

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

April 14, 2022, Meeting

10:00 AM–12:15 PM, 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 March 3, 2022
- Approve the Work Scope, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023 National Transit Database
- Approve the Work Scope, MBTA 2023 Triennial Title VI Program
- Approve the Work Scope, MBTA Bus Delay Tool Ongoing Support
- Release Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2022–26 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Four for public comment
- Endorse FFYs 2022–26 TIP Adjustment One

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance beginning on page 12

2. Public Comments

Emily Mitchell (Select Board Chair, Town of Bedford) advocated for the Minuteman Bikeway Extension project to be given more time, as town voters rejected to authorize the Select Board to complete the necessary land acquisitions abutting the trail.

State Senator Jamie Eldridge (Marlborough, Acton, Boxborough, Hudson, Littleton, Maynard, Stow, and Southborough) advocated for TIP Project #610552 (Marlborough-Hudson Ramp Improvements and Related Work at I-495 to I-290).

Todd Baldwin (Town Engineer, Town of Saugus) advocated for TIP Project #611999 (Phase 2 Route 1 Northbound Widening).

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

S. Woelfel encouraged attendees to participate in the Innovation Conference, to be held both virtually and in person.

4. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

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

L. Diggins reported on the most recent meeting of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council), held on April 13, 2022. At this meeting, the Advisory Council members discussed the draft TIP with Matt Genova (MPO Staff) in attendance.

L. Diggins also announced his new role as the Chair of the Select Board for the Town of Arlington and discussed the steps he will take to mitigate any potential conflicts of interest.

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

T. Teich highlighted some recent events held by staff beginning with a discussion on the April 13, 2022, Inner Core Committee's Transportation meeting, during which Sandy Johnston (MPO Staff) presented on the MPO's freight program. In addition, there will be a Transit Working Group Coffee Chat to be held April 27, 2022, discussing school transit.

T. Teich then briefly summarized the topics for the day's discussion: three scopes of work, an amendment to the FFY 2022–26 TIP, and an adjustment to the FFY 2022–26 TIP. Notably, staff are requesting that the Board vote to release the amendment for public comment. There will be additional presentations from MassDOT and MBTA regarding the Commonwealth's Capital Investment Plan, as well as a discussion among board members on the TIP process.

7. Action Item: Approval of March 3, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes—*MPO Staff*

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 3, 2022, was made by Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Town of Arlington (Daniel Amstutz). The motion carried.

8. Action Item: Work Scope, MBTA SFY 2023 National Transit Database—Bradley Putnam, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [MBTA SFY 2023 National Transit Database](#)

B. Putnam stated that Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) has been assisting the MBTA with its submissions to the National Transit Database for a number of years; thus, this scope represents a continuation of that work. The purpose of this project is to collect and analyze data on transit ridership to assist the MBTA in making its annually required submission to the National Transit Database. Data collected includes passenger surveys on heavy and light rail, fair mix surveys at gated stations, and passenger counts on buses and shuttle buses (when substituting for rail service). The budget for the study is \$165,000.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked how the model used by the MBTA to track destination, origin, and transfer on its transit routes has developed, and what is considered efficient in terms of this model. B. Putnam replied that the Federal Transit Administration has guidelines for sampling requirements that all transit agencies are expected to follow, and the MBTA has been working to determine whether to replace use of the current model with the one in development.

Vote

A motion to approve the work scope for MBTA SFY 2023 National Transit Database was made by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: Work Scope, MBTA 2023 Triennial Title VI Program—Bradley Putnam, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [MBTA 2023 Triennial Title VI Program](#)

B. Putnam stated that CTPS has been assisting the MBTA with its Title VI compliance work for many years, and this scope represents a continuation of that work. The budget for the study is \$146,000, and the MBTA is funding this program. Every three years, the MBTA is required to submit a program to the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) detailing its efforts to comply with Title VI and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This project contains many components, such as an analysis of the MBTA's service, monitoring vehicle load data on time performance, distribution of transit amenities, maps of MBTA service areas showing where predominantly minority and low-income

populations reside, and compiling the service and fare equity analyses conducted by the MBTA over the last three years. Staff will compile these materials, as well as the MBTA's Public Participation Plan and its Language Access Plan, and submit to the FTA in March of 2023.

Discussion

Brian Kane (MBTA Advisory Board) asked whether this scope contains a signage audit, whereby the MBTA assesses the placement and inclusion of signage indicating to riders their rights and how to file a Title VI complaint. B. Putnam stated that part of the data collection process will examine signage and other amenities at stations. B. Kane replied that he is supportive but would like to see a broader signage audit take place in conjunction with this work scope.

Vote

A motion to approve the work scope for MBTA 2023 Triennial Title VI Program was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane). The motion carried.

10. Action Item: Work Scope, MBTA Bus Delay Tool Ongoing Support— *Jonathan Belcher, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [MBTA Bus Delay Tool Ongoing Support](#)

J. Belcher stated that this work scope represents a follow up to a previous MBTA project, where staff and the MBTA developed an interactive tool to display bus delay by route and/or community. This scope will allow the project team to make final changes to the database and the tool itself to make it readily available to others beyond MPO staff, such as municipal planners. This funding will also allow staff to add more information to the tool, whose data currently reflects ridership in fall 2019, pre-COVID-19. As ridership recovers from the pandemic and as the MBTA implements the Bus Network Redesign, staff aim to keep this tool relevant and up to date.

Discussion

L. Diggins expressed support for this project.

D. Amstutz (Town of Arlington) additionally expressed his support and asked whether data such as passenger hours delay and passengers per mile of delay would be represented in this tool as well. He also asked whether a user guide or "liner notes" would be available. J. Belcher responded that there would be some user training and help provided when the tool is released.

Erik Burkman (Director of Transit Priority, MBTA) voiced his support for this project, and emphasized the need for developing a tool tracking delays as part of transit priority business decisions.

Vote

A motion to approve the work scope for MBTA Bus Delay Tool Ongoing support was made by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane). The motion carried.

11. Action Item: Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2022-26 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Four—*Matt Genova, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [FFYs 2022–26 TIP Amendment Four](#)

M. Genova stated that TIP Amendment Four impacts the highway and transit portions of the TIP. This amendment proposed the addition of three new projects to the highway program: a superstructure replacement in Randolph, the replacement of highway lighting systems at the Interstate 93/Route 24 Interchange, and ramp improvements at Interstate-495/Interstate 290 in Marlborough. With the signing of the Appropriations Act in March 2022, which appropriated funds previously authorized within the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, an increased amount of funding was made available. These projects are being paid for with this new funding. The transit program of the TIP proposes an upgrade to the Cape Ann Transportation Authority's fare collection system. M. Genova requested that the Board vote to release this amendment for a 21-day comment period.

Discussion

There was none.

Vote

A motion to release the FFY 2022–26 TIP Amendment Four for public comment was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham) (Dennis Giombetti). The motion carried.

12. Action Item: FFY 2022-26 TIP Adjustment One—*Matt Genova, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [FFYs 2022–26 TIP Adjustment One](#)

M. Genova stated that this is the first adjustment proposed to the current TIP, and it proposes a change in funding source for Project #609066, the Multi-Use Trail Connection and Pedestrian Bridge in Newton and Weston. This project was originally funded by MassDOT in the Statewide Highway Program, but this adjustment proposes replacing about \$2.4 million of the initially allocated Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds with earmark funding originally intended for use by a nearby project, I-95 and Route 20 improvements in Waltham. Repurposing this earmarked funding will allow the funds to be fully used, and also decreases the total project cost. M. Genova requested that the board vote to endorse Adjustment One; M. Genova clarified that adjustments do not need to go through the amendment process with a public comment period, as they generally have less significant cost changes than an amendment.

Discussion

There was none.

Vote

A motion to endorse the FFY 2022–26 TIP Adjustment One for public comment was made by the City of Newton (D. Koses) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

13. Discussion: TIP Process Debrief

M. Genova opened the discussion with a recap of the March 31, 2022, meeting, where board members engaged in a lengthy discussion on this current year’s TIP programming. At this meeting, members approved the addition of a handful of projects in the first two years of the upcoming TIP, due to an unexpected funding surplus from the return of the final year of the MPO’s Green Line Extension funding, as well as new funds made available to the TIP through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

To that end, the MPO allocated \$34.5 million in funding in FFY 2023 to the MBTA’s Lynn station improvement project, and \$20 million in funding in FFY 2024 to the MBTA’s Forest Hills Station Improvements. However, these allocations were not at the full federal match amount, meaning that the MBTA would not be able to leverage matching funds in 2023. Ultimately, staff proposed to reallocate a portion of the funds allocated to the Forest Hills Station Improvement project to the Lynn Station project, which would allow the latter to be fully funded and move forward in 2023. Importantly, this proposal does not change the MPO’s overall funding commitment to MBTA projects in federal fiscal years 2023 and 2024; that amount remains at about \$54.5 billion. In addition, this proposal ensures that the Lynn Station Improvements project can proceed with full

funding. With board approval, staff will include it in the Draft FFY 2023–27 TIP, which will be presented at the next meeting of the MPO board.

Discussion

Jillian Linnell (MBTA) thanked the MPO staff and MassDOT staff for assisting the MBTA in thinking through these funding considerations.

B. Kane agreed that this proposal accurately reflects the sense of the MPO's decision at the previous meeting.

E. Bourassa said that he felt the review and decision-making process at the previous meeting was rushed, and with the number of projects that have had to be pushed back or redesigned, this year's TIP was unusual. The MPO Board felt rushed to make a decision at the last meeting, and some members saw projects for the first time and were then asked to decide. E. Bourassa stated that he is open to creating space to hear feedback from MPO members about the decision-making process and what can improve the process next year.

B. Kane agreed that the process felt rushed, but it is important to ensure that the MPO is going through the correct procedures for making decisions and allowing members enough time to review projects.

Peter Pelletier (South West Advisory Planning Committee) (Town of Medway) suggested that perhaps it would be good practice to allow some buffer time between receiving projects and having to make decisions.

D. Giombetti agreed, stating that having some time to review projects seems to be in line with how other, similar boards operate.

Darlene Wynne (North Shore Task Force) (City of Beverly) agreed, stating that these situations can be unpredictable and sometimes there is just not enough time, but ensuring that there are procedures in place for this kind of situation in the future would be helpful.

Ken Miller (Federal Highway Administration) stated that the federal government requires the TIP to be endorsed by September of 2023, at the beginning of the federal fiscal year, and the MPO chooses to complete the process much earlier to allow the state to complete its Capital Investment Plan in time for the state fiscal year to begin on July 1. However, there is some leeway for the MPO to decide whether to push back or slow down development of the TIP to allow for more decision-making time.

S. Woelfel stated that a discussion on moving back the TIP development timeline would have to be among all the state's MPOs.

Jim Fitzgerald (Boston Planning and Development Agency) stated that while he understands things move fast, an email or communication prior to the board meeting would be helpful at the very least.

L. Diggins expressed interest in the idea of adjusting the TIP development schedule.

E. Bourassa additionally expressed interest in this idea and wanted to see some time carved out for its discussion.

K. Miller stated that the planning targets and categories are a construct of the state, and therefore targets are flexible. S. Woelfel responded that the state has allocated state funding to support regional projects.

B. Kane suggested that this topic might fall in line with discussions of the MPO Operations Plan, spearheaded by the Administration and Finance (A&F) Committee.

E. Bourassa agreed. S. Woelfel stated that it would be important to parse out what considerations are within the region and what changes need to involve other MPOs as well.

E. Bourassa raised the issue that there is still a question of timing vis-a-vis the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and there is limited flexibility there. He stated that it is important to understand what factors are within the MPO's control and what factors are not. S. Woelfel agreed and stated that discussions on issues such as the distribution of the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) formula can concern others beyond the Boston Region MPO, and thus should be held with the appropriate stakeholders.

Thomas Bent (Inner Core Committee) (City of Somerville) stated that during his tenure on the MPO, projects had been introduced at the last minute, and such changes were not unprecedented.

S. Woelfel concluded the discussion by noting that B. Kane should continue this discussion with the A&F Committee, while MassDOT will consider this discussion as well.

14. FFYs 2022-26 TIP Development: State Capital Investment Plan (CIP) Update-Michelle Ho, MassDOT Staff, and Jillian Linnell, MBTA Staff

Documents posted to the meeting calendar:

1. [FFYs 2023-27 TIP: MassDOT Statewide Highway Programming \(DRAFT\)](#)
2. [MBTA Capital Program—FFY 2023-2027 TIP](#)

M. Ho began the presentation with a discussion on MassDOT's CIP process for the years 2023–27. The three key priorities guiding the CIP's development are reliability, modernization, and expansion (providing diverse transportation options). Reliability is defined as state of good repair investments that go into maintaining existing systems. Modernization aims to take state of good repair investments and make them more accessible and more modern. Finally, expansion focuses on providing diverse transportation alternatives and/or expanding the capacity of the overall transportation network.

M. Ho noted that there was an overall increase in federal funding to improve the condition of bridges, from \$1.1 billion to \$1.5 billion. Additional funds were also made available for projects that support climate change mitigation through carbon reduction and electric vehicle charging infrastructure. M. Ho additionally detailed MassDOT's efforts to engage the public during the development of the CIP, and provided an outline of the funding sources that make up the budget of the CIP and STIP.

J. Linnell provided an overview of the MBTA's proposed fiscal year 2023–27 TIP, beginning with a description of the CIP, a short-term financially constrained investment program that funds the planning, construction, and capital maintenance of all of the assets across the MBTA. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 and 2022 CIPs were one year capital plans, so the plan presented at this meeting is the first five-year plan published since the SFY 2020–24 plan in 2019.

The process to develop this plan begins with assessing cash flow for existing projects to understand available sources of income across the five-year window. The MBTA then conducts a call for projects, where sponsors across departments submit requests for funds. Such projects include new capital projects or additional funds for existing projects. Projects are then scored using a set of criteria that includes system preservation, mobility, cost effectiveness, environmental and health effects, policy support, social equity, economic impact, and safety. Once projects are scored, approved studies will then be sorted into distinct programs, and incorporated into the CIP based on their priority, agency capacity, and availability of funds. Finally, the proposed TIP is released for public comment.

J. Linnell then provided an overview of the various funding sources that support the MBTA's capital program: federal formula funding, competitive funding grants, state funding, MBTA sources (bonds, loans, budget transfers, and capital maintenance fund), as well as outside, reimbursable sources. Overall, this five-year program contains 552 capital projects, representing \$9.4 billion in programs to be executed by 32 MBTA departments. J. Linnell then provided a high-level overview of some of the projects included in this capital plan, such as vehicle procurement for the Red Line and Orange Line, the Quincy bus facility modernization project, and the South Coast Rail project. She concluded by stating that the TIP is expected to wrap up development in the next two months.

Discussion

Jay Monty (City of Everett) stated that while he appreciates that the MBTA continuously works to deliver necessary transit projects across the state, he is concerned that projects such as commuter rail electrification and regional rail were not included in this TIP. Communities like Chelsea and Everett are able and willing to make the necessary zoning and housing changes to welcome new jobs and infrastructure, but need the support of targeted investments in the commuter rail and bus system to be successful.

D. Amstutz asked which phase of the Green Line Extension Project (GLX) J. Linnell was referring to in this TIP. J. Linnell responded that it was GLX Phase 1.

Steven Olanoff (Three Rivers Interlocal Council) (Town of Westwood) stated that while he appreciates the work that the MBTA has put into this TIP, he is disappointed to see little advancement on regional rail, commuter rail, and bus electrification.

15. Members Items

B. Kane mentioned that the MBTA Board of Directors holds its meetings on Thursday mornings, and he asked that the MPO adhere to keeping meetings on the first and third Thursdays of the month as much as possible.

S. Olanoff asked for clarification on the Canton Interchange project by MassDOT, budgeted at \$6 million in the draft 2023–27 TIP. Marie Rose (MassDOT Highway) stated that this project would be done by MassDOT and offered to send more information along. S. Olanoff replied that this project has been put off for years and the interchange continues to be a dangerous one, and that \$6 million did not seem enough to complete the necessary repairs.

S. Woelfel asked for M. Rose to follow up with S. Olanoff offline.

16. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee/City of Somerville (Thomas 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
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	William Conroy
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Marie Rose
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Jillian Linnell
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
	Amira Patterson
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of	Austin
Acton)	Cyganiewicz
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
	Jennifer
South Shore Coalition (Town of Rockland)	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

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Senator Jamie Eldridge	
Joy Glynn	MetroWest Regional Transit Agency (MWRTA)
David Manugian	
Emily Mitchell	
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT District 3
Amy Fidalgo	
Aleida Leza	
Todd Baldwin	Town Engineer, Town of Saugus
Tyler Terrasi	MWRTA
Paul Cobuzzi	
Adi Nochur	MAPC
Derek Krevat	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Ali Kleyman	
Tiffany Garcia	MBTA
Jon Rockwell	TEC, Inc.
Jon Seward	
Jeanette Rebecchi	
Cassandra Ostrander	FHWA
Andrew Wang	MassDOT
Josh Klingenstein	MBTA
Catherine Bowen	
Chris Klem	MassDOT
Casey Auch	MassDOT
Todd Blake	Town of Medford
Derek Shooster	MassDOT
Terry Gleason	Bedford Friends of the Minuteman Bikeway
Eric Molinari	
Steven Olanoff	TRIC/Town of Westwood
Colette Aufranc	
Eric Burkman	MBTA
Stefanie Kizza	VHB
Rich Benevento	
Gregory Sobczynski	
Amy Ingles	Town of Medford
Bruno Fisher	
Benjamin Muller	MassDOT District 6
Angela Servello	MBTA

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Gina Perille

Annette Demchur

Matt Genova

Sandy Johnston

Anne McGahan

Michelle Scott

Srilekha Murthy

Matt Archer

Heyne Kim

Sean Rourke

Stella Jordan

Rebecca Moran

Emily Domanico

Paul Christner

Marty Milkovits

Bradley Putnam

Jonathan Belcher

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Title VI Specialist

Boston Region MPO
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116
civilrights@ctps.org

By Telephone:

857.702.3702 (voice)

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