Schuyler Larrabee, Boston Society of
Architects