

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

October 20, 2022, Meeting

10:00 AM–11:45 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Stephen 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 September 1, 2022
- Approve Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) performance targets
- Release Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2023-27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment One for a 21-day public comment period

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 10.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Chair's Report—*Stephen Woelfel, MassDOT*

Stephen Woelfel stated that MassDOT will be holding a public meeting for Beyond Mobility, the long-range transportation plan for Massachusetts, on October 20, 2022, at 6:00 PM on Zoom. Additionally, applications for new projects under the Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Program are open and will close on November 18. Finally, S. Woelfel highlighted that the Moving Together conference registration will be ending on October 25, and the conference will take place on November 1 both in-person and virtually.

4. Committee Chairs' Reports

Derek Krevat (MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning) stated that the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee will be meeting on November 3 at 1:00 PM, following the MPO meeting, to discuss Adjustment One to the FFY 2023 UPWP.

Brian Kane (MBTA Advisory Board) stated that the Administration and Finance Committee met earlier this morning to discuss the operating budget for the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) and review first quarter revenue and expenditures.

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

Lenard Diggins stated that at the previous meeting of the Advisory Council, Michelle Scott (MPO staff) attended to speak about the ongoing updates to the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

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

Tegin Teich began her report with an update on the MPO election process and introduced Eric Bourassa (Metropolitan Area Planning Council [MAPC]), who provided more information. E. Bourassa stated that the deadline for accepting nominations was extended for the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) subregion. The other subregions up for election are the Inner Core Committee, the MetroWest Collaborative, and the South Shore Coalition. The results of the election will be announced at the MAPC Fall Council Meeting, to be held on October 27, 2022, at 9:00 AM.

T. Teich then provided a staffing update, noting that a new position for a Performance-Based Planning Program Manager was recently posted; staff will be accepting applications until November 3. T. Teich then discussed some recent and upcoming engagement activities staff have been conducting, including attending an Inner Core Committee Transportation Group meeting on October 19, as well as meetings of the other subregional groups over the coming months to discuss the LRTP, the TIP, and the UPWP.

Additionally, there will be two Transit Working Group Coffee Chats in November: one on November 1, on Marketing and Launching the Berkshire Flyer, and one on November 16, discussing the development of the MPO's LRTP, *Destination 2050*, and updating the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan.

7. Action Item: Approval of September 1, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of September 1, 2022, was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane) and seconded by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce (Tom O'Rourke). The motion carried.

8. Action Item: Approval of CMAQ Performance Targets—Michelle Scott, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [CMAQ Program Performance Targets – 2022 Update](#)

Discussion

Michelle Scott began her presentation with an overview of some key takeaways. The US Department of Transportation requires transportation agencies to set targets for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program performance measures in two key areas: traffic congestion measures at the urbanized area (UZA) level, and emissions reduction measures at the state and MPO level based on expected CMAQ-funded projects in air quality monitoring areas. Recently, the Boston Region MPO, MassDOT, New Hampshire DOT, and the Northern Middlesex MPO staff identified UZA traffic congestion targets based on travel trends. Boston Region MPO staff are proposing a carbon monoxide (CO) reduction target based on a programmed TIP project that overlaps Waltham, a city which has historically been an air quality limited maintenance area (designated by the US Environmental Protection Agency).

This set of performance targets is not as frequently discussed as some other targets, such as roadway safety or transit asset management targets, but CMAQ targets are part of a larger family of targets that include bridge condition, pavement condition, and travel time reliability. The CMAQ Program is a major federal funding program through which Massachusetts and the Boston Region MPO fund transportation projects that will reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. CMAQ funds supported the MPO's Community Connections Program, which funds first- and last-mile connection projects, and the MPO's contribution to the Green Line Extension project.

Today's discussion was focused on two measures in the traffic congestion category and one in the emissions reduction category: the percent of non-single occupancy vehicle (non-SOV) traffic in the Boston urbanized area, *annual hours of peak hour excessive delay per capita*, and total emissions reduction for applicable pollutants for CMAQ-funded projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas.

The federal government examines three different criteria when evaluating how states and MPOs comply with requirements: whether the state or MPO contains an air quality nonattainment or maintenance area, overlaps a UZA with a nonattainment or maintenance area and a population greater than 200,000, and overlaps the National Highway System in that UZA. The Boston Region MPO addresses these criteria by setting targets with partners in the urbanized area and developing CMAQ performance

plans that describe its targets and CMAQ-funded projects happening in the region. The MPO additionally reports on targets and progress in the LRTP and TIP.

The MPO has three major partners in setting CMAQ traffic congestion targets: MassDOT, New Hampshire DOT, and the Northern Middlesex MPO. While there are other MPOs in the larger UZA, they do not face the same requirements of coordination to set and achieve targets. With respect to the percent of non-SOV travel in the region, the reason for measuring this target is that as the region sees a general reduction in use of single-occupancy vehicles, there are opportunities to decrease congestion and improve air quality. There are a few key ways this can be measured. One is through analysis of data from the US Census' American Community Survey (ACS), which provides estimates of how people are commuting to work. This measure has two targets: a two-year target reflecting 2019-23 ACS estimates, and a five-year target reflecting 2021-25 ACS estimates. There were some elements to consider when setting these targets, namely commuting changes due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and increased investments in transit.

The next measure focused on *annual hours of peak hour excessive delay per capita*. The focus of this measure is specifically asking how much excessive delay—that is, delay beyond a certain pre-determined threshold—do people experience on the National Highway System network. This measure is normalized based on the population of the UZA. The main methodology of determining this measure is through the use of the National Performance Management Research Data Set. *Peak hours of excessive delay* is a function of travel time, threshold travel time, travel time segment delay, and people and time periods affected. Again, there are two targets for this measure: a two-year target, resulting in a value as of year-end 2023, and a four-year target, resulting in a value as of year-end 2025.

At this point, M. Scott paused in her presentation and asked members if they had questions on the material presented up until this point. E. Bourassa asked what the excessive delay threshold metric represented. M. Scott stated that this metric is determined by what the travel time of a given segment of the highway system would be if a person was traveling at 20 miles per hour or 60 percent of the speed limit, whichever is greater. E. Bourassa then asked how this measure and the previous one regarding reduction in single-occupancy vehicle travel interact with each other. M. Scott replied that there are some factors that contribute to the differences in measures, including population measured and travel time.

E. Bourassa observed that it seems counterintuitive that the targets for coming years are higher than present numbers, and he asked if this is due to an anticipated

population increase. M. Scott responded affirmatively and stated that when staff set the early target a few years ago, there was little historical data to consult. The goal is to bend the curve over a period of time, not immediately.

D. Krevat stated that the reason for the 2023 target being significantly higher than that of 2021 is due to the available data at the time. Though it is higher than 2021, that projection was made with some faulty data at the time, so the long-term goal is to balance aspirations of reductions with the actual data available.

Daniel Amstutz (At Large Town/Town of Arlington) asked why the target for 2023 was set so high. M. Scott replied that the idea is to be able to “overdeliver”; that is, the target is an overestimation. D. Krevat added that, overall, the goal was to be more conservative to see how traffic data would look as people return to the office. He added that there is an opportunity to revisit the targets at the two-year reporting period.

L. Diggins asked how the formula for calculating the targets incorporated people living in areas of high congestion if the data are normalized for the entire region. M. Scott responded that she was not sure of the exact procedure and would follow up afterwards.

Kenneth Miller (Federal Highway Administration) highlighted the fact that the data are derived from the American Communities Survey, and that work-related travel used to comprise about one third of all trips generated; now, that percentage may be even less. Generally, work travel also is responsible for a greater share of SOV-travel than other trip types. K. Miller asked what strategies the MPO hopes to implement to reduce *annual hours of peak hour excessive delay per capita* from 2023 to 2025. M. Scott replied that the MPO is investing in travel alternatives to SOV trips, specifically in transit. D. Krevat added that, through results from the telework study conducted by MassDOT as well as with increased funding for congestion reduction through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the MPO is looking to formulate a strategy for *annual hours of peak hour excessive delay per capita* reduction in the coming years. K. Miller cautioned that these targets, while aspirational, should also be grounded in the reality that there are more vehicle trips than transit trips and that the ratio may not even out even as people return to the office.

M. Scott then began discussing the final measure: emissions reduction. The goal of this measure is to understand how CMAQ-funded projects will help to reduce relevant emissions. There are two relevant components to this measure: the total emissions reduction for applicable pollutants and precursors, and total emissions reduction for CMAQ-funded projects in designated nonattainment and maintenance areas. The

measures monitor expected carbon monoxide reductions, and for the second component, expected reductions from CMAQ-funded projects in Waltham in FFYs 2022-25. This is due to Waltham's designation as a CO limited-maintenance area until April 2022.

The main method for evaluation is by consulting emissions reduction data in the CMAQ Public Access System. There was one project funded in a recent Transportation Improvement Program, The NewMo Expansion, Phase 2. CMAQ air quality analysis accounts for a number of variables, including CO impacts of new service, days of operation per year, average trip distance and service mileage, and estimated CO emissions associated with replaced SOV trips, among others. Using these variables, MPO staff calculated a 1.471 kilogram (kg) reduction of CO emissions in a day as a result of the NewMo Expansion, Phase 2, project. In Waltham, which will be served as part of the NewMo Expansion, staff estimate a reduction of approximately 0.354 kg per day.

M. Scott then requested that the MPO board vote to adopt the CMAQ traffic congestion targets to ensure consistent reporting with the Boston MA-NH-RI UZA partners, and vote to adopt the MPO emissions reduction target.

Vote

A motion to approve all six targets was made by the Advisory Council (Lenard Diggins) and seconded by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2023–27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment One—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

2. [FFYs 2023-27 TIP Amendment One](#)
3. [FFYs 2022-26 TIP Amendment Eight](#)

Discussion

E. Lapointe introduced Amendment One to the FFYs 2023-27 TIP. This Amendment proposes budget revisions to one Community Connections project and one Complete Streets project due to readiness and updated cost estimates. This amendment also includes some carry-forward funding of FFY 2022 MBTA funding into FFY 2023. Additionally, the amendment incorporates recently awarded grant funding from the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5307 and 5337 programs, as well as

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant and CMAQ funding.

Amendment One contains changes to the Regional Target Highway Program, with respect to the Community Connections program and Complete Streets. The Chenery Middle School Bicycle Parking project in Belmont (ID 512704) has a cost increase of \$3,913.40 due to increased cost estimates from bicycle rack vendors. Consequently, the amendment reduced the FFY 2023 budget for the Rehabilitation of Mount Auburn Street project in Watertown (ID 607777) by \$3,913.40. However, the latter project will see an increase in the same amount in FFY 2024, so the project budget will stay the same.

The proposed changes to the MBTA's projects result from carry-forward changes from three categories of federal funding: Section 5307, Section 5337, and a pool of other funding from a combination of grants and awards, all administered by the FTA. The changes to the MBTA's portion reflect the agency's own Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), adopted in May 2022, and are intended to bring the TIP in line with project readiness updates as outlined in the CIP for FFYs 2023-27.

Funds carried forward from FFY 2022 under the FTA's Section 5307 Program will be applied to the MBTA's Bridge and Tunnel Program, the Revenue Vehicle Program, the Signals/Systems Upgrade Program, and the Stations and Facilities Program. Funds carried forward from FFY 2022 under the FTA's 5337 Program will be applied to the same programs. In sum, the Bridge and Tunnel Program funding is increased to \$61,272,064; the Revenue Vehicle Program funding is increased to \$115,366,166; the Signals/System Upgrade Program funding is increased to \$93,031,964; and the Stations and Facilities Program funding is increased to \$159,825,035.

Funds carried forward from other federal funding sources will be applied to specific projects. This amendment proposes increasing funding to these projects: North Wilmington Station, Quincy Bus Facility Modernization, South Salem Commuter Rail Stop Study, Chelsea and Everett Route Planning, Battery Electric Buses, South Elm Street Bridge in Haverhill, MBTA Suicide Trespass Intervention, Lynnway Multimodal Corridor, Blue Hill Avenue Corridor, Alewife Wayfinding Improvements, MBTA Systemwide Bike Racks, and Columbus Avenue Bus Lane Phase II projects. These projects are funded by the Commuter Authority Rail Safety Improvements Grant, Federal Railroad Administration funding, RAISE grants and CMAQ funding.

E. Lapointe then requested the MPO board vote to release FFYs 2023-27 TIP Amendment One for public comment.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked E. Lapointe to clarify the need for the cost increase for the Chenery Middle School Bicycle Racks project. E. Lapointe stated that the increase is due to rising materials costs, resulting in a higher quote from the vendor for the bicycle racks.

E. Bourassa asked if most of the additional funds are either formula funds or grants. Laura Gilmore (MBTA) stated that some edits may need to be finalized to reflect the MBTA's numbers. E. Lapointe stated that the tables outlining funding sources and projects reflects materials provided by the MBTA, and that the amounts are accurate, even if there may be confusion on the exact timing of the funding source.

L. Diggins noted that a lot of funding seems to be moved from later years to FFY 2023, and he asked if these were completely new projects or projects scheduled for later years that are being moved up. E. Lapointe stated that these are tasks that are funded every year and the general funding levels for the programs change every year. Eric Waaramaa (MBTA) clarified that the shift in funding is not taking money from later years into FFY 2023; the shift is carry-over funding from FFY 2022 into 2023.

Jim Fitzgerald (Boston Planning and Development Agency) pointed out that FTA funds have significantly more flexibility in when they can be spent, as compared to FHWA funds, which are restricted by year on a "use it or lose it" basis. S. Woelfel stated that as far as he can remember, FTA funds have had this kind of flexibility.

L. Gilmore asked that the format of the tables presented today be changed before presented to the MBTA's board. S. Woelfel replied that the MBTA should submit any requested changes to MPO staff ahead of a future meeting where this amendment will be discussed.

Vote

A motion to release FFY 2023-27 TIP Amendment One for a 21-day public comment period was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Lenard Diggins). The motion carried.

10. Members' Items

Brad Rawson (Inner Core Committee) (City of Somerville) expressed his gratitude to the MPO board for the historic and continued support of the Green Line Extension project, which is now very close to completion. He additionally highlighted the tension between the need for system expansion and state-of-good-repair work. He argued that this is a false choice and reminded the board that the Green Line Extension is a regional air quality mitigation project developed primarily due to the Big Dig's climate impacts. He

urged the board to continue to work regionally and collaboratively for a greener and safer transit system.

11. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Lenard 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)	Heather Hamilton Todd Kirrane
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	William Conroy
Federal Highway Administration	Kenneth Miller Cassandra Ostrander
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler Steve Woelfel
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Jillian Linnell Laura Gilmore
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Eric Johnson
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	Austin Cyganiewicz
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne Denise Deschamps
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Hull)	Jennifer Constable
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
Eric Waaramaa	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
Tyler Terrasi	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT District 3
Benjamin Muller	MassDOT District 6
Stephen Carluccio	
Miranda Briseno	MassDOT
Raissah Kouame	
Derek Shooster	
Andrew Wang	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Patty Carluccio	
Owen MacDonald	Town of Weymouth
Jon Seward	Town of Burlington
JR Frey	Town of Hingham
Josh Klingenstein	MBTA
Chris Klem	MassDOT
Sheila Page	Town of Lexington
Rich Benevento	
Derek Krevat	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Gina Perille, Deputy Executive Director
Annette Demchur, Director of Policy and Planning
Rebecca Morgan, Director of Projects and Partnerships
Marty Milkovits, Director of Modeling and Analytics
Jonathan Church, Manager of MPO Activities
Sean Rourke, Manager of Communications and Engagement
Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff
Logan Casey, MPO Staff
Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff
Betsy Harvey, MPO Staff
Michelle Scott, MPO Staff
Judy Taylor, MPO Staff
Silva Ayvazyan, MPO Staff

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Title VI Specialist

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By Telephone:

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