

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

October 5, 2023, Meeting

10:00 AM–11:40 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

David Mohler, Chair, representing Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Acting 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 August 3, 2023
- Approve the work scope for Strategies for Environmental Outreach and Engagement
- Accept the nomination of the Town of Wrentham as a representative for the South West Advisory Planning Committee (SWAP) on the Boston Region MPO board

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 stated that two new full-time hires will be starting in October: the Manager of MPO Activities and a Transportation Policy Analyst. There is a new job posting for a Vision Zero Transportation Planner on the Multimodal Planning and Design team.

T. Teich stated that some MPO staff attended the Association of MPOs (AMPO) Annual Conference and MassDOT's Moving Together Conference. On October 3, staff hosted an Inner Core Committee Transportation Group meeting and a Transit Working Group meeting. Staff are attending subregional group meetings, hosted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and various in-person events.

Discussion

Brad Rawson, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), asked if there are plans to present the findings of the Vulnerable Road User safety assessment, which was shared at the Inner Core Committee, with other municipalities.

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 will meet on October 11, 2023, to discuss the Needs Assessment StoryMaps and updates to the Performance-Based Planning Dashboard.

7. Action Item: Approval of August 3, 2023, MPO Meeting Minutes Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. August 3, 2023, MPO Meeting Minutes ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 3, 2023, was made by the MAPC (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the City of Newton (Josh Ostroff). The motion carried.

8. Action Item: Work Scope: Strategies for Environmental Outreach and Engagement—*Judy Taylor, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. Work Scope: Strategies for Environmental Outreach and Engagement ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

J. Taylor stated that the work scope for Strategies for Environmental Outreach and Engagement is funded in the Federal Fiscal Year (FFYs) 2024 Unified Planning Work Program for \$25,086 and is scheduled to last 12 months after work commences. This study seeks to establish connections with environmental groups in the Boston region, understand how other MPOs and transportation agencies of similar geography and scale approach environmental engagement, and determine the most effective engagement strategies for the MPO to pursue to better understand and meaningfully contribute to environmental and climate action in the region.

In Task One, staff will identify peer agencies for research, conduct a literature review, conduct interviews, and document findings. In Task Two, staff will identify environmental stakeholders for outreach and conduct a survey and interviews with stakeholders to better understand their needs and begin building relationships. Staff will also host at least one public event, such as a forum or small focus group. In Task Three, staff will determine and present next steps to the MPO board through a memorandum.

Discussion

Jen Rowe, City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department [BTD]), commended staff for building proactive relationships with environmental stakeholders.

Vote

A motion to approve the work scope for Strategies for Environmental Outreach and Engagement was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (B. Rawson). The motion carried.

9. Transit Transformation Program: Project Scoring Criteria—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. Draft Transit Transformation Program Scorecard ([pdf](#))

E. Lapointe stated that the Transit Transformation Program was established in the *Destination 2050* Long-Range Transportation Plan. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project scoring criteria are divided into six categories, based on *Destination 2050*, and use a 100-point scale to assess projects with qualitative and quantitative analyses. The intent of TIP scoring is to contextualize projects relative to MPO goals and objectives and to aid in the development of TIP scenarios. The scores are just one method of evaluation, and a low score does not necessarily mean that the project should not be funded.

Scoring is divided into the following categories: transportation equity, safety, mobility and reliability, access and connectivity, resiliency, and clean air and healthy communities. Transportation equity accounts for 20 points, while all other criteria are 16 points each. The goal of the transportation equity category is to assess the impacts of projects on Transportation Equity populations and give higher scores to projects that are expected to provide greater benefits to these populations. This is implemented by using an equity multiplier, which uses local demographic factors to trigger a multiplier for key scoring areas, such as a project reducing transit passenger delays. Example scoring criteria, by category include the following:

- Safety
 - Addresses documented operational safety issue
 - Improves the safety of transit facility users
 - Supports dedicated right-of-way for transit
 - Improves responsiveness during emergency events
- Mobility and Reliability
 - Reduces transit passenger delay
 - Invests in new transit assets or expands service
 - Performs state-of-good repair work that extends the useful life of a facility
 - Improves conditions for transit operators and personnel
- Access and Connectivity
 - Serves sites of existing or future developments
 - Invests in bicycle and pedestrian access to transit facilities or routes
 - Improves ADA accessibility for transit facilities or routes
- Resiliency
 - Addresses risk of flooding
 - Reduces extreme heat effects
 - Implements needs identified through municipal planning
 - Demonstrates regional coordination or partnership on resilience improvements
 - Penalties for not addressing flooding or effects of extreme heat
- Clean Air and Healthy Communities
 - Reduces single-occupancy vehicle trips
 - Reduces greenhouse gas emissions
 - Improves air and water quality
 - Meaningful community engagement

Discussion

B. Rawson asked if the scoring criteria will be applied to all TIP projects or only those in the Transit Transformation program. E. Lapointe stated that the scorecard presented at this meeting is just for the Transit Transformation program. Programs such as Intersection Improvements will each have their own, specific scorecard.

L. Diggins asked for additional information on the use of equity multipliers. L. Diggins suggested modifying the language of “extreme heat” to “extreme weather” to be inclusive of winter weather events. Betsy Harvey, MPO staff, stated that the equity multiplier takes into consideration the percentage of six different equity populations that live within the project area.

J. Ostroff asked if the multiplier could include those who are predicted to benefit from the project. B. Harvey stated that the analysis uses census data, as it is difficult to identify data to predict who will utilize roadways.

John Alessi, Town of Arlington, suggested including additional emphasis on last-mile transit connection solutions.

Jim Fitzgerald, City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency [BDPA]), asked if project proponents would be able to combine Transit Transformation funding with other funding sources. E. Lapointe stated that staff are working to evaluate that as an option.

Kenneth Miller, Federal Highway Administration, asked if projects are scored on a scale. E. Lapointe confirmed. K. Miller suggested that specific scores sometimes imply a sense of false precision and that other considerations be made in addition to specific quantitative scores.

J. Rowe suggested reevaluating criteria to add a transportation equity multiplier to, such as including improving safety of transit users.

Ali Kleyman, MBTA, asked if impacts on ridership were considered in scoring criteria. E. Lapointe stated that ridership is incorporated into scenario development, but not scoring directly.

A. Kleyman asked if system redundancy is considered in the resilience category.

E. Bourassa spoke of the limitations of the project development timeline.

10. TIP Design Pilot: Update—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

E. Lapointe stated that the Project Design Pilot will be launching with the FFYs 2025–29 TIP. E. Lapointe stated that the MPO board voted to program \$4 million in FFY 2025.

E. Lapointe stated that the pilot is aimed at funding design for about four diverse projects, which may potentially be funded for construction later. Eligible projects must be initiated with MassDOT. The pilot funding covers as much as 80 percent of all design.

E. Lapointe stated that the application process will be identical to that of the other investment programs and that ideal projects will have a strong vision that is consistent with the MPO's goals and objectives.

Staff have been soliciting project ideas through direct outreach to municipalities and subregions. Ideas that have been discussed include multi-community rail trails,

pedestrian bridges, Complete Streets projects, corridor safety improvements, and transit-supportive facilities.

Discussion

E. Bourassa asked if projects programmed for design on the TIP must be programmed for construction funds by a certain year. E. Lapointe stated that guidance so far has suggested including a timeline for the project's implementation, but it is not required. Derek Krevat, MassDOT, stated that if a project is anticipated to be constructed within the five-year scope of the TIP, that it is expected to be programmed, but it is not required if construction is out of this timeframe. John Bechard, MassDOT, reviewed the process for a project to be initiated with MassDOT.

K. Miller stated that an ideal project would address a safety issue identified in a corridor or intersection study in a municipality that does not have the capacity to bring a project through the design phase on its own.

A. Kleyman noted that TIP projects may be delayed due to readiness issues and asked if there has ever been an instance where a project was delayed because a municipality was not able to fund it through design. J. Bechard stated that design has been delayed in the past due to the authorization of funds in Town Meetings or acquisition of right-of-way.

11. Action Item: MPO Elections Update: Nominees—*Eric Bourassa, MAPC*

E. Bourassa stated that four municipal seats are up for election this year: SWAP, North Shore Planning Council (North Shore), an At-Large City, and an At-Large Town. One nomination was received for the City of Everett for the At-Large City seat, one for the Town of Brookline for the At-Large Town seat, one for the City of Beverly for the North Shore. E. Bourassa stated that nominations for those three seats are unopposed and were received before the nomination deadline. E. Bourassa stated that a nomination was received from the Town of Wrentham for the SWAP seat after the deadline. Wrentham had expressed interest in running for the seat and took time to orchestrate internal approvals within the town and the subregion. No nominations were received for the SWAP seat before the deadline. E. Bourassa stated that electronic ballots will be sent out the week of October 9 and results will be announced at the Fall Council meeting on October 25.

E. Bourassa requested that the board vote to approve the Town of Wrentham's nomination for the SWAP seat.

Vote

A motion to approve the nomination for the Town of Wrentham to run as a representative for SWAP was made by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by the Town of Arlington (J. Alessi). The motion carried.

12. Members' Items

B. Rawson thanked communities that will continue serving on the board and welcomed new communities joining the board.

13. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa) seconded by the City of Boston (BTD) (J. Rowe). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Everett)	Eric Molinari
At-Large City (City of Newton)	Josh Ostroff
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	John Alessi
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)	Robert King
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jen Rowe
Federal Highway Administration	Kenneth Miller Joshua Barber
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Brad Rawson
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler John Bechard
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Ali Kleyman
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane Amira Patterson
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	Kristen Guichard
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Erin Schaeffer
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Hull)	
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
Nicolas Allmond	
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT District 3
Mirada Briseño	MassDOT
Tyler Distefano	Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Council
Daniela Espinosa	BPDA
Zhuofei Gao	
Joy Glynn	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)
Sandy Johnston	MBTA
Josh Klingenstein	MBTA
Raissah Kouame	MassDOT
Derek Krevat	MassDOT
Barbara Lachance	MassDOT District 5
Jackie LaFlam	Cape Ann Transportation Authority
Owen MacDonald	Town of Weymouth
Benjamin Muller	MassDOT District 6
Kumara Nagabhus Chinta	
Jim Nee	MWRTA
Sheila Page	Town of Lexington
Deborah Peterson	
Julia Wallerce	MAPC
Jon Rockwell	TEC, Inc.
Derek Shooster	MassDOT
Tyler Terrasi	MWRTA
Andrew Wang	MassDOT
Lijiao Want	
Sadie Woodward	

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Logan Casey

Annette Demchur

Betsy Harvey

Stella Jordan

Marnie Kopec

Ethan Lapointe

Erin Maguire

Marty Milkovits

Rebecca Morgan

Gina Perille

Sarah Philbrick

Sean Rourke

Sam Taylor

Judy Taylor

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