

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

November 3, 2022, Meeting

10:00 AM–12:00 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

David Mohler, 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 15, 2022
- Approve nomination and election of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Eric Bourassa, for the position as Vice-Chair
- Approve the Red-Blue Connector work scope
- Approve the Sustainability and Decarbonization in the Freight and Logistics Sector in the North Suffolk Area work scope

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 12.

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

There was none.

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

T. Teich announced the results of the 2022 Boston Region MPO Board members election. The City of Somerville was reelected to serve for the Inner Core Committee. The City of Framingham was reelected to serve for the MetroWest Regional Collaborative. The Town of Acton was reelected to serve for the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination. The Town of Hull was elected to serve for the South Shore Coalition.

T. Teich announced that the distribution of population, household, and employment forecasts to municipalities has been delayed due to some technical challenges. The forecasts will be released in mid-November.

T. Teich announced upcoming engagement events including three Fall subregional outreach meetings in November, as well as a Transit Working Group Coffee Chat meeting to discuss the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Coordination Plan, scheduled for November 16, 2022, at 4:00 PM.

4. Public Comments

Michael Lambert, Brockton Area Transit (BAT), spoke regarding Subregional Priority Roadway Study: Washington Street Corridor in Canton. BAT has a successful route that serves this area, so BAT was included within the study. M. Lambert offered thanks to MPO staff for the review of the study area. An issue that came up as part of the study was the crash incident rates along Cobb Corner in Canton, with many of these incidents driven by curb cut access to strip malls in the area. M. Lambert encouraged the community to evaluate the number of sidewalks that are dedicated to curb cuts for retail entrances and exits.

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council, spoke about the recent MPO election. S. Olanoff stated that half of the subregions did not get a ballot for two reasons. First, this was the election method for how at-large candidates were originally elected. Second, the MPO board voted last year to have municipalities elect the candidate from their subregion only. S. Olanoff stated that the elections process should be reconsidered in a future meeting of the MPO.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

Brian Kane, MBTA Advisory Board, stated that the Administration and Finance Committee met before the MPO board meeting to discuss and continue work on the Operations Plan.

Derek Krevat, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, stated that the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee would be meeting at 1:00 PM after the MPO board meeting. The committee will discuss and vote to endorse Adjustment One to the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 UPWP for final endorsement by the MPO board on November 17, 2022.

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

L. Diggins stated that the Advisory Council has not had a meeting since the last meeting of the MPO board. The next Advisory Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 9, 2022. The Advisory Council will be having discussions with the Executive Director regarding MPO peer exchanges, as well as with Srilekha Murthy, UPWP Manager, to discuss updates to the UPWP and project submissions.

7. Action Item: Approval of September 15, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [September 15, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes \(pdf\)](#)
2. [September 15, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes \(html\)](#)

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of September 15, 2022, was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane) and seconded by the MAPC (Eric Bourassa). The motion carried.

8. Action Item: Election of Vice-Chair for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023—David Mohler, Chair

D. Mohler requested nominations for the election of the Vice-Chair for FFY 2023.

Vote

A motion to nominate and elect the MAPC, Eric Bourassa, for the position as Vice-Chair, was made by the MBTA Advisory Council (Brian Kane) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (Tom Bent). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: Work Scope, Red-Blue Connector—Ben Dowling, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Red-Blue Connector Work Program \(pdf\)](#)
2. [Red-Blue Connector Work Program \(html\)](#)

B. Dowling introduced the Red-Blue Connector work program. Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) has been requested by the MBTA to support a study for connecting the Red and Blue Line at the Charles/MGH station. The Blue Line would be extended beneath Cambridge Street to the Charles/MGH station. This would be done in the context of a Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) filing. CTPS would use its regional travel demand model to perform this work.

The MBTA is the client for the project and the budget is \$213,000 over the course of 24 months. The bulk of this project work would be completed in the first nine months. There are five modeling scenarios envisioned for the project. These scenarios include a base year scenario, an opening year no-build scenario, an opening year build scenario, a future year no-build scenario, and a future year build scenario.

The area that CTPS will focus on for analysis is the area where the two lines are proposed to be connected. In particular, the study will focus on Charles/MGH Station on the Red Line, and Bowdoin Station on the Blue Line, as well as Park Street station, State Street Station, and Government Center Station. CTPS will provide the MBTA and the project team with mode share information, station access information, transfer information, in addition to boarding and alighting information. CTPS would also perform an air quality and environmental justice analysis in connection with this project.

CTPS would provide support to the Red-Blue Line connector project team at two public meetings. CTPS does not anticipate that this work would interfere with the MPO's work.

Discussion

Jay Monty, At-Large City, City of Everett, asked how this work scope would build upon previous studies that analyzed the Red-Blue connector. J. Monty further asked if the study would consider the ridership demand in the North Shore area. B. Dowling stated that the last time CTPS was involved with the Red-Blue connector was more than 10 years ago, so this work scope would warrant a fresh look at the project. B. Dowling further stated that the study would look at transit impacts or activity not only in the mentioned locations but in other locations as well.

Shannon Greenwell, MBTA, added that the MBTA had taken the project through the draft environmental impact report process in 2010. Enough time has passed since the first filing so the MBTA will need to restart the environmental review process. The MBTA is requesting modeling to support the environmental review process. After 2010, another study was conducted in 2018 that examined tunneling and construction methods, in addition to the cost associated with the project. The 2018 study also offered updates in terms of population estimates and land use. In 2021, the MBTA completed a concept design report that laid out a preliminary design and design criteria.

B. Kane added that the MBTA Advisory Board voted in April 2021 to fully support the construction and operation of the Red-Blue Line connector. B. Kane asked if the Red-Blue Line connector project was a State Implementation Plan (SIP) requirement. D. Mohler answered that the Red-Blue Line connector project is no longer a SIP requirement.

B. Kane asked if the Red-Blue Connector study would make any conclusions on who should pay for the construction and increased operating cost. S. Greenwell answered that the study has funding for preliminary engineering to support environmental review. The MBTA will produce an updated cost estimate that will include construction and

capital costs, as well as operating costs. The MBTA currently does not have funding to go further into design or construction of the project.

Daniel Amstutz, At-Large Town, Town of Arlington, asked if there would need to be new tunnels built under Cambridge Street. S. Greenwell answered that under the concept design, the MBTA would decommission Bowdoin station and would construct a new tunnel under Cambridge Street that would connect to a new Blue Line station underneath the current Charles/MGH station. There was a cost estimate developed in 2021 as part of the concept design report and puts the project cost at \$850 million, including construction, additional rolling stock, and increased operational costs.

L. Diggins stated that Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) was undertaking construction in the proposed project area. L. Diggins asked if the MBTA has coordinated with MGH on development of the proposed project. S. Greenwell answered yes, and that part of the concept design report is the coordination with MGH. MGH will be saving a space for a headhouse and has included this in its designs.

Jim Fitzgerald, Boston Planning & Development Agency, stated that he was looking forward to working with the MBTA project team and advancing the needed permitting on this analysis.

Vote

A motion to approve the Red-Blue Connector work scope, was made by the City of Boston, Boston Planning & Development Agency (Jim Fitzgerald) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane). The motion carried.

10. Action Item: Work Scope, Sustainability and Decarbonization in the Freight and Logistics Sector in the North Suffolk Area—*Sandy Johnston, MPO staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Sustainability and Decarbonization in the Freight and Logistics Sector in the North Suffolk Area Work Program \(pdf\)](#)
2. [Sustainability and Decarbonization in the Freight and Logistics Sector in the North Suffolk Area Work Program \(html\)](#)

S. Johnston introduced the work scope and stated the work scope has a total budget of \$67,500. Additional meeting files include a table documenting MAPC's accompanying budget commitment to the study, which totals \$37,850. The idea of the study is to develop data on and look at decarbonizing and cleaning up air pollution in the freight and logistics sector in a slice of the MPO region.

The study area covers Chelsea, parts of Everett, Revere, Winthrop, and East Boston. All relevant municipalities have indicated their support of the study. The concept for the study was originally brought to MAPC by the City of Chelsea and the North Suffolk Office of Resiliency and Sustainability. MAPC shared this project idea with CTPS staff. MAPC and MPO staff evolved this project to be more regional and the UPWP Committee elected to fund this project in the FFY 2023 UPWP. The core idea of this study is that the area under consideration is home to heavy concentrations of Environmental Justice populations, while also being a key industrial and logistical node for the entire region, due to the presence of Logan Airport, port and railroad facilities, produce markets, and highways. The local municipalities would like to retain industrial and logistics jobs brought by the cluster, which are under significant pressure from high land values. The municipalities would also like to relieve some of the Environmental Justice burdens on the local population linked to presence of such economic activities. Ideally, this study will be the first phase of work in this area and in the future. Staff will work with municipalities to pursue additional tasks including potentially looking for alternative funding sources. MPO staff also believe this study could be an interesting model for future work around the MPO region looking at other geographic areas.

MPO staff plans for this study to proceed through a number of stages over the next 11 months, wrapping up by the end of the FFY 2023. In task one, MPO staff will collect basic data on the study area, freight infrastructure, environmental justice populations, and land use relating to industrial and logistics sectors. In task two, MPO staff will conduct a literature review to help understand the issues at hand and how other metropolitan areas have dealt with or plan to handle them. In task three, MPO staff will work with the CTPS Communications and Engagement team and staff at MAPC to consult with key stakeholders, the local municipalities supporting the study, local business, freight carriers, and activities and advocates in these communities. Tasks four and five will conduct more advanced research, both qualitative and quantitative with details being directed by the combination of previous findings and conversations with stakeholders. Task six covers development of recommendations and production of the final work project, which will be produced in the form of an ArcGIS StoryMap. MPO staff believes that this is a suitable type of work product for capturing large amounts of data that MPO staff plans to collect and analyze as part of this work. MPO staff will pay special attention to ensure the final product is accessible to residents of that area, especially in terms of language.

CTPS is contributing \$67,500 to the budget of this project, supplemented by \$37,500 from MAPC, totaling \$105,350. This amount does not fully capture the time MPO staff will spend on the study, as costs for CTPS workgroups such as Communications and

Engagement, Editorial, and Graphics are budgeted separately from programmed study budgets.

Discussion

D. Mohler asked if non-budgeted work for other MPO workgroups is considered overhead. T. Teich answered no and that workgroup budgets are budgeted separately in the UPWP.

L. Diggins stated his support for the work program and stated his interest in understanding the full cost of the study.

B. Kane stated his support for the work program and suggested the study also consider projects, such as the Silver Line extension, where displaced light industrial entities should be located.

Jen Rowe, Boston Transportation Department, emphasized the importance of presenting the study results to stakeholders at the end of the process. S. Johnston stated that MPO staff intended to do so.

Abby Swaine, US Environmental Protection Agency, suggested that projects and plans resulting from this work program would be in a strong position to receive funding from the Federal Highway Administration Carbon Reduction Program formula funding that MassDOT has been receiving and will receive in upcoming years.

Vote

A motion to approve the Sustainability and Decarbonization in the Freight and Logistics Sector in the North Suffolk Area work scope was made by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Lenard Diggins) and seconded by the MAPC (Eric Bourassa). The motion carried.

11. Presentation: Developing Baseline Transportation Equity Indicators for the Boston Region—Betsy Harvey, MPO staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [An Exploration of Destination Access and Transportation Cost Analyses \(pdf\)](#)
2. [An Exploration of Destination Access and Transportation Cost Analyses \(html\)](#)
3. [Data Repository](#)
4. [Online Application](#)

B. Harvey introduced the presentation, Developing Baseline Transportation Equity Metrics for the Boston Region. This study resulted from the public engagement process that MPO staff conducted between 2018 and 2020, to create a Disparate Impact and

Disproportionate Burden (DI/DB) policy for the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Many of the stakeholders involved in the study requested MPO staff go above and beyond what is required for a DI/DB analysis and to address existing transportation inequities. The study had four goals, to develop a set of initial baseline equity indicator metrics, to create and document a replicable method, to lay groundwork for expanding metric sets, and to provide a baseline for disparate impact metrics.

MPO staff conducted public engagement during the early and middle stages of the study to get feedback on the types of metrics that MPO staff should analyze, as well as feedback on the types of products that MPO staff might produce that would be most helpful to stakeholders. MPO staff spoke to stakeholders representing a range of community types and organizational interests in the region including organizations with a strong Environmental Justice focus. In response to feedback from stakeholders, MPO staff has developed several work products that meet the needs of different audiences. In addition to a traditional report, MPO staff has developed an online application that people can use to explore study results, as well as a data repository that anyone can access to dive deep into the MPO's methodology. Lastly, MPO staff plans to host several follow-up engagement activities to reconnect with the original stakeholders, as well as other interested parties.

Destination access measures the ability of people to reach destinations. The analysis of destination access consists of four factors including where people live, a travel mode that people use to make the trip, a travel time threshold, and a destination. Destination access does not look at accessibility from the standpoint of people with disabilities. Further, it does not consider whether people want to access the destination or other factors that affect the likelihood of someone making a trip, such as transit fees, tolls, or other costs. The results of the analysis are reported in two ways, the total number of destinations that can be accessed, and the number of destinations that can be accessed per person. The number of destinations that can be accessed per person is the measure of equity per person. Specific metrics were used to analyze access to destinations, including analyzing access to jobs, higher education, emergency healthcare, non-emergency healthcare, essential places, all parks, large parks, and off-street paths. To determine whether access was inequitable, MPO staff compared access per person between the equity populations and their respective non-equity populations. There are three different equity populations groups that are analyzed: minority populations, low-income populations, and zero-vehicle households.

In addition to analyzing access across the entire MPO region, MPO staff also analyzes access within subregional areas. MAPC has developed subarea community types based upon population density and land use. By analyzing access to community types,

MPO staff is able to control for these factors when looking at access among municipalities with similar characteristics. There are eight community types in the MPO region. From most dense to least dense, these community types are metropolitan core communities, streetcar suburbs, subregional urban centers, major regional urban centers, mature suburbs, established suburbs, maturing New England towns, and country suburbs. Transportation cost metrics were analyzed in three different ways. MPO staff had not found one standard that illustrates the variation of transportation cost in the region. Metrics analyzed included household transportation expenditures, housing and transportation index, and value of travel time.

B. Harvey gave a demonstration of the online application. B. Harvey presented a diagram representing the equity flags per destination metric, as well as presenting a diagram representing the equity flags by demographic metrics. An equity flag indicates that the minority population, low-income population, or zero-vehicle households have access to fewer destinations per person. Finally, B. Harvey presented a diagram representing the number of equity flags by community type. Housing and transportation costs tend to be highest in the inner suburban ring, with poverty increasingly prevalent in suburban and rural areas where costs are higher.

B. Harvey stated that the study is not an ending and is a place for the MPO to build upon and better understand the inequities in the region and what can be done. MPO staff plans further conversations with stakeholders about the findings, as well as use the findings to select and analyze additional baseline equity indicator metrics. MPO staff plans to develop a process for updating metrics over time and for using destination access analyses to support MPO decision-making.

B. Harvey invited questions and comments.

Discussion

B. Kane suggested the study consider the full cost of car ownership in transportation cost calculations, as well as the costs associated with non-single-occupancy vehicle travel.

Lynsey Heffernan, MBTA, asked how travel costs were calculated and how travel times and travel costs of various public transportation services were considered. B. Harvey answered that the application was travel mode agnostic. Emily Domanico, MPO staff, added that the analysis focuses on the time it takes to make a trip. Because it was not possible to cleanly account for car related costs, MPO staff did not account for transit fare costs in the analysis.

E. Bourassa asked if the online application analyzed the ability for persons to get to destinations in a specified area, or if the analysis was for persons living in the area attempting to get to destinations outside of the specified area. B. Harvey answered the latter, that the analysis looks at where people are living and where they can access the transportation network.

Jen Rowe, City of Boston, asked if higher variability of public transit times were considered as part of the analysis and what were the decisions on which destinations to use drive and public transit versus walking and biking. J. Rowe further asked if it was possible to download these data in shapefile form to better understand the information. B. Harvey answered that reliability included impedances on the roadway network. MPO staff focused on most common types of transportation for the various destinations mentioned. E. Domanico stated that it is currently not possible to download a shapefile, but MPO staff is considering including a download option to allow more analysis of the generated maps.

Laura Gilmore, MBTA, asked if there were opportunities to continue this work and incorporate additional variables into the analysis. B. Harvey responded that in the MPO's Equity program, a significant portion of the budget is going toward continuing this work and expanding the number of metrics used to analyze destination access.

12. Presentation: Subregional Priority Roadway Study: Washington Street Corridor in Canton—Julie Dombroski, MPO staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Subregional Priority Roadway Study: Washington Street Corridor in Canton \(pdf\)](#)
2. [Subregional Priority Roadway Study: Washington Street Corridor in Canton \(html\)](#)

J. Dombroski introduced the Subregional Priority Roadway Study: Washington Street Corridor in Canton. The study area runs along Washington Street in the Town of Canton to Route 27 near the Cobb Corner Shopping Plaza. Before collecting data, MPO staff conducted a survey to gain an understanding of the use of the corridor. Key takeaways from the survey include that the majority of trips were made for shopping, dining, and recreation. Forty percent of respondents to the survey stated they walk in the corridor, with most respondents frequenting Cobb Corner or Canton Center. Significant concerns included high traffic volumes, trouble accessing side streets and driveways, high vehicle speeds, lack of convenient and safe crossings, and poor driver attention to those biking and walking.

J. Dombroski presented diagrams of congested and high-crash locations within the corridor and gave an overview of the types of crashes in the corridor. J. Dombroski further presented a video illustrating the travel conditions of the corridor.

J. Dombroski stated that MPO staff came up with the following improvement objectives to inform MPO staff's proposed improvements. MPO staff aimed to improve safety for all users of the corridor, maintain safe travel speeds in the corridor, improve and provide safe and comfortable accommodations for people who walk and bike, provide safe and convenient access to adjacent businesses and residences, enhance access management to reduce traffic conflicts, and to minimize delays and increase safety at intersections while maintaining efficient traffic flow in the corridor. J. Dombroski presented diagrams of proposed road improvements for the corridor.

MPO staff recommended short-term improvements to the Canton Center section, including restriping of the roads, crosswalk installations, and removing and redesigning on-street parking. MPO staff recommended long-term improvements, such as signalizing the High Street and Washington Street intersection, and improving the Cobb Corner section through access management at the shopping plaza by installing signals and consolidating entrances and exits. MPO staff further recommended the addition of turn lanes at the Route 27 and Washington Street intersection.

J. Dombroski invited questions and comments.

Discussion

Tom O'Rourke, Three Rivers Interlocal Council, asked what the reaction in Canton has been from Town representatives. J. Dombroski stated that MPO staff worked with a group of different stakeholders including representatives from the Town of Canton, the Canton Bike and Hike Committee, and Canton residents. The feedback received has been mostly positive, and most people would like to see changes to the corridor.

13. Members' Items

Daniel Amstutz, Town of Arlington, stated that he was leaving the Town of Arlington and thanked MPO board members and CTPS staff for their work with the MPO.

14. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee, City of Somerville (Tom Bent). 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)	Jen Rowe
Federal Highway Administration	Cassandra Ostrander
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Laura Gilmore
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane Amira Patterson
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
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 Burlington)	Melisa Tintocalis
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Hull)	Jennifer Constable
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Karl Allen	
Miranda Briseño	MassDOT
Laura Castelli	
Shaun Chu	
Paul Cobuzzi	
Joe Collins	Town of Norwood
Alison Felix	MAPC
James Fitzgerald	
JR Frey	Town of Hingham
Glenn Geiler	Brockton Area Transit
Joy Glynn	MWRTA
Shannon Greenwell	MBTA
Scott Hamwey	
Lynsey Heffernan	MBTA
Michelle Ho	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Ali Kleyman	MBTA
Josh Klingenstein	MBTA
Derek Krevat	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Michael Lambert	Brockton Area Transit
Josh Levin	
Ibrahim Lopez-Hernandez	North Suffolk Office of Resilience and Sustainability
Benjamin Muller	MassDOT
Sheila Page	Town of Lexington
Sydney Peterson	MBTA
Jeanette Rebecchi	
C Senior	MassDOT Highway District 5
Jon Seward	
Haydn Smith	
Jeff Sullivan	
Abby Swaine	US Environmental Protection Agency
Tyler Terrasi	MWRTA
Andrew Wang	MassDOT

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Seth Asante

Logan Casey

Paul Christner

Jonathan Church

Annette Demchur

Emily Domanico

Julie Dombroski

Ben Dowling

Hiral Gandhi

Betsy Harvey

Sandy Johnston

Stella Jordan

Heyne Kim

Ethan Lapointe

Rose McCarron

Marty Milkovits

Rebecca Morgan

Srilekha Murthy

Meghan O'Connor

Gina Perille

Sean Rourke

Judy Taylor

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A complaint form and additional information can be obtained by contacting the MPO or at http://www.bostonmpo.org/mpo_non_discrimination. To request this information in a different language or in an accessible format, please contact

Title VI Specialist

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857.702.3700 (voice)

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