



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

December 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. Chair's Report—*Lenard Diggins, Chair*

L. Diggins noted that the memorandum [A Method to Evaluate Flexible Bus Service Opportunities](#) prepared by Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff is available on the Boston Region MPO website and encouraged the council to review it.

L. Diggins provided an update on the development of the MPO's Travel Demand Model, TDM23, and his recent discussion with the MPO staff's Director of Modeling and Analytics.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2023, meeting was made by WalkMassachusetts (John McQueen) and seconded by Acton resident (Franny Osman). The minutes were approved.

4. Performance-Based Planning and Programming (PBPP): Performance Dashboard Follow Up—*Sam Taylor, MPO Staff*

S. Taylor provided an update on the overhaul of the MPO's performance dashboard and sought feedback and guidance on how the dashboard could be useful for the Advisory Council, the MPO Board, other stakeholders, and the region at large.

S. Taylor gave an overview of the PBPP program and explained how the MPO uses a performance-based planning approach to assess how its spending decisions support progress toward the vision and goals of *Destination 2050*.

S. Taylor stated that the new dashboard will organize the performance metrics by the six federally required performance target areas and will be built for more regular maintenance.

S. Taylor initiated a discussion about the PBPP. The discussion revolved around four questions:

- How important are certain features, such as interactive charts, to your understanding of the metrics shown?
- What would be most helpful to the Advisory Council and other MPO stakeholders?
- There was previous discussion about presenting the linkages to MPO actions and other events within or outside our control alongside performance and targets. How could you envision or recommend displaying such info?
- Are there other ways you could see a dashboard being a resource that is more creative than a set of charts and figures that reports on performance?

Discussion

L. Diggins asked if the dashboard would be regularly updated. S. Taylor responded that the MPO is seeking to construct a dashboard that could be easily refreshed when new metrics and data are released.

L. Diggins noted that it would be helpful if the new dashboard displayed completed projects with the ability to be overlaid on maps to visualize the association and impact of projects. J. McQueen discussed the importance of displaying completed projects and milestones reached with additional information with project details, such as meeting project timeline and budget goals. L. Diggins stated that the dashboard should go beyond the federal requirements.

F. Osman proposed the idea of adding qualitative reports such as videos of people's experiences before and after projects are completed. F. Osman stated that qualitative reports could add a humanizing effect to the dashboard.

J. McQueen discussed that there is a lack of effort spent on evaluating project performance such as insight into details on budget, effectiveness, and reaching project goals. J. McQueen stated the importance of conducting post evaluation or ongoing evaluation for projects.

S. Taylor stated that the Performance Dashboard is a tool used to display region-wide and system-wide performance in areas such as safety, congestion, or transit access. S. Taylor discussed that the dashboard would provide a snapshot of how the region is reaching goals related to broader topics and issues as opposed to individual projects.

J. McQueen stated that displaying project details is significant to the overall understanding of how the region is addressing these broader topics such as transit access or congestion.

L. Diggins asked S. Taylor what he thinks of the data that exists on the current dashboard to help facilitate feedback from the Advisory Council. S. Taylor responded that while the current metrics are useful, creating the dashboard was a large undertaking and is not easy to update the data on a regular basis.

L. Diggins asked if adding metrics such as equity would be possible to the dashboard. S. Taylor responded that MPO Staff is also currently developing an Equity Dashboard.

5. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Study Ideas—*Srilekha Murthy, MPO Staff*

S. Murthy provided a timeline of the UPWP development process and solicited possible study ideas from the meeting participants.

Discussion

J. McQueen discussed revisiting previously submitted study ideas that may still be relevant, especially concerning resiliency and transit. J. McQueen stated that resiliency is a priority for project ideas. He noted that as the public becomes more dependent on transit, it will be significant to study how to build a system that serves the needs of the public.

J. McQueen asked the possibility of testing the effectiveness and acceptance of Electric Multiple Units, specifically with the Framingham Line and Grand Junction.

L. Diggins suggested that looking into previous UPWP universes to examine what study ideas may still be relevant that could be useful.

F. Osman discussed exploring studies of certain corridors that cross regions, specifically the need for North-South bus routes.

F. Osman suggested conducting a study on airport transit connectivity to the Route 2 corridor.

J. McQueen agreed that transit connectivity is missing outside of the inner core. J. McQueen stated that to meet transit goals such as reducing personal vehicle miles, there must be assets and abilities that connect the urban center to further towns and cities outside of the Boston region.

L. Diggins discussed a study exploring the significance of car-share services across the region to equity and climate goals.

L. Diggins and J. McQueen discussed exploring the impacts of electric vehicles (EV) on roadways, and cost and technological considerations associated with increased EV use. L. Diggins also discussed follow-up research on past MPO projects including the Future of the Curb, flexible bus routes, and roadway pricing studies.

F. Osman discussed a study idea that compares the use of different types of vehicles for paratransit services.

6. Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Needs Assessment—*Lenard Diggins, Chair*

L. Diggins opened the discussion about the *Destination 2050* [LRTP Needs Assessment StoryMaps](#), available on the MPO website.

L. Diggins began with a discussion of the Safety goal and StoryMap. He noted his interest in exploring crash factors and previous MPO research on this topic. He then discussed the Mobility and Reliability goal and StoryMap, and stated that the goal does not sufficiently address the energy and accessibility concerns for transit infrastructure.

J. McQueen raised concerns about the usage, ridership, and functionality of existing circumferential transit.

J. McQueen discussed opportunities to use vehicles that may be considered unconventional in supplementing the transit system to increase frequency, capacity, and flexibility.

L. Diggins discussed the MBTA and Central Transportation Planning Staff study exploring sources of community value and noted the importance of studying bus network redesign.

J. McQueen stated that resilience has been under-emphasized and there is a need to understand how transit systems will be affected by climate change and to develop mitigation strategies.

7. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

F. Osman shared that there will be a Regional Transit Authority Advocacy Coalition round table discussing the upcoming legislation about RTA Advancement Bill.

8. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Acton resident (Franny Osman) and seconded by the Town of Weymouth (Owen MacDonald). The motion carried.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
Weymouth	Owen MacDonald

Citizen Advocacy Groups	Attendees
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
MoveMassachusetts	Jon Seward
WalkMassachusetts	John McQueen
Acton Resident	Franny Osman

Agencies (Non-Voting)	Attendees
MWRTA	Tyler Terrasi

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Baltimore Metropolitan Council	Zach Kaufman

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Logan Casey
Annette Demchur
Betsy Harvey
Dave Hong
Jia Huang
Stella Jordan
Ethan Lapointe
Erin Maguire
Srilekha Murthy
Sarah Philbrick
Sean Rourke
Sam Taylor

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