

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

April 8, 2021, Meeting

10:00 AM–12:05 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Steve Woelfel, Chair, representing Jamey Tesler, 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 March 4, 2021
- Endorse Amendment Three to the federal fiscal years (FFY) 2021–25 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Approve the work program for Low-Cost Improvements to Express Highway Bottleneck Locations
- Approve the work plan for Dorchester Bay City Redevelopment Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) Modeling Support
- Approve the work program for Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Map Support
- Approve transit safety performance targets for the Boston region

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 8.

2. Chair's Report—*Steven Woelfel, MassDOT*

S. Woelfel stated that the members of the TIP Project Costs Ad-Hoc Committee had been selected. Eric Bourassa (Metropolitan Area Planning Council [MAPC]) will chair, and ten MPO members will serve on the committee. All committee meetings will be public. The first committee meeting is anticipated for late May 2021. S. Woelfel stated that the committee's work to develop a policy to address TIP project cost overruns is anticipated to end in fall 2021. The committee will make a policy recommendation to the full MPO board, and the policy will undergo a 30-day public review period.

3. Executive Director's Report—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)*

T. Teich provided an overview of recent MPO staff outreach activities, including the spring Inner Core Committee (ICC) Transportation meeting. T. Teich announced the planned "History of the MBTA 'Spider Map'" virtual event on April 30, 2021, and two virtual TIP Open Houses on May 10 and May 19, 2021.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports—*Tina Cassidy, North Suburban Planning Council, City of Woburn, and Co-Chair, Administration and Finance (A & F) Committee*

T. Cassidy provided an update on the status of expenses and revenues for CTPS, reviewed at the A & F meeting held immediately prior to the MPO board meeting. T. Cassidy stated that with approximately three quarters of the fiscal year elapsed, approximately two thirds of expenses had been spent and two thirds of revenue received. T. Cassidy stated that the overhead target rate of 106 percent is currently approximately on target. T. Cassidy reported that the committee reviewed preliminary work to estimate anticipated costs associated with the return of staff to the office and the creation of a remote-work policy. T. Cassidy stated that the A & F Committee would next meet on June 17, 2021, at 9:00 AM, to vote on approval of the new operating budget.

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

L. Diggins stated that the Advisory Council would meet next on April 14, 2021. The Advisory Council's 3C Documents Committee would meet on April 13, 2021.

7. Action Item: Approval of March 4, 2021, MPO Meeting Minutes—*Barbara Rutman, MPO Staff*

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 4, 2021, was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) (T. Cassidy). The motion carried.

8. Action Item: FFYs 2021–25 TIP Amendment Three—*Matt Genova, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [FFYs 2021-2025 TIP Amendment Three](#)

M. Genova stated that Amendment Three includes changes to four MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) projects to align MWRTA's 2021 programming with current needs and planned projects for FFY 2021 and to allow MWRTA to spend expiring funds. The MPO released Amendment Three for a 21-day public review period on March 4, 2021, and MPO staff received no public comments regarding the amendment.

Vote

A motion to approve Amendment Three to the FFYs 2021-25 TIP was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane) and seconded by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham) (Thatcher Kezer III). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: FFY 2021 Low-Cost Improvements to Express-Highway Bottleneck Locations—Mark Abbott, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Work Program for Low-Cost Improvements to Express Highway Bottleneck Locations](#)

M. Abbott stated that the Low-Cost Improvements to Express Highway Bottleneck Locations is a biennial study MPO staff have conducted five times previously. These studies addressed fifteen bottleneck locations. All the studies received positive feedback from MassDOT and the Federal Highway Administration. For this new study, MPO staff will identify as many as three express-highway bottleneck segments or points to study and recommend low-cost improvements for the selected bottleneck locations. The budget for the study is \$64,500.

Discussion

Responding to questions, M. Abbott stated that MPO staff should be able to identify bottlenecks as easily as they did prior to the pandemic by using INRIX data and getting feedback from MassDOT District offices. He also stated that past recommendations have been implemented and, based on feedback, have been successful. While, the studies focus on low-cost improvements, more expensive improvements are described in the reports if staff sees a need for those improvements.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for Low-Cost Improvements to Express-Highway Bottleneck Locations was made by the At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) (Daniel Amstutz) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane). The motion carried.

10. Action Item: Work Scope, Dorchester Bay City Redevelopment Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) Modeling Support—*Drashti Joshi, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Work Plan for Dorchester Bay City Redevelopment DEIR Modeling Support](#)

D. Joshi stated that the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) certificate for the Dorchester Bay City (DBC) project recommended that CTPS perform the transportation modeling necessary for the DEIR. The objective of this study is to provide insight into potential impacts on the transportation system resulting from the proposed development using travel demand model forecasts. D. Joshi stated that the study was expected to take six months to complete and is budgeted for \$94,500.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked how developments like DBC are factored into land use assumptions for the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). E. Bourassa stated that MAPC works closely with municipalities to track planned developments in order to make demographic and land use projections for the LRTP, and that MAPC is working with the City of Boston to refine projections for DBC specifically.

Vote

A motion to approve the work plan for the Dorchester Bay City Redevelopment DEIR Modeling Support was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) (T. Cassidy). The motion carried.

11. Action Item: Work Scope, MBTA Map Support—*Kenneth Dumas, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Work Program for MBTA Map Support](#)

CTPS provides map-making support to the MBTA and has created many maps, including the MBTA System Map, District Maps, Bus Schedule Maps, Neighborhood Maps, Fare Increase Maps, and detour maps. CTPS will update MBTA maps, as needed and upon request from the MBTA, within the budget provided for this project. The work program funds \$18,000 in mapping support over 36 months.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for MBTA Mapping Support was made by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane). The motion carried.

12. Action Item: Transit Safety Performance Targets—Michelle Scott, MPO Staff, and Matthew DeDonato, MBTA

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Technical Memorandum: Transit Safety Performance Requirements and Targets](#)
2. [MBTA 2020 Transit Safety Plan](#)
3. [MWRTA 2020 Transit Safety Plan](#)
4. [CATA 2020 Transit Safety Plan](#)
5. [National Public Transportation Safety Plan](#)

M. Scott presented the initial proposed set of transit safety targets for the Boston region, covering targets for the MBTA, Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA), and MWRTA. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires transit agencies to develop safety plans to implement safety management systems (SMS) and to set performance targets for federally required transit safety performance measures. MPOs must set transit safety targets for their regions and consider transit safety in capital programming decisions.

The transit safety performance measures include the number and rate of fatalities, the number and rate of injuries, the number and rate of safety events, and vehicle-revenue miles (VRM) per major mechanical failure, which reflects system reliability. The desired direction for fatalities, injuries, and safety events is a decrease, while the desired direction for system reliability is to increase VRM between major mechanical failures. These targets reflect a one-year timeframe and transit agencies must revisit them yearly. The specific targets can be found in the linked memorandum on the MPO meeting calendar.

M. DeDonato described the MBTA's activities to implement SMS internally, which moves the agency from a compliance-based to a performance-based safety approach. M. DeDonato stated that the MBTA is in Phase 2 of a four phase SMS implementation, which involves refining the agency's Safety Risk Management (SRM) policies in order to build an agency-wide safety culture.

Discussion

D. Amstutz asked why the fatality measures and targets exclude deaths from trespassing. M. DeDonato stated that the FTA rule does not include these deaths in the measure, but he explained that the MBTA tracks and investigates all fatalities regardless of cause internally.

B. Kane noted that the Department of Public Utilities also has its own investigative requirements for fatalities, and he expressed support for approving the targets. L.

Diggins encouraged MPO members to read the National Public Transportation Safety plan, which informs this process.

Vote

A motion to approve transit safety performance targets for the Boston region was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

13. FFYs 2022-26 TIP Highway Element: Statewide Projects—John Bechard, MassDOT

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [FFYs 2022-26 TIP - DRAFT Statewide Highway Programming](#)

J. Bechard reviewed the framework that MassDOT uses to identify projects for the statewide TIP. J. Bechard stated that MassDOT uses longer term planning documents to identify projects to include in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Retrofit, Bridge, Bicycle/Pedestrian, Intelligent Transportation Systems, Intersection Improvements, Pavement, Roadway Improvements, Roadway Reconstruction, and Safety programs. In particular, J. Bechard described the process MassDOT is undertaking to create the Next Generation Bridge Program, which was authorized in the recent Transportation Bond Bill.

Discussion

D. Amstutz asked who the best contact at MassDOT would be for municipal staff looking for information about bridges. J. Bechard stated that each highway district has a bridge engineer who communities can contact.

B. Kane stated that using grant anticipation notes (GANS) to finance the Next Generation Bridge Program is a horrible way of doing business, and elected officials need to find a better way to finance infrastructure than by using borrowed money leveraged against future borrowed money and paying double interest.

K. Miller clarified that the federal measure for bridges in poor condition accounts for the substructure and superstructure, not just deck area. K. Miller also noted that the national bridge inventory is available online. K. Miller asked how the state decides which projects to include in the statewide bicycle and pedestrian program. J. Bechard stated that MassDOT has a Trails Team that meets regularly to identify the overall program and identify connectivity for trails. Projects are also submitted by communities.

14. Members Items

S. Woelfel stated that registration for the 2021 virtual MassDOT Innovation Conference was open.

15. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

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Attendance

Members

Representatives and Alternates

At-Large City (City of Everett)	
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Daniel Amstutz
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)	Todd Kirrane
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Steve Woelfel
MassDOT Highway Division	John Bechard
	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Jillian Linnell
Massachusetts Port Authority	
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Thatcher Kezer III
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Rockland)	Jennifer 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
Aleida Leza	Belmont resident
Paula Doucette	
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT
Constance Raphael	MassDOT
Colette Aufranc	Wellesley Select Board
Joy Glynn	MWRTA
Timothy Paris	
Matthew DeDonato	MBTA
Matthew Petersen	
Felicia Webb	CATA
John Osorio	
Eric Johnson	City of Framingham
Tim Czerwienski	Town of Milton
Josh Klingenstein	MBTA
Steven Olanoff	TRIC Alternate
Johannes Epke	Conservation Law Foundation
Bryan Pounds	MassDOT
Rich Benevento	WorldTech Engineering
Ray Hayhurst	AECOM
Jon Seward	
Todd Baldwin	Town of Saugus
Frank Tramontozzi	City of Quincy
Michelle Ho	MassDOT
Sheila Page	Town of Lexington
Jon Rockwell	TEC Inc.
Linda Murtagh	
Daniel Fitch	MWRTA
Owen MacDonald	Town of Weymouth
Mason Heilman	State Representative Michelle Ciccolo's office

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Mark Abbott

Matt Archer

Ed Bromage

Jonathan Church

Annette Demchur

Ken Dumas

Róisín Foley

Hiral Gandhi

Matt Genova

Jane Gillis

Betsy Harvey

Sandy Johnston

Drashti Joshi

Anne McGahan

Ariel Patterson

Gina Perille

Barbara Rutman

Michelle Scott

Chen-Yuan Wang

Kate White

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Title VI Specialist

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857.702.3702 (voice)

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