

## **MPO Meeting Minutes Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting**

**March 23, 2023, Meeting**

9:00 AM–10:30 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

### **Chairperson**

Jay Monty (City of Everett), Chair

### **Decisions**

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Congestion Management Process Committee (CMP) agreed to the following:

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of December 2, 2021

### **Materials**

Materials for the meeting included the following:

1. [March 23, 2023 CMP Committee Meeting Agenda](#)
2. [December 2, 2021 CMP Committee Meeting Minutes](#)
3. [Identifying Roadway-Pricing Programs for Interviews Memorandum](#)
4. [Meeting Presentation Slides](#)

Meeting Video

<https://youtu.be/GYsKFxIdnIU>

### **Meeting Agenda**

#### **1. Introductions**

See attendance on page 9.

#### **2. Approval of Minutes from December 2, 2021, CMP Committee Meeting**

There was a discussion regarding Steve Olanoff's membership on the CMP Committee. It was determined that S. Olanoff can sit on the committee as the representative of Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC). Grecia White was representing the City of

Boston in place of Jen Rowe. The meeting minutes were approved by the CMP Committee.

### **3. Learning from Roadway-Pricing Experiences Workshop**

Seth Asante (MPO staff) presented information on roadway pricing experiences in the United States and the plan for the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) discrete study on roadway pricing. S. Asante requested feedback from the committee members on the roadway pricing programs that were presented. Highlights of the presentation included the following:

- [The Learning from Roadway-Pricing Experiences study](#) was funded through the UPWP in FFY 2023. The study is currently in Task 1, Identify and Select Roadway-Pricing Studies.
- The purpose of this study is to identify the political and institutional challenges that arise from implementing roadway-pricing programs, the MPO's goals for roadway pricing, and ways to incorporate roadway pricing into the planning process.
- Thirteen candidate programs were identified by staff. Staff requested input from MPO board members and CMP Committee members to help select five programs that staff would focus on when conducting interviews.

The candidate programs and (method of pricing) that were identified are as follows:

- Central Business District Tolling Program, New York City (Cordon)
- Chicago's Transportation Network Provider Congestion Pricing (Cordon and targeted)
- Colorado Department of Transportation's (DOT) Express-Lanes Program (Express lanes)
- Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Express-Lanes Program, San Francisco (Express lanes)
- Texas DOT's Express-Lanes Program (Express lanes)
- Virginia DOT's Express-Lanes Program (Express lanes)
- Orange County Transportation Authority's Express-Lanes Program (Express lanes)
- Washington State DOT's Express-Lanes Program (Express lanes)
- Florida DOT's Express-Lanes Program (Express lanes)
- Maryland Transportation Authority's Express-Lanes Program (Express lanes)
- New Jersey Turnpike (Variable pricing)
- Minnesota DOT's HOT Lanes Program (High-occupancy toll lanes)

- Penn Quarter/Chinatown Parking Pricing Program, Washington, DC (Parking pricing)

Ryan Hicks (MPO staff) facilitated a discussion about the programs to obtain feedback from CMP Committee members and MPO board members that would be useful for selecting five of the programs for further study. He framed the discussion by posing a series of questions to the attendees:

- 1) What would you like to achieve from the implementation of congestion pricing or other forms of roadway pricing in the Boston region?

Lenard Diggins (Regional Transportation Advisory Council) mentioned that the predominant goal should be to move people and goods efficiently. The more efficiently that people and goods are moved, the less it should cost people to use the network. L. Diggins mentioned that these pricing methods that were presented can be used to help achieve that goal. How efficient the methods are at moving goods and people should strongly influence the price of using the network.

Jay Monty (City of Everett) mentioned that S. Asante had presented several different types of congestion-pricing methods, some of which even pre-date the interstate highway system. He noted that stakeholders probably are not looking to build more lanes on Interstate 93 or the Massachusetts Turnpike and that understanding how congestion pricing could be applied in the Boston region could be a complicated topic.

L. Diggins said there would have to be a mix of congestion-pricing schemes. Different methods will need to be used for different parts of the region. He mentioned that staff need to find out what has worked in certain situations, what method the municipalities use, and how those methods were successfully implemented. He mentioned that the public input process and the engagement process is important.

John Romano (MassDOT Highway Division) suggested looking at how congestion pricing fiscally affects different groups. For example, if everyone is pushed to the commuter rail system, how does this affect the commuter rail? Could our transit system handle a shift of 50 percent of roadway users to transit? If congestion pricing is used to reduce the traffic coming into town, what do economically burdened commuters do to commute to work?

R. Hicks mentioned that some, but not all, of these programs account for equity. An example of a program that does account for equity is the rideshare surcharge program in Chicago. The revenue from this program goes directly to the Chicago Transit

Authority (CTA). This program has raised over \$15 million for the CTA in a short period of time.

- 2) What do you expect will be the challenges to implementing congestion pricing or other forms of roadway pricing in the Boston Region?

L. Diggins mentioned that the biggest challenge is always building consensus and determining the level of buy-in. The most important thing that we need to do is communicate the benefits to the public.

J. Romano mentioned that physical space will be a challenge. There is not a lot of room in the city of Boston. He also mentioned that real estate is going to be an issue.

J. Monty mentioned that legislative action is a big challenge. Most of these policies would require some form of state legislation. An example of congestion pricing would be to draw a circle around Boston and charge drivers who commute into the circle. This would encompass several other municipalities. Do individual municipalities, MassDOT and the Federal Highway Administration need to get involved with legislation for roadway pricing?

Sarah Lee (Massachusetts Port Authority) mentioned that if commuters are required to take alternative modes other than driving, then the alternatives will need to be reliable and commuters need to be confident that they are reliable. She also mentioned that businesses are already having a tough time due to COVID-19, and congestion pricing could put an extra burden on businesses.

- 3) What would be your priorities for using revenue generated from roadway pricing if roadway pricing is implemented in the Boston region?

S. Lee mentioned that there should be some assurance that the revenue supports alternative modes, such as transit, bicycling, and walking.

L. Diggins mentioned that the revenue should go towards maintaining the infrastructure, and that maintenance should be the most important task. The second task should be funding alternative transportation choices.

J. Romano mentioned that there might be a fear that if the revenue is being poured into public transportation, the revenue would be replacing shortfalls in money. Instead, it might be a good idea for the revenue to go toward new buses. He mentioned that new elements for the alternative modes of transportation are important so that people can

see where their money is going and so that they will be more likely to support the new program.

- 4) Are there any additional programs that were not listed that should be considered?

S. Lee mentioned the London program and the mode shift results. It might be helpful to have some information on their goals and how they achieved them.

L. Diggins mentioned that he can do some additional research to see if there are any additional programs within the next couple of weeks. He stated that he is also interested in the Texas Department of Transportation's Express-Lanes Program because some stakeholders of this program felt that this was double taxation, and it would be interesting to see how they dealt with this issue. He also mentioned that he liked the variable parking program because there was an indication that there were few challenges. He then discussed an equity model, where everyone is given basic access to the entire network and any use beyond that level will cost commuters more. For example, any multi-layer trips that include single-occupancy vehicle travel could cost ten times the amount of any trips that rely on public transportation. Lastly, he mentioned that cost of travel would be modulated for different parts of the network.

Travis Pollack (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) mentioned that the Stockholm program was the most successful congestion-pricing program as a regional program, and they used the revenue to support the regional rail system.

J. Monty mentioned that the list is dominated by express lanes. Many of the express lanes were constructed to improve the efficiency of the expressways, instead of shifting transportation modes. It might be best to keep a couple of express lanes programs and try to find other example programs that focus on shifting multiple modes.

- 5) How can congestion pricing and other forms of pricing be implemented without adversely affecting environmental justice (EJ) and low-income populations?

L. Diggins mentioned that if everyone is given a basic level of access to the transportation network they can thrive. Then any service above that level that is not efficient will cost more. In that way, everyone gets access to the network that they paid for. The cost to expand and maintain the transportation network will come from travelers that use the network less efficiently.

J. Monty noted that places such as Everett and Somerville have been impacted by the freeways. The behavior of travelers who bypass traffic and tolls can lead to congestion

on local roads, causing the communities to be doubly impacted by congestion. These communities also experience increased pollution and environmental effects. If the tolling pushes traffic from the freeways, then the increased congestion on local roads will further burden the EJ communities.

S. Lee added to J. Monty's comment by noting that this phenomenon can occur with other modes too. The pedestrian zone at Downtown Crossing has caused drop-off locations for rideshares to be condensed and caused congestion near Silver Line stops. Any facility that has a financial incentive will encourage commuters to detour around it. The new legislative action to identify the process for reducing MBTA fares must be included in the process and commuters who need fare relief must be identified.

- 6) Which aspects of these programs would be most relevant when considering congestion pricing or other roadway pricing for the Boston region?

L. Diggins mentioned that he will write up his innovative financing idea because it will take more than a couple of seconds to explain it.

Eric Molinari (City of Everett) mentioned that vehicle size is important. He asked if there are examples in other cities of charging smaller vehicles less or larger vehicles more? Larger vehicles not only affect traffic but parking as well, he noted.

L. Diggins mentioned that in addition to small vehicles, it is important that electric vehicle users are given credit and pay less than those using non-electric vehicles.

J. Monty mentioned that fuel tax affects people's preference for small vehicles. But as we move toward electric vehicles, this perception goes away because the efficiency will be based on miles traveled rather than emissions.

Amira Patterson (MBTA Advisory Board) mentioned that it is important to communicate program goals and benefits to the people that we serve. We want to benefit the MBTA and municipalities. We want to stay on the goal of being equitable, holistic, and communicative, because if system users do not support the program it will fail.

S. Olanoff mentioned that the New Jersey Turnpike is the example that is closest to the Massachusetts Turnpike in the Boston region. He recommended that the New Jersey Turnpike be selected for further analysis.

R. Hicks mentioned that the only difference between the Massachusetts Turnpike and the New Jersey Turnpike is that the New Jersey Turnpike uses variable pricing by time of day for all E-Z Pass users.

- 7) Can you refer us to someone who would be able to provide more information about any of these programs?

S. Lee mentioned that Chris Dempsey, who formally worked with Transportation for Massachusetts, has done a lot of research on congestion pricing and is likely aware of programs that have been completed around the world.

- 8) Are there any programs that you feel should or should not be selected for further study?

S. Olanoff recommended that staff select the San Francisco Express Lanes program. He remarked that, surprisingly, environmental groups raised concerns that this program contributed to more emissions, and he thought it might be interesting to find out if this concern was justified.

L. Diggins agreed with S. Olanoff about the San Francisco program. He mentioned that he was also considering the Chicago program. He then mentioned that the New York cordon study is important to explore, but that type of program may or may not be implementable in Boston, especially considering the concerns about the businesses in the Central Business District. He then mentioned that the Texas program should be a candidate because of the concern about double taxation. Lastly, he expressed support for studying the Washington DC variable parking program.

J. Monty mentioned that he believes that staff should keep the New York cordon program in the running. He was also interested in the Washington DC program because parking caps implemented in Boston and at the airport were proven methods of reducing vehicle travel in Boston. He also appreciated S. Olanoff's point about the San Francisco program. He mentioned that any programs that would require building new highway miles should not be evaluated for the Boston region.

S. Olanoff mentioned that he supported studying the Chicago, San Francisco, Washington DC, and New Jersey programs.

### ***Next Steps***

R. Hicks mentioned that staff will process the input from today and narrow the program list from 13 to five programs. Then staff will interview stakeholders who worked with the selected programs.

J. Monty asked what the next steps entail. Are we going to check back a few times a month or are we going to have another discussion on roadway pricing?

S. Asante mentioned that staff will review the input of this workshop and select five projects. After staff interviews the stakeholders of the five projects, staff will assemble the information and present a summary to the MPO board, so the members can help identify the goals for roadway pricing. Task 3 of the work plan requires staff to identify the MPO goals and objectives for roadway pricing.

Rebecca Morgan (MPO staff) mentioned that staff can conduct another workshop to discuss MPO goals for roadway pricing with the CMP Committee and share a summary with the MPO board. She noted that the CMP Committee is a good forum because an hour can be dedicated to discussing important topics.

#### **4. Other Business**

The current roster for the CMP Committee was established:

- City of Everett – Jay Monty
- City of Boston – Jen Rowe
- TRIC - Steve Olanoff
- MBTA Advisory Board - Amira Patterson
- Regional Transportation Advisory Council - Lenard Diggins
- MassDOT Highway Division - John Romano
- Massachusetts Port Authority – Sarah Lee
- Vacant

The committee should try to meet in the next few months. It was indicated that Thursdays remain the best days to meet.

#### **5. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by the City of Everett (Jay Monty) and seconded by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:30 AM.



## Attendance

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### Members

### Representatives and Alternates

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City of Everett (Committee Chair)	Jay Monty
City of Boston	Eric Molinari (Alternate)
MassDOT Highway Division	Grecia White (Alternate)
Massachusetts Port Authority	John Romano
MBTA Advisory Board	Sarah Lee
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Amira Patterson
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Lenard Diggins
	Steve Olanoff

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### Other Attendees

### Affiliation

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Allison Simmons	Lower Mystic TMA
Austin Smith	
Derek Krevat	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Rick Parker	Burlington Chamber of Commerce
Tom Ryan	A Better City
Travis Pollack	MAPC
Owen MacDonald	Town of Weymouth
Brad Rawson	City of Somerville

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### MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

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Erin Maguire  
Seth Asante  
Annette Demchur  
Rebecca Morgan  
Ryan Hicks  
Stella Jordan  
Sean Rourke

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Boston Region MPO  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150  
Boston, MA 02116  
[civilrights@ctps.org](mailto:civilrights@ctps.org)

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