

MPO Meeting Minutes

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

December 2, 2021, Meeting

10:00 AM–11:14 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Steve Woelfel, Chair, representing Jamey Tesler, Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

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

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of October 21, 2021
- Approve the work program for Travel Demand Management (TDM) Follow-Up

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 7.

2. Chair's Report—*Steve Woelfel, MassDOT*

S. Woelfel reminded attendees to register for MassDOT's annual Moving Together conference on December 7, 8, and 9, 2021.

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

T. Teich reported that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) had launched a website about the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/>.

T. Teich reminded Board members to join staff for a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) scenario planning focus group following the meeting.

T. Teich provided updates on ongoing recruitment, including the hiring of a new Manager of Outreach and Communications, final interviews for the Public Outreach Coordinator, ongoing interviews for Transportation Planner/Data Analyst and Transportation Planner/Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Manager positions, and a recently posted Manager of Projects and Applications position.

T. Teich provided updates on recent and upcoming outreach, including a Transit Working Group Coffee Chat about planning for transit's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic on December 9, 2021, at 1:00 PM. T. Teich noted that Community Connections funding program applications opened on November 22, 2021, and were due on December 17, 2021. T. Teich stated that staff would hold one final Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) subregional outreach meeting for the season, with the North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC) on Tuesday, December 14, 2021.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports—*Jay Monty, At-Large City, City of Everett, Chair, Congestion Management Process (CMP) Committee*

J. Monty reported that the CMP committee met prior to the MPO meeting and heard from Ryan Hicks, MPO staff, regarding a study of bicycle parking at MBTA stations. J. Monty encouraged Board members interested in joining the committee to reach out to himself or Mark Abbott, MPO staff.

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

L. Diggins stated that the next Advisory Council meeting on December 8, 2021, would feature Colette Aufranc, Wellesley Select Board member, and Meghan Jop, Town Executive Director, to talk about perspectives on regional transit authorities. Bill Kuttner (MPO staff) would also talk about research on trucks at the Southampton Street bottleneck.

7. Action Item: Approval of October 21, 2021, MPO Meeting Minutes—*Róisín Foley, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Minutes of the Meeting of October 21, 2021](#)

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of October 21, 2021, was made by MAPC (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) (Daniel Amstutz). The motion carried.

8. Action Item: Work Scope, TDM Follow-Up—*Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Work Program: TDM Follow-Up](#)

S. Johnston presented the work program for TDM Follow-Up. S. Johnston stated that the budget for this work is \$10,000 and it will take 10 months to complete. TDM consists of a set of policies or programs intended to reduce driving-alone trips. During federal fiscal year 2021, MPO staff sponsored two virtual forums about TDM. Both forums drew more than 300 participants combined. Based on continued interest in the topic from stakeholders, and the success of the forums, the UPWP Committee funded this work to examine what TDM roles the MPO and its staff could choose to take on in the future. Staff will research how other MPOs engage with TDM, continue building and deepening relationships with regional TDM stakeholders, and report back to the MPO.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked whether outreach to stakeholders will include regional transit authorities (RTA) and encouraged S. Johnston to use the Advisory Council as an outreach avenue. S. Johnston replied that RTAs would be included and that he would follow up with L. Diggins.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for TDM Follow-Up, was made by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by the South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (Peter Pelletier). The motion carried.

9. A Decade of Bluebikes in the Boston Region—*Betsy Harvey, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [A Decade of Bluebikes in the Boston Region: How Access to Bikeshare has Changed for Environmental Justice Communities](#)

B. Harvey presented the results of a study conducted under the Transportation Equity program that looked at how access to Bluebikes stations has changed for Environmental Justice (EJ) populations since the service opened in 2011. B. Harvey stated that the study results are presented in a StoryMap that traces the history of Bluebikes in the Boston Region and the distribution over time of stations in communities with high shares of people of color and people with low incomes, referred to collectively as EJ populations. The results show that as of 2021, more than 50 percent of the people of color or people with low incomes live within one-quarter mile of a station, and more than 75 percent live within one-half mile. This compares favorably to the approximately 10 percent and 30 percent that lived within one-quarter and one-half mile, respectively, of a station in 2011. B. Harvey noted that the analysis looks at the proximity of where people live to bikeshare stations and assumes that if a person lives near a station, they can use it. It does not assess whether there are other barriers, such

as cost, or the presence or absence of safe bicycling infrastructure. MPO staff anticipate updating the analysis with current Census data once the full American Community Survey data for 2020 are released. Future updates could include other equity populations, including seniors, people with disabilities, children, and people with limited English proficiency.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked if it is possible to calculate the statistical significance of the difference in proximity for these populations. B. Harvey stated that statistical significance is probably not as much use in this analysis as it is in modeling future equity impacts, but that she would look into it and get back to L. Diggins.

10. Future of the Curb, Phase 2—Curb Management Guidebook—Blake Acton, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Managing Curb Space in the Boston Region: A Guidebook](#)

B. Acton presented the results of a study conducted to create a curb management guidebook for planners in the Boston Region. The guidebook introduces the practice of curb management by examining case studies, best practices, and challenges facing the region and provides planners with realistic, practical strategies to effectively manage curb space in their municipality.

B. Acton stated that curb space can be defined as roughly the area between the street curb and the roadway typically inhabited by parking. This is an increasingly valuable space, especially in dense urban areas where it can be used as a travel lane or as an area for parking, deliveries, outdoor dining, or dedicated bike or bus lanes. B. Acton stated that, ideally, the goal is to reframe curb space away from parking as the default. Since parking dominates most curb space in cities today, curb management strategies need to also acknowledge this reality to be useful.

To create the guidebook, project staff interviewed 27 different professionals, mostly comprised of municipal transportation planners. From interviews, staff learned that curb management is new to most planners and that today curbs are managed in a largely reactive and ad-hoc fashion.

B. Acton presented three foundations of curb management: (1) building a community coalition of allies that can help develop and accomplish curb management goals; (2) develop a curb priority matrix that prioritizes the different curb uses within each land use

according to the goals of the community; and (3) create a searchable curb inventory database.

The guidebook recommends that planners frequently begin with a comprehensive study of parking use both on and off street near their area of interest to help defend projects and proposals against the continuous and pervasive perception that there is never enough parking. If parking is underused, there is an opportunity to decrease the parking supply and institute other uses using the curb priority matrix and depending on the neighborhood makeup. If parking use is very high, municipalities can increase the price of that parking. The guidebook recommends several strategies for approaching this difficult issue, such as prioritizing early, in-person or personal outreach to business owners on the corridor. Planners can also emphasize the benefits of increased parking turnover for businesses. The guidebook suggests instituting a Parking Benefit District, where local parking revenue is reinvested into the district, when appropriate.

Discussion

D. Amstutz agreed that rates of turnover are an important factor in discussions of the best use of curb space, as well as the existence of off-street parking for employees.

Ken Miller (FHWA) noted that the interviews did not include any representatives of the freight industry and encouraged staff to include freight stakeholders in future work. K. Miller also cautioned against recommending specific proprietary curb management platforms. B. Acton stated that the intent was not to endorse a specific vendor but to note that creating inventories in house is difficult and that some vendors are more popular with local communities than others. B. Acton added that the goal with Phase III of this work, starting now, is to explore data collection more fully. K. Miller added that it is important to consider the relationship between on- and off-street parking. B. Acton agreed, noting that MAPC work had found that a lot of off-street parking also tends to be underused.

Derek Shooster (MassDOT) recommended to any municipalities or stakeholders seeking grant funding from state or regional sources that the guidebook contains practical information that can help create a more successful grant application.

Matthew Warfield (City of Boston) stated that information on how to have difficult conversations with stakeholders about parking would also be useful.

Tom Bent (Inner Core Committee) (City of Somerville) agreed that these conversations can be contentious regardless of data and continuous dialogue is important.

David Koses (At-Large City) (City of Newton) asked whether staff had a sense that communities were starting to develop official programs for things like on-street dining or if it continued to be ad-hoc. B. Acton stated that some communities, mainly in the inner core, are ready to develop a more formal approach to parklets or on-street dining but that this will evolve in the coming years.

11. All-Hazards Planning Application Web Tool—Jonathan Church, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [All-hazards Web Application](#)

J. Church presented the revised All-Hazards Planning Application. The purpose of the application is to provide an online interactive tool that supports resiliency planning by identifying various climate hazards relative to the transportation network. The application was conceptualized in 2010, and since then climate change projections have become more accurate. The goal of the revision was to produce a new version of the app on a more up-to-date platform and incorporate new data. The new app is ArcGIS-based. The app includes data from the Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information Services, MassDOT, Central Transportation Planning Staff, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the US Army Corps of Engineers and allows users to see various hazards relative to critical facilities, transportation infrastructure, EJ communities, and more.

12. Members Items

There were none.

13. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (P. Pelletier). 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
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Bill Conroy
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Brad Rawson
	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Steve Woelfel
	John Bechard
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Jillian Linnell
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	Amira Patterson
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Thatcher Kezer
	III
	Eric Johnston
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	Melisa Tintocalis
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Rockland)	
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Peter Pelletier
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Ariel Patterson	
Joe Blankenship	BPDA
Alison Felix	MAPC
Jon Seward	
Paul Cobuzzi	
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT
Derek Shooster	MassDOT
Derek Krevat	MassDOT
Abby Swaine	EPA
Wesley Lickus	MassDOT
Kim Foltz	BTD
JR Frey	Town of Hingham
Josh Klingenstein	MBTA
Cassandra Ostrander	FHWA
Franny Osman	
Michael Garrity	MassDOT
Timothy Paris	MassDOT
Colette Aufranc	
Matthew Warfield	
Kris Carter	City of Boston

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Blake Acton

Matt Archer

Paul Christner

Jonathan Church

Annette Demchur

Julie Dombroski

Róisín Foley

Matt Genova

Betsy Harvey

Sandy Johnston

Heyne Kim

Benjamin Krepp

Anne McGahan

Marty Milkovits

Rebecca Morgan

Gina Perille

Michelle Scott

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Title VI Specialist

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