

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

January 21, 2021 Meeting

10:00 AM–12:08 PM, Zoom

David Mohler, Chair, representing Stephanie Pollack, Secretary, and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreed to the following:

- Approve the work program for All-Hazards Planning Application Update
- Approve the work program for Mapping Major Infrastructure Transportation Projects
- Approve State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2021 Transit Asset Management (TAM) Targets for the Boston Region

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on pages 11–13.

2. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT*

D. Mohler stated that Governor Baker had announced that MassDOT Secretary and CEO, Stephanie Pollack, would be leaving MassDOT to become Deputy Administrator at the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Jamey Tesler, Registrar of Motor Vehicles, would become Acting MassDOT Secretary.

3. Executive Director's Report—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

T. Teich introduced Gina Perille, the new Deputy Executive Director at Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS). T. Teich announced that Scott Peterson, CTPS Director of Technical Services, would be leaving the agency on February 4, 2021. T. Teich stated that CTPS would pause the hiring process for the Data Strategist position in order to prioritize filling S. Peterson's role.

T. Teich reviewed recent MPO staff outreach activities, including the winter Inner Core Committee Transportation meeting, presentations at the InnerWest Regional

Coordination Council, and the release of a survey to gather Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) study ideas. T. Teich stated that staff planned to present at the upcoming MetroWest Regional Collaborative meeting. Staff will also release a survey soliciting feedback about the MPO election process and hold an equity task force planning meeting and a Travel-Demand Management forum.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports—*Tina Cassidy, North Suburban Planning Council, City of Woburn, Chair, Administration and Finance Committee*

T. Cassidy provided an update on the Administration and Finance (A & F) Committee meeting. Len Diggins, Regional Transportation Advisory Council Chair, has been added to the Committee. Membership also includes Ben Muller (MassDOT), Brian Kane (Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority [MBTA] Advisory Board), and Eric Bourassa (Metropolitan Area Planning Council [MAPC]). T. Cassidy stated that Hiral Gandhi, CTPS Director of A & F, provided an overview of the CTPS budget development process. T. Cassidy stated that the budget is currently on or slightly under budget, and the overhead rate is slightly over projections. The next A & F Committee meeting will be on April 1, 2021, at 9:00 AM.

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

L. Diggins stated that at the last Advisory Council meeting Kate Fichter, MassDOT, presented the Shared Streets Program. T. Teich presented the history of the MPO, the ongoing strategic planning process, and scenario planning.

7. Action Item: All-Hazards Planning Application Update—*Ariel Patterson, MPO Staff*

1. [Work Program: All Hazards Planning Application Update](#)

A. Patterson presented the work program for the All-Hazards Planning Application update. The All-Hazards Planning Application is an interactive tool that identifies climate hazards relative to the Boston Region MPO area. The work program will allow MPO staff to update the application with current information. The application could be used for future Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project evaluation and other ongoing work. The project is budgeted at \$29,876 in the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2021 UPWP and is scheduled to take seven months to complete.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for All-Hazards Planning Application Update was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) (Daniel Amstutz). The motion carried.

**8. Action Item: Mapping Major Infrastructure Transportation Projects—
*Kenneth Dumas, MPO Staff***

1. [Work Program: Mapping Major Infrastructure Transportation Projects](#)

K. Dumas stated that this project would create an online map that displays the major multimodal transportation infrastructure milestones in the Boston Region MPO area from 1800 to present. The project is budgeted at \$20,000, and scheduled for eight months.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked how MPO staff will define a milestone. K. Dumas replied that milestones could be the opening date of a highway or transit line or the closing of any of these. They may also include major legislative milestones, such as the incorporation of the MBTA. L. Diggins asked how large a project would need to be for inclusion. K. Dumas stated that because the project is visual, some important smaller projects will not be on the map, but will be listed in the accompanying text.

D. Amstutz asked what base map would be used. K. Dumas stated that the base map already exists but needs to be digitized. K. Dumas stated that staff expect the online map to be modified over time and staff are open to linking to other sources.

Steve Olanoff (Three Rivers Interlocal Council) (Town of Norwood/Neponset River Regional Chamber) asked whether MPO studies would be included. K. Dumas stated that the goal is not for the map to include all MPO products, and staff must determine the criteria for inclusion.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for Mapping Major Infrastructure Transportation Projects was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) (T. Cassidy). The motion carried.

**9. Action Item: Proposed SFY 2021 TAM Targets for the Boston
Region—*Michelle Scott, MPO Staff, and David DeRossette and Jillian
Linnell, MBTA Staff***

1. [Memorandum: Proposed SFY 2021 Transit Asset Management Targets](#)

M. Scott explained that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires transit agencies and MPOs to set TAM performance targets. MPO staff recommends that the MPO update its existing set to reflect new transit agency data and SFY 2021 TAM targets. Going forward, the MPO can consider transit asset performance when reviewing capital programming for the TIP.

M. Scott explained that Chapter 4 (Performance Analysis) of the MPO's FFYs 2021–25 TIP has information about the MPO's performance-based planning, while information about the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' performance management process is available at massdottracker.com. In upcoming months, the MPO will discuss other performance management targets, including those for roadway and transit safety.

M. Scott explained that individual transit agencies set performance targets for measures established by the United States (US) Department of Transportation, and that MPOs work with these agencies to set targets for the Boston Region MPO. The table below shows the four TAM performance measures for which one-year targets are set. These measures indicate when assets may be out of a state of good repair, so the goal is to reduce these values as much as possible.

Asset Category	Measure	Measure Type
Rolling Stock	Percentage of vehicles that have met or exceeded their Useful Life Benchmark	Age-based
Equipment (vehicles only)	Percentage of vehicles that have met or exceeded their Useful Life Benchmark	Age-based
Facilities	Percentage of assets with condition rating below 3.0 on FTA TERM scale	Condition-based
Infrastructure (fixed guideway)	Percentage of track segments with performance [speed] restrictions, by mode	Performance-based

FTA TERM = Federal Transit Administration Transit Economic Requirements Model.

M. Scott explained that MPO staff recommends incorporating transit agency targets directly into a set of MPO targets, with some aggregating and reorganizing of asset groups within the overall categories.

D. DeRossette discussed the MBTA's recent progress on developing its Asset Management Program. The asset management team develops relationships across all MBTA departments to create strategic processes to manage assets from inception to replacement. The MBTA covers four major asset categories in its 2018 Transit Asset Management Plan: vehicles, facilities and stations, guideway civil elements (such as tracks and bridges), and other systems (such as power and signal systems). The TAM Plan leads into the MBTA's Strategic Asset Management Plan and incorporates strategies from its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. The MBTA uses these documents to address the 2019 Capital Needs Assessment and the Safety Review Panel Report. The MBTA plans to update the TAM Plan in SFY 2022 and to update the Capital Needs Assessment to inform the SFY 2022 and SFY 2023 Capital Improvement Program.

D. DeRossette noted that the MBTA's Asset Management Program has successfully complied with the FTA's TAM rule by meeting deadlines for developing the TAM Plan and reporting targets. Going forward, the team will (1) update the TAM Plan and associated improvement program; (2) continue to develop full asset inventory data and key performance indicators; (3) continue hiring for its Quality Management Program, and (4) fully implement the MBTA's Enterprise Asset Management System.

J. Linnell described recent MBTA capital projects that are driving asset performance. These include vehicle procurements and overhauls, facility upgrades, and track and tunnel improvements. She then detailed the performance of MBTA rolling stock, equipment vehicles, facilities, and fixed guideway infrastructure as of the end of SFY 2020, and targets the MBTA has set for these assets as of the end of SFY 2021. For each asset category, she described how the measures were calculated and factors that may influence performance.

J. Linnell also noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted decreases in transit ridership and revenue loss, which has had significant impacts on the MBTA. The SFY 2021 targets reflect known and anticipated impacts to the capital program as of October 2020, which MBTA staff expected to be minimal. Decisions made through the *Forging Ahead* planning process, which happened after the targets were set, has put some capital projects on hold, but these reallocations of federal funds are expected to have a minimal impact on the SFY 2021 capital program.

M. Scott presented the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA) and the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) SFY 2021 targets for rolling stock, equipment vehicles, and facilities. She noted that the FFYs 2021–25 TIP includes capital

investment in rolling stock for both agencies, which will bring new vehicles into their respective fleets.

M. Scott described approaches for improving transit asset condition. One component of this process is the MassDOT Capital Investment Plan (CIP), which provides funding to both the MBTA and regional transit authorities (RTA) via series of programs, including several that focus on improving asset condition. MBTA and MassDOT staff are mindful of asset needs when allocating funding to those programs. MBTA and MassDOT staff also consider existing asset condition and potential improvements that a candidate project may make when scoring projects for inclusion in the CIP. MPOs can use this transit asset condition performance and target information as context when considering proposed MBTA and RTA capital programming brought to the MPO board for inclusion in the upcoming TIP. M. Scott added that the MPO has recently established a transit modernization funding program, and is working with MBTA and RTA staff to determine how MPO resources may be able to help improve transit assets, which may affect some of the TAM measures.

Discussion

S. Olanoff asked if MBTA parking lots and parking garages are grouped together in the MBTA's targets. J. Linnell replied that they were aggregated together. S. Olanoff said that there have been problems in maintaining parking garages in the MBTA system, which does not seem to be reflected in this value. J. Linnell replied that the FTA asks that assets be reported in this way. If these asset categories were disaggregated, one would see different trends in asset condition based on the type of asset and the programs the MBTA has been advancing to address those assets.

S. Olanoff asked where one can find out what the one to five condition ratings for facilities mean with respect to a parking garage. He added that there is a difference between rating a parking garage and knowing that regular maintenance is being performed, and asked if details about maintenance are reflected in this information. J. Linnell showed a slide that explained the rating levels in the FTA Transit Economic Requirements Model scale, which the MBTA has adopted. D. DeRossette explained that his team maintains individual parking lot assessments and keeps maintenance records in its Enterprise Asset Management system.

S. Olanoff asked if this assessment shows that maintenance is being kept up on the garages on a year-to-year basis, or if MBTA staff look to the ratings to determine if maintenance is insufficient. D. DeRossette responded the FTA requires the Asset Management Program to perform an assessment on each facility asset every four years and from that, the MBTA can see trends for any maintenance that has been performed

between those four years. The MBTA can then determine what assets to focus on for maintenance, overhaul, or replacement projects. J. Linnell added that the overall asset condition does inform the projects that end up getting submitted for consideration in the five-year capital improvement program. S. Olanoff asked if there is a way to know if maintenance is being kept up with each individual garage. He noted that there are garages with specific yearly maintenance required, and he asked if it is being done. D. DeRossette responded that his department is working on recording this information that makes it easier for the MBTA to provide on a requested basis. J. Linnell offered to follow up on specific concerns after the meeting.

Samantha Silverberg (MBTA) mentioned that the MBTA has focused on and applied much of its federal programs towards vehicles, particularly buses, and has replaced between 350 and 400 buses over the last four years. The MBTA is also focused on improving infrastructure with speed restrictions due to track conditions, and has made progress in this area, which reduces slowdowns experienced by passengers. She added that the MBTA appreciates both the funding support from the MPO and the support from the City of Boston in allowing shutdowns to complete the work. She added that the MBTA is making significant investments in the Braintree and Quincy Adams garages, which will prompt changes in ratings and overall performance. Targeted investments are also being made in the Alewife and the Route 128 parking facilities. She thanked staff for their presentation and the MPO board for its support for the MBTA's capital program.

B. Kane stated that the MBTA has made great strides in making asset condition information available, compared to five years ago when nothing like it was available. This information enables the MBTA to drill down to those specific issues and target them for funding and action, and it is important for the MPO and the public to have. He thanked staff throughout the MBTA for working on these issues. He encouraged the team to consider a gap analysis review to determine how much money is needed to bring assets into a state of good repair, and how that estimate compares to past estimates.

Vote

A motion to approve the SFY 2021 TAM Targets for the MBTA was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried.

A motion to approve the SFY 2021 TAM Targets for CATA and MWRTA was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent). The motion carried.

10. Presentation: Review of Vision Zero Strategies—Paul Christner and Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff

1. [Memorandum: Review of Vision Zero Strategies](#)

P. Christner presented *Review of Vision Zero Policies*, a FFY 2020 UPWP study. The study included a literature review, several interviews, and five case studies from around the world: Sweden, the Netherlands, Oslo, Norway, Helsinki, Finland, and Portland, Oregon. The concept of Vision Zero originated in Sweden in 1997 with the goal that no one shall be killed or seriously injured as a consequence of roadway vehicle crashes. The guiding principle is that the designers, owners, and managers of the system are responsible for the safety of all users. P. Christner discussed the adoption of Vision Zero principles in the US. The concept was first adopted in New York City and San Francisco in 2014, and has so far expanded to 42 cities (including Boston) and three states.

S. Johnston reviewed the five case studies, emphasizing infrastructure as the critical intervention. S. Johnston stated that the key lesson of international experience is to align intervention with road type and keep the most vulnerable road users as the primary concern. S. Johnston noted that in both Sweden and the Netherlands, Vision Zero was adopted by all levels of government. In the US, that is not always the case, which can result in uneven results because different agencies share responsibility for roads. S. Johnston framed Vision Zero as creating a positive cycle of improvement beginning with policy and proceeding through planning, implementation, monitoring, and continual policy revision.

P. Christner noted that one of the critical elements of Vision Zero is allowing data to drive the process. He illustrated how the COVID-19 pandemic has offered both challenges and opportunities in the realm of road safety and Vision Zero, and will continue to do so. He also emphasized that public involvement, education, and outreach are important to the success of the Vision Zero program.

S. Johnston stated that equity is a key component of the Vision Zero paradigm. He discussed how the first step is identifying existing disparities and he highlighted existing research on that topic. He also explained that in the US some stakeholders have significant concerns about racial inequities in Vision Zero implementation. Specifically, some advocates and planners from communities of color fear that the paradigm is too strictly derived from Northern European experience. In particular, these stakeholders argue that enforcement of traffic safety by police brings danger to Black and other Americans of color, and that the overall level of personal danger to some individuals may be greater than the safety gained through making roads safer.

S. Johnston finished the presentation by reemphasizing that Vision Zero must be effectively coordinated between levels of government. As a regional agency, the MPO may be well placed to serve an important role in creating this collaboration.

Discussion

B. Kane encouraged further research on the intersection of Vision Zero and dedicated bus lanes, saying that in many ways, “we” are trying to make roads wider but still segregate that new space just for MBTA buses or others. He worried that this might go against some of the Vision Zero goals where the trend is to narrow roads. S. Johnston acknowledged that this has come up in UPWP discussions before.

D. Amstutz expressed sympathy with B. Kane, feeling that when trying to accommodate large truck traffic, there is tension between this and curb extensions or street narrowing. This is another factor in juggling all types of users of the street and pedestrian and bike safety while accommodating 18-wheel trucks. He asked if there had been conversations with Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville about some of the lessons learned from trying to implement Vision Zero programs. He noted that there is also a Massachusetts Vision Zero coalition; thus, there are people closer to home that might have more context-specific information for the state of Massachusetts.

P. Christner said there was outreach done to local people in Boston. He also said in speaking about the bus lanes and trucks that these are definite issues to consider. Lowering the speed of all vehicles is an issue that has come up but the MPOs are not legally able to do that in Massachusetts. S. Johnston responded that talking with other towns, municipalities, and organizations is a potential next level in the MPO’s research. He said that this study was intentionally about international best practices, and best practices around the US. It was a relatively narrow project with a small budget.

D. Amstutz also recommended that when it comes to speed management and enforcement issues, one way is to make these roads self-enforcing by designing traffic calming into the streets, so the enforcement mechanism is the road itself. P. Christner said it was definitely seen in the case studies with the infrastructure interventions being key.

David Koses (At-Large City) (City of Newton) said last night he was asked to check on a crosswalk that someone said was unsafe for pedestrians. He saw that the lighting was perfectly fine, the sidewalks had already been bumped up into the crosswalks, and the rapid flashlights had been added. All the engineering was in place to keep the pedestrians safe. However, in just 10 minutes, he saw two cars goes straight through

without stopping. He stated enforcement and education are the only things left sometimes.

L. Diggins asked what it means for owners and managers to become more responsible for the safety of roadway users and what the legal implications are of that. S. Johnston replied that the legal questions are still being played out. S. Johnston stated that we need to be more aggressively narrowing travel lanes to separate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure from cars in the roadway. There is also a cultural aspect of it, as to how agencies that are responsible for roadways behave. L. Diggins said he would like to see the MPO take concrete steps toward Vision Zero as an integral part of the next Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Ken Miller (FHWA) pointed out some resources from the FHWA. There is something called “Do-It-Yourself Local Reform Guide” for municipalities. It is a local developing road plan and a step-by-step process that municipalities and localities can use to develop safety plans on roads. He also commented on using European cities and countries as models, saying that European countries have much stricter impaired driving laws than we do in the US and that is probably a factor. S. Johnston said staff did use a number of high-quality resources from the FHWA.

11. Members Items

L. Diggins stated that the All-Hazards Planning tool seems like a project that might be coordinated at the state level and asked if staff is planning to share the results with other MPOs. A. Patterson replied that the All-Hazards Planning Application Update is meant to compliment ongoing work of the state and some regional organizations, like the Resilient Mystic Collaborative. Because the field of climate change planning is evolving quickly, MPO staff meet with MassDOT and the MBTA regularly to stay informed. There is also ongoing work being done through the Resilient Massachusetts Action Team, a multiagency group formed in 2016.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins). 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)	Todd Kirrane
	Heather Hamilton
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis
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)	Samantha Silverberg
Massachusetts Port Authority	
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Thatcher Kezer III
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	Austin Cyganiewicz
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Rockland)	
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset River Regional Chamber)	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
David Alschuler	
David DeRossette	MBTA
Jillian Linnell	MBTA
Ben Muller	MassDOT
Bill Conroy	City of Boston
Janie Dretler	Town of Sudbury
Paula Ducette	
Joy Glynn	MWRTA
Michelle Ho	MassDOT
Jillian Linnell	MBTA
Angela Servello	MBTA
Jon Seward	
Judith VanHamm	
Felicia Webb	CATA
Eva Willens	

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Blake Acton

Matt Archer

Jonathan Church

Annette Demchur

Ken Dumas

Róisín Foley

Hiral Gandhi

Matt Genova

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Ben Krepp

Anne McGahan

Marty Milkovits

Ariel Patterson

Gina Perille

Scott Peterson

Roger Roy

Barbara Rutman

Michelle Scott

Kate White

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