



## Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

September 13, 2023, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–4:10 PM, Zoom

Lenard Diggins, Chair, representing the MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)

### Meeting Agenda

#### 1. Introductions

L. Diggins called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 5).

#### 2. Transit Transformation Workshop—*Ethan Lapointe and Logan Casey, MPO Staff*

E. Lapointe stated that the Transit Transformation investment program was established in the *Destination 2050* Long-Range Transportation Plan, expanding the Transit Modernization program to incorporate multimodal access and other goals. There is \$2.5 million available for programming in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025 and \$6.5 million per year between FFYs 2026 and 2028. Project scales are expected to be from \$250,000 to \$4 million and the set-aside funding could fill surpluses for projects costing more than \$6.5 million. The program will invest in projects that

- enhance amenities for transit customers;
- improve accessibility;
- expand station capacity, accessibility, and create multimodal connections;
- improve state of good repair;
- support limited fleet modernization and conversion; and
- invest in climate resilience and support electrification.

Under the Transit Modernization program, the MPO contributed funding to the Columbus Avenue Phase II, Jackson Square Accessibility Improvements, Lynn Station Improvements Phase II, Reading Station and Wilbur Interlocking, and Lynn–Broad Street Corridor Transit Signal Priority projects.

Potential regional transit authority projects include

- bus transit hub improvements;
- operational facility expansion and repair;
- Intelligent Transportation Systems; and
- low-/no-emission vehicle transition

Criteria for the Transit Transformation program is guided by *Destination 2050* and contains criteria in categories including equity, safety, mobility and reliability, access and connectivity, resilience, and clean air and healthy communities.

### **Discussion**

Ana Cristina Fragoso, Boston Society of Civil Engineers, asked what the phrase “capacity improvements” is referencing. E. Lapointe stated that the criteria were written in reference to improving multimodal connections, with the potential for other improvements such as way-finding and station platform upgrades.

Dan Jaffe, Charlestown resident, asked if funding in the program could be used to fund improvements to connections between transit stations. E. Lapointe stated that a project such as that could be funded under Transit Transformation or Complete Streets.

L. Casey introduced an interactive virtual activity on the MentiMeter platform to direct further conversations. L. Casey asked, “What aspects of projects should Transit Transformation prioritize?” Attendees submitted responses electronically.

Sheila Page, Town of Lexington, asked for an example of what a transit equity improvement might look like. E. Lapointe stated that this could include projects such as the Fairmount line, which was historically underserved by transit.

Andy Reker, City of Cambridge, stated that it is difficult to prioritize project types, as there are various challenges in the transit system.

L. Casey asked, “What elements of *Destination 2050*’s goals would you like to see prioritized?”

A. C. Fragoso stated that state-of-good-repair improvements should be coupled with resilience improvements. Judy Taylor, MPO Staff, stated that *Destination 2050* presents resilience as a separate goal to give it additional emphasis to encourage more, stronger resilience projects to come through the MPO.

John McQueen, WalkMassachusetts, spoke of the large costs associated with achieving a transformed transit system.

### **3. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Scoring Criteria Update— *Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff***

E. Lapointe stated that scoring criteria are being rewritten to align with goals outlined in *Destination 2050*. A resilience criteria workshop was held on August 31. The TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee will be meeting to review project selection criteria and review project scopes.

#### ***Discussion***

L. Diggins asked how overall project scoring criteria differs from Transit Transformation criteria. E. Lapointe stated that criteria are specific to each investment program.

### **4. Nominations—*Ana Cristina Fragoso—Nomination Committee Chair***

A. C. Fragoso stated that no nominations were received prior to this meeting.

A. C. Fragoso stated that she would like to nominate L. Diggins and Franny Osman, Acton resident, for chair and vice-chair, respectively.

#### ***Discussion***

A. C. Fragoso stated that she heard a desire to begin transitioning away from Zoom from members. L. Diggins stated that the ability to participate virtually would be preserved, and that he could work with staff to determine what is feasible for hybrid or in-person meeting options.

F. Osman stated that if she continued as vice-chair, she would like to address membership concerns and spoke of the requirements to officially be considered a member.

### **5. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

#### ***Discussion***

F. Osman discussed her affiliated membership and requested that minutes be amended to remove her affiliation.

A motion to approve the minutes of the following meetings was made by F. Osman and seconded by WalkMassachusetts (J. McQueen).

- June 14, 2023
- May 10, 2023
- October 13, 2021
- July 8, 2020
- June 10, 2020
- May 27, 2020
- May 13, 2020

The minutes were approved.

## **6. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements**

There was none.

## **7. Chair's Report—*Lenard Diggins, Chair***

L. Diggins stated that the work plans and research that are produced by the MPO contain a significant amount of information and encouraged members to engage with the material when feasible.

L. Diggins summarized key topics from the July 20, 2023, MPO meeting. He stated that the MPO Board approved an Operations Plan on July 20 and spoke of opportunities to adjust the role of the Advisory Council. L. Diggins stated that the *Destination 2050* Long-Range Transportation Plan was endorsed and that further discussions will be held on the content. L. Diggins shared that the Flexible Fixed Route Bus Service work scope was presented. At the meeting, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation presented its Massachusetts Vehicle Census.

L. Diggins stated that the Congestion Management Process Committee met on August 17 to discuss and provide feedback on the Learning from Roadway-Pricing Experiences study.

The August 17, MPO meeting had two intersection improvement studies in Wellesley and Stowe, which both featured safety improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists.

L. Diggins stated that preliminary work is being undertaken to address the MPO's Memorandum of Understanding.

## **8. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by WalkMassachusetts (J. McQueen) and seconded by F. Osman. The motion carried.

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## Attendees

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<b>Member Municipalities</b>	<b>Representatives and Alternates</b>
Cambridge	Andy Reker
Weymouth	Owen MacDonald

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<b>Citizen Advocacy Groups</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
Boston Society of Architects	Schuyler Larrabee
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	Ana Cristina Fragoso
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
National Rural Transit Assistance Program	Scott Zadakis
WalkMassachusetts	John McQueen
Resident (Acton)	Franny Osman

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<b>Agencies (Non-Voting)</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
MBTA	Sandy Johnston
MetroWest Regional Transit Authority	Tyler Terrasi

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<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Dan Jaffe	Charlestown resident
Kat Torres	Riders' Transportation Access Group
Sheila Page	Lexington

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<b>MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff</b>
Logan Casey
Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan
Stella Jordan
Ethan Lapointe
Erin Maguire
Srilekha Murthy
Sarah Philbrick
Judy Taylor
Sam Taylor

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**Title VI Specialist**

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**By Telephone:**

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