

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

December 16, 2021, Meeting

10:00 AM–11:30 AM, 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 November 4, 2021
- Release the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2022–26 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment One for public review

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 8.

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 thanked the board members who participated in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) scenario planning focus group held two weeks ago.

T. Teich also encouraged MPO members to complete the scenario planning survey that is open through December 20.

T. Teich provided updates on staff recruitment. The new Manager of Outreach and Communications, Sean Rourke, will start on January 3, 2022. The new Public Outreach Coordinator, Stella Jordan, started December 13, 2021, and introduced herself to the board members. T. Teich also mentioned the other staffing recruitments that are ongoing for the Transportation Planner/Data Analyst and Transportation Planner/Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Manager positions, as well as the Manager of Projects and Applications and Transportation Planner/TIP Manager positions. T. Teich highlighted her email to the board members regarding M. Genova's departure in June

2022 for Atlanta, Georgia, and noted M. Genova's contributions to the TIP process over the last three years.

T. Teich provided updates on recent and upcoming outreach, including the Transit Working Group Coffee Chat about Human Services Transportation on January 11, 2022, at 4:00 PM, as well as the upcoming quarterly meeting of the Transit Working Group. There will also be a Transit Working Group forum on microtransit on January 18, 2022, at 12:30 PM, hosted in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the MBTA Advisory Board.

T. Teich noted that the MPO website now has a dedicated Freight Planning webpage and that the Community Connections funding program applications are due on December 17, 2021. T. Teich stated that staff held its final MAPC subregional outreach meeting for the season with the North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC) on Tuesday, December 14, 2021. Finally, T. Teich noted that the next MPO meeting will be January 20, 2022.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

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

L. Diggins stated that the Advisory Council met on December 8, 2021, and featured Colette Aufranc, Wellesley Select Board member, and Meghan Jop, Town Executive Director, who talked about perspectives on regional transit authorities. Bill Kuttner (MPO staff) also presented research on trucks at the Southhampton Street bottleneck in Boston.

7. Action Item: Approval of November 4, 2021, MPO Meeting Minutes—*Jonathan Church and Róisín Foley, MPO Staff*

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of November 4, 2021, was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) (Daniel Amstutz). The motion carried.

8. Action Item: Work Scope, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (MBTA) Disparate Impact/ Disproportionate Burden (DI/DB) Policy Update Support—Paul Christner, MPO Staff

Document posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Work Program: MBTA DI/DB Policy Update Support](#)

P. Christner presented the work program for the MBTA's DI/DB Policy Update Support. P. Christner stated that the budget for this work is \$83,000 and it will take six months to complete. The MBTA's DI/DB policy complies with the guidelines and requirements defined in the Federal Transit Administration's Title VI Circular 4702.1B, which requires transit providers to evaluate the equity of the impacts of proposed fare changes and major service changes. The updated policy will be based on new FTA guidance, input from peer transit agencies and the MBTA's experience implementing the current policies since 2017. The MBTA has asked staff to support the goal of developing an updated DI/DB policy, which is the objective of this work scope. Staff will identify strengths and weaknesses of the MBTA's current DI/DB policy, conduct interviews of peer transit agencies' DI/DB policies, and then support the update of the MBTA's DI/DB policy.

Discussion

L. Diggins encouraged P. Christner to use the Advisory Council to assist with this process and asked what MassDOT PL funds are. D. Mohler responded that transit planning (PL) funds that come to the region are divided between MAPC, the Boston MPO, and MassDOT, and this project is funded using MassDOT's share of the funds.

Sarah Lee (Massachusetts Port Authority) referred to a recent news article and asked how the DI/DB policy may prevent Boston's fare-free bus project from moving forward. D. Mohler responded that it is not about the policy, but that the obstacle is the federal requirement that project "pilots" are recognized for six months; the City's current proposal for fare-free transit is beyond what the Federal Transit Administration would consider a pilot.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for MBTA's DI/DB Policy Update Support, was made by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by MAPC (Eric Bourassa). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2022-26 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment One –*Matt Genova, MPO Staff*

Document posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [FFYs 2202-26 TIP Amendment One](#)

M. Genova highlighted the changes involved in Amendment One. For the highway element, two new projects are proposed to be added to the statewide highway program using Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) funds. These projects are the replacement of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) barriers on the Southeast Expressway in Boston, Milton, and Quincy at a cost of \$32,200,000 (Project #609119) and the construction of an office, salt sheds, and park-and-ride lot reconstruction along Route 9 in Framingham at a cost of \$3,450,000 (Project #611951). In addition to those two projects, the programming of \$24,767,912 in CRRSAA funds to cover operating costs for the Metropolitan Highway System is proposed in Amendment One.

For the transit element, Amendment One includes updates to the MBTA's federal capital programs in order to align those programs with the MBTA's anticipated obligations. The amendment includes the reprogramming of carryover funds that were unobligated in FFY 2021. Of particular interest to the MPO board, many of the MBTA-administered projects funded through the MPO's Community Connections Program were proposed for addition to the MBTA's capital program through this amendment. Those projects include carryover funds from FFY 2021 for the transit signal priority projects in Cambridge and Somerville and projects funded in FFY 2022, including wayfinding at Alewife Station, transit signal priority on Main Street in Everett, and new bike racks at a number of MBTA stations systemwide. Funding for these projects is being flexed from the highway element to the transit element. Additional new projects include the MPO-funded second phase of the Columbus Avenue bus lanes and the Blue Hill Avenue Corridor Project, which was recently awarded a \$15 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant. No new funding from the recently passed federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is included in this amendment.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked if the project to replace HOV barriers on the Southeast Expressway would have been placed onto the TIP previously using Regional Target funds. D. Mohler responded that because CRRSAA funds are available, MassDOT wants to fund this project with those monies, rather than ask the MPO to use limited Regional Target funding.

Daniel Amstutz (Town of Arlington) asked if the Southeast Expressway barriers themselves were being replaced or if the project also includes the machine that moves them. John Bechard (MassDOT) clarified that just the barriers were being replaced. D. Amstutz also asked what constitutes operating costs on the Metropolitan Highway System. D. Mohler responded that CRRSAA funds can be used for both capital and operating expenses and doing this will free up \$25 million of National Highway System (NHS) funds for capital construction of the new I-90/I-95 interchange in Newton and Weston.

Eric Bourassa (MAPC) asked how much MassDOT received in CRRSAA funding. D. Mohler said that MassDOT received \$151 million statewide and that, eventually, all of these funds will be programmed by MassDOT as additional projects are developed, including some in the Boston region.

Ken Miller (Federal Highway Administration) clarified that CRRSAA funds are separate from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The CRRSAA funds are federal funds for transportation and are eligible to use for operating costs that normal federal highway funding does not cover. K. Miller also mentioned that FHWA recently released three memoranda which included the federal apportionments for FFY 2022 and the announcement of the obligation authority limitation for FFY 2022. The BIL also includes two new formula-funded programs. Funds from the BIL are not yet eligible to fund projects as there is a Continuing Resolution in effect for the previous federal Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act transportation bill through February 18, 2022.

Vote

A motion to release FFYs 2022-26 TIP Amendment One for a 21-day public review period was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried.

10. Hazardous Cargoes on Core Area Roadways—*Bill Kuttner, MPO Staff Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar*

1. [Hazardous Cargoes on Core Area Roadways Memorandum](#)

B. Kuttner presented the various challenges of hazardous cargoes, including the elevated seriousness of hazardous cargo crashes, the prohibition of hazardous cargoes on important parts of the regional roadway system, and the difficulty of obtaining hazardous cargo traffic data. Hazardous cargoes are important commodities that have to move, but they are also challenging in that they have to move safely. The challenge

in developing or obtaining data is the need to view placards on vehicles that signify a vehicle is carrying hazardous cargo.

B. Kuttner presented a map of roadways that prohibit hazardous cargoes in the region, which includes all tunnels (the Sumner, Callahan, Ted Williams, Central Artery, and Prudential tunnels), as well as the Tobin Bridge because traffic must pass under City Square. Critical Urban Freight Corridors were identified partly to serve as bypass routes around the routes with hazardous cargo prohibitions. The map showed 29 specific locations with hazardous cargo vehicle counts. Not shown on the map were 13 minor roadways where few hazardous cargo vehicles were counted, four locations outside the map area, and the Charlestown Bridge where nighttime counts were taken.

B. Kuttner stated that hazardous cargo traffic is only significant in the vicinity of fuel terminals in Chelsea, East Boston, and Revere and that the vehicles spread out over the region to make deliveries. Daytime core area hazardous cargo volumes were collected between 6:00 AM and 6:00 PM and were depicted in the graphic as two-way volumes. B. Kuttner highlighted the numbers of vehicles on each roadway on the map. Vehicles were counted during three-hour increments throughout a day. Locations where the percent of hazardous cargo vehicles can be calculated include I-93 in Stoneham, where 352 hazardous cargo vehicles were counted (0.27 percent of total traffic), Route 99 in Charlestown with 156 (0.58 percent of total traffic), US 1 in Chelsea with 80 (0.12 percent), Rutherford Avenue in Charlestown with 68 (0.19 percent), and I-93/Southampton Street in South Boston with 53 (0.03 percent).

B. Kuttner presented the implications of the study: (1) hazardous cargo vehicles represent a small fraction of both trucks and total traffic, (2) showing this data in a travel demand model is difficult, and (3) ensuring safe hazardous cargo transportation is an important public safety issue.

Discussion

D. Amstutz asked where hazardous cargo is coming from and whether trucks are prohibited from the Mystic Valley Parkway system, Storrow Drive, or Memorial Drive because of low bridges. B. Kuttner answered that throughout much, but not all, of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) road system, all trucks including those carrying hazardous cargoes are prohibited. The Port of Boston is the best entry point for transporting hazardous cargo into the region where it can be distributed from the several waterfront terminals.

K. Miller clarified that the prohibition of hazardous cargoes in the tunnels is not a federal or state regulation, but a determination by the Boston Fire Commissioner. B. Kuttner agreed and corrected his earlier statement made during the presentation.

Derek Shooster asked two main questions: (1) Is there a link between hazardous cargo vehicle trips to lab science and lab tech facilities in the region? (2) Does the Department of Homeland Security have any bearing on hazardous vehicles going into and out of the tunnels. B. Kuttner said he was not aware of Homeland Security involvement as he has dealt directly with local fire marshals; however, biohazard placarded trucks can drive anywhere standard freight trucks are allowed, including tunnels.

L. Diggins asked if this work was done through a UPWP study. B. Kuttner responded that this study was completed under the MPO's freight program. L. Diggins then asked if there were data on accidents involving hazardous cargo vehicles. B. Kuttner responded there was not. Lastly, L. Diggins asked if it would be worth studying hazardous cargo routes through environmental justice (EJ) neighborhoods. B. Kuttner responded that these routes are not clear given that the location of facilities on major arterial corridors are typically in commercial areas.

Sandy Johnston (MPO staff) also offered his knowledge as the outgoing UPWP Manager and incoming freight program manager to assist in any future efforts and to speak with the Advisory Council.

11. Members Items

There were none.

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)	
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)	
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler John Bechard 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)	Erika Oliver Jerram
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)	
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Paul Cobuzzi	
Aleida Leza	Belmont resident
Derek Krevat	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Derek Shooster	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT District 3
Ben Muller	MassDOT District 6
Michael Garrity	MassDOT
Wesley Lickus	MassDOT
Michelle Ho	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Frank Tramontozzi	MassDOT
Joy Glynn	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Eric Johnson	City of Framingham
J.R. Frey	Town of Hingham
Jon Seward	Community Design Partnership
Cassandra Ostrander	FHWA
Timothy Paris, P.E.	MassDOT
Joe Collins	
Josh Klingenstein	MBTA
Colette Aufranc	Town of Wellesley

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Gina Perille

Annette Demchur

Stella Jordan

Jonathan Church

Róisín Foley

Matt Genova

Betsy Harvey

Matt Archer

Sandy Johnston

Heyne Kim

Anne McGahan

Paul Christner

Rebecca Morgan

Michelle Scott

William Kuttner

Mark Abbott

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