MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 13, 2018
TO: Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden Working Group
FROM: Betsy Harvey, Transportation Equity Program Manager
RE: Summary of Second Working Group Meeting

This memo summarizes the second meeting of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden (DI/DB) Policy working group.

Date: June 5, 2018
Location: Egan Research Center, Room 306, 120 Forsyth Street, Boston, MA 02115
Time: 5:30 PM–7:30 PM

The following stakeholders were in attendance:

- Amy Laura Cahn, Conservation Law Foundation
- Len Diggins, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Rider Oversight Committee
- Marc Ebuña, Transit Matters
- Maria Foster, TRIPPS
- Louisa Gag, LivableStreets
- Tom Kadzis, Boston Transportation Department (Boston Region MPO member representative)
- Sheryl Leary, Hessco Elder Services
- Mela Miles, Four Corners Action Coalition
- Jay Monty, City of Everett (Boston Region MPO member representative)
- Bryan Pounds, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Boston Region MPO member representative)
- Tegin Teich, Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Boston Region MPO member representative)

The following MPO staff members were in attendance:

- Matt Archer, MPO intern
- Annette Demchur, Director of Policy and Planning
• Róisín Foley, Administrative and Communications Assistant
• Betsy Harvey, Transportation Equity Program Manager
• Ali Kleyman, Manager of Certification Activities
• Anne McGahan, Long-Range Transportation Plan Program Manager
• Scott Peterson, Director of Technical Services
• Jen Rowe, Public Participation Program Manager

The following members of the public were in attendance:

• Chris Clemens
• Tracy Lithcut, Boston Transportation Department
• Travis Pollack, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
• Sheri Warrington, State Senator Brendan Crighton’s office

1 MEETING OVERVIEW
The meeting began with introductions. B. Harvey then reviewed the goals of the meeting, the dates and times of the subsequent working group meeting on July 17, 2018, and the public workshop on June 26, 2018, and gave a recap of the previous working group meeting.

2 WORKING GROUP DISCUSSION
Stakeholders were divided into three groups. MPO staff asked stakeholders to discuss transportation challenges and impacts that they see in the region. For each group, an MPO staff member recorded stakeholder feedback on a flipchart. After 30 minutes, a stakeholder from each group reported the challenges and impacts identified by their group. J. Rowe recorded each comment on a running list continued from the previous meeting. S. Peterson sorted each idea into one of the following three categories, which B. Harvey recorded on a flipchart:

1) Impacts that can be considered for measurement in the next Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Destination 2040
2) Impacts that could be considered for measurement in the subsequent LRTP, which will be developed in five years, pending more research
3) Impacts for which the time frame for evaluation in the LRTP is unknown and would require significant research

All of the issues identified by stakeholders are included at the end of this memo in Table 1. The following themes were discussed:

• Access to several transportation options
• Public transit and paratransit reliability
• Access to goods and services, including shopping facilities and medical facilities
• Costs of travel, by mode
• Changes in mode shares
• Syncing schedules of different transit modes and different transit agencies (connectivity)
• Health benefits
• Transportation cost as a function of total household income
• The relationship between household income and access to transportation options
• The effects of automated vehicles and ridesharing
• The effects of displacement on transportation costs (as a function of total household income)
• Effects of climate change and resiliency

The discussion among stakeholders was very robust and MPO staff agreed to finish categorizing the issues over the next few weeks following the meeting. The second planned activity, which was to prioritize the issues, was postponed. MPO staff and stakeholders agreed that stakeholders would prioritize the issues via a survey prior to the third stakeholder working group meeting.

3 PRESENTATION SUMMARY

B. Harvey then gave a presentation on data and analytical considerations for selecting impacts to assess for disparate impacts and disproportionate burdens potentially caused by the program of projects in the LRTP. These projects are major infrastructure projects—which increase capacity in the transportation system and/or cost at least $20 million—that would be funded by the MPO and/or other transportation agencies in the region, such as the MBTA and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), or municipalities. Key points that were discussed included the following:

• The MPO develops metrics to assess the LRTP program of projects for disparate impacts and disproportionate burdens.

• A metric is a standardized, measurable method for evaluating impacts. Whether a metric can be developed to assess transportation impacts depends on the data and methodological tools that are available. Data must be used to measure the impacts of a group of projects, as opposed to individual projects, and analytical tools must be available for projecting the impacts of projects over a 20-year period.

• The MPO uses a regional travel demand model to project the impacts of the LRTP program of projects in a future year, which for Destination 2040
would be 2040. The impacts on the region-wide minority or low-income population (protected population) are compared to the impacts on the region-wide non-minority or non-low-income population (comparison population). These data are used to evaluate the program of projects for disparate impacts and disproportionate burdens.

- The MPO runs two model scenarios to assess the impacts of the LRTP program of projects on the region-wide protected and comparison populations. The no-build scenario is a future scenario—projecting to 2040 for the next LRTP, Destination 2040—that assumes projected growth in population and employment and assumes that the LRTP program of projects is not built. The build scenario is another future scenario—also projecting to 2040—that assumes projected growth in population and employment and assumes that the LRTP program of projects is built. The model outputs are used to evaluate disparate impacts and disproportionate burdens for each metric.

- To assess metrics for disparate impacts and disproportionate burdens, the percentage change is calculated for no-build and build scenarios for the protected population and for the comparison population. The percentage change for the protected population is then divided by the percentage change for the comparison population. The result is compared to the DI/DB threshold to determine if there is a disparate impact or disproportionate burden.

4 STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

After the presentation stakeholders had the opportunity to ask questions.

A.L. Cahn asked whether it is acceptable to set a threshold that allows a disparity and, if so, why is it acceptable to have a disparity. B. Harvey answered that the threshold will set the very outer bounds of what disparity is acceptable to the MPO. If it is set too low, it may be difficult for the MPO to meet its other obligations and goals, such as those relating to safety or system preservation. A.L. Cahn also asked if the DI/DB policy will guard against minority or low-income populations receiving disproportionately more of a benefit than nonminority or non-low-income populations. B. Harvey responded no.

B. Pounds asked whether it matters, in the context of the DI/DB policy, if the minority or low-income populations ultimately would be affected the same as nonminority or non-low-income populations if the LRTP program of projects is built. B. Harvey replied that the DI/DB policy only considers the impact of building the program of projects relative to not building the program of projects. A. Demchur said that the policy looks at the effects of the program of projects
that the MPO is currently programming, not the existing conditions. The MPO
determines whether the impacts of the program of projects itself are potentially
discriminatory against minority or low-income populations.

L. Diggins said that when the MPO releases the draft LRTP program of projects
there may be a perception from the public that no changes are possible and that
members of the public cannot affect what actually gets programmed. He asked
whether the MPO will use the DI/DB analysis to help select the program of
projects in the LRTP. A. Demchur replied that the DI/DB analysis will examine
the impacts of the program of projects after they are selected. L. Diggins asked
how the projects in the LRTP are selected. A. Demchur answered that project
selection is based on criteria derived from the MPO’s goals and objectives.

B. Pounds asked whether the MPO might be able to use the DI/DB analysis as
an evaluation factor for selecting projects. L. Diggins said it would be good to
know what the results of the DI/DB analysis would have been if other projects
from the LRTP Universe of Projects had been selected for inclusion in the
program of projects. He said more people from the public might be engaged if the
public could see the DI/DB results for several different build scenarios. B. Pounds
said that MassDOT is trying to increase stakeholder engagement so that when
MassDOT selects projects they are getting public input. He added that MassDOT
does receive public feedback after projects are selected and that MassDOT is
trying to include public participation as a factor in project selection criteria.
A. McGahan noted that transportation equity is part of the MPO’s project
selection criteria because it is one of the MPO’s goals. A. Demchur said that if
disparities are found after the DI/DB policy is applied to the LRTP program of
projects, the MPO will address them going forward.

M. Miles said that the MPO has to engage minority and low-income communities
to find out their needs, so that the analysis of impacts for disparate impacts and
disproportionate burdens addresses those needs. She also said that as
transportation agencies develop projects they need to engage more with minority
and low-income communities from the start of the process so that projects reflect
the needs of those communities. E. Harvey responded that projects in the LRTP
program of projects are still at the conceptual stage. She also said that the DI/DB
policy will be applied to the final program of projects in the upcoming LRTP,
Destination 2040, but that the MPO will consider other approaches in the future.

A. McGahan said that as part of developing the LRTP, the MPO puts together a
Universe of Projects—the list that the program of projects is chosen from—that is
released for public review. Because the LRTP is a 20-year plan, some projects
still have not gone through public review. The LRTP is updated every four years,
which allows the MPO to review each project in light of the latest planning assumptions.

M. Miles said that the MPO should try to engage the public in a way that is less technical and makes the public excited to participate in the outreach for the LRTP.

5 PUBLIC COMMENT

T. Lithcut commented that transportation, and especially the topic of disparate impact, can be very confusing to people who are not involved in transportation planning. He recommended that MPO staff simplify the language used to talk about the DI/DB policy, especially at the upcoming public workshop on June 26. He also stated that MPO staff should be prepared to hear tough questions at the public workshop. He recommended that the MPO meet with the Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association and other neighborhood organizations prior to the public workshop to discuss what will be presented at the public workshop and to help MPO staff be prepared for feedback they may hear there.
Table 1
Transportation Challenges or Impacts Identified by Stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Land Use-Transportation Relationship</th>
<th>Affordability</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Mobility</th>
<th>New Transportation Technologies</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Integration of Transit</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to goods and services</td>
<td>Housing-transit connections</td>
<td>Places where there are not options—too expensive</td>
<td>Impact of rising transportation costs on people with lack of transportation choices: tradeoffs, such as transportation vs. food or medical expenses</td>
<td>Exponential rise of zero-emission vehicles</td>
<td>Health impacts of non-electric modes</td>
<td>Culture of cars; cars are responsible for 40% of emissions</td>
<td>Lack of option to not have a car</td>
<td>Ride-sharing</td>
<td>Partnership with transportation network companies (TNCs) and private companies to improve accessibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>Integration of transit services</td>
<td>Impact on entire system—essential to everything</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to jobs and medical appointments</td>
<td>Land cost near different types of transportation—transit vs. highway</td>
<td>Places where there are not options—too expensive</td>
<td>Impact of rising transportation costs on people with lack of transportation choices: tradeoffs, such as transportation vs. food or medical expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Options in different modes for different needs</td>
<td>Land use reinforces transit-oriented development</td>
<td>Cost of living and transportation</td>
<td>Health impacts of non-electric modes</td>
<td>Safe design of bicycle facilities</td>
<td>Culture of cars; cars are responsible for 40% of emissions</td>
<td>Lack of option to not have a car</td>
<td>Automated vehicles</td>
<td>Migrations in and out of cities</td>
<td>Lack of support for transportation in legislature</td>
<td>Integration of schedules between providers</td>
<td>Reliability of public transit and paratransit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transit = freedom of travel and access to recreation and services</td>
<td>Prioritizing parking over other modes</td>
<td>Affordability: Its impact on transportation access</td>
<td>Impact of congestion on transit</td>
<td>Modernization of transit</td>
<td>Impact of congestion on transit</td>
<td>Mobility and lack of connections between towns</td>
<td>Disruptive technologies</td>
<td>Urban development, as urban sprawl continues</td>
<td>Implementation does not always reflect what the public wants or needs</td>
<td>Integration of schedules between providers</td>
<td>Reliability of public transit and paratransit</td>
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<td>Reverse commuting</td>
<td>Lack of transit in growth areas</td>
<td>Lack of money relative to rising costs</td>
<td>Reduce travel in single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs)</td>
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<td>Not all qualify for paratransit who need it</td>
<td>Legibility and person-focused wayfinding</td>
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<td>Accessing recreation via transit</td>
<td>Creation of density</td>
<td>Relative affordability of transit</td>
<td>Lack of transit access in some areas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Climate change impacts and resiliency</td>
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<td>Barriers to access transportation for people with mobility issues</td>
<td>Land development patterns</td>
<td>Bike-share memberships for low-income people</td>
<td>Communities underserved by transit (such as seniors, people with disabilities, people with low incomes, and people of color) and new economic areas</td>
<td>Rising vehicle-miles traveled (from freight and SOVs)</td>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inaccessibility or legibility of new technologies and modes</td>
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*Table 1*: Transportation Challenges or Impacts Identified by Stakeholders