

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

December 7, 2023, Meeting

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

David Mohler, Chair, representing Monica Tibbits-Nutt, 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 meeting minutes of the October 19, 2023, MPO meeting
- Endorse the Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2024–28 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment One
- Release the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment Two for its 21-day public review period
- Endorse the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Adjustment One

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 13.

2. Chair’s Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT*

There was none.

3. Executive Director’s Report—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

T. Teich introduced new staff members Jia Huang and Kyle Casiglio.

T. Teich stated that the Inner Core Committee Transportation Group met on December 6 and discussed the MBTA’s state-of-good-repair needs assessment, bus priority work, and the City of Somerville’s experiences with the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Demonstration Grant.

T. Teich stated that TIP applications for project funding are open through December 31, 2023.

T. Teich stated that the MPO is soliciting ideas for transportation studies and technical assistance in FFY 2025 at the following link: <https://bit.ly/25-UPWP-survey-FB>.

T. Teich stated that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced that states and MPOs must adopt targets on greenhouse gas emission reduction for carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles. State targets are due on February 1, 2024, and MPOs must establish targets within 180 days, in June or July 2024.

4. Public Comments

Jim Nee, MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA), stated that he looks forward to continuing to work with the Memorandum of Understanding Update Committee to resolve discussions of regional transit authority representation on the MPO board.

Josh Ostroff, City of Newton, stated that the City was awarded funds to expand its Bluebikes system through the Community Connections program and that initial contracts with Lyft have been delayed. A favorable vote on the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment Two would allow the City to move forward with gaining MPO and FHWA approval to execute the funding.

Brad Rawson, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), spoke of the November 30 Annual Meeting and discussed opportunities for coalition building.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

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

L. Diggins stated that the next meeting of the Advisory Council will be on December 13 and will feature a workshop on updates to the Performance-Based Planning and Programming dashboard, discussions on the Long-Range Transportation Plan Needs Assessment, and brainstorming on study ideas for the FFY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program.

7. Action Item: Approval of October 19, 2023, MPO Meeting Minutes Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. October 19, 2023, MPO Meeting Minutes ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of October 19, 2023, was made by the City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department) (Jen Rowe) and seconded by the Town of Arlington (John Alessi). The motion carried.

8. Action Item: FFYs 2024-28 TIP Amendment One—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment One ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

E. Lapointe stated that the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment One proposes the following:

- Programming Boston’s FFY 2022 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Implementation Grant
- Reprogramming of three Border to Boston Trail Design Earmarks for the following communities: Peabody, Salem, and Marblehead
- Cost increase for one Statewide Highway Project
- Addition of three projects from the FFYs 2023–27 State TIP into the FFYs 2024–28 TIP for project readiness

Project #609254, Lynn—Intersection Improvements at Two Intersections on Broadway, was reprogrammed with a new budget of \$6,491,704 and an advertisement date of December 30, 2023. The project cost has increased to account for the cost of material removal from the project site.

Discussion

Kenneth Miller, FHWA, asked who will be providing the match for the SS4A Implementation Grant. D. Mohler stated that the City of Boston will provide the match.

Vote

A motion to endorse the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment One was made by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by the City of Boston (BTD) (J. Rowe). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: FFYs 2024-28 TIP Amendment Two—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment Two ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

E. Lapointe stated that the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment Two proposes the following:

- Earmarks to design projects in the Towns of Arlington, Brookline, Dover, and Needham, seen in the Amendment Two table linked above and in Table 1 below
- Removal of FFY 2024 funding for the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA) On-Demand Service Expansion project

- Scheduling changes for CATA projects to accommodate a procurement delay for trolley replacement, seen in Table 2
- Reprogramming of funding for a Bluebikes project for Arlington, Newton, and Watertown; the project was funded previously but never proceeded due to delays and it is now being reprogrammed in FFY 2024
- Adjustments to the set-aside for Community Connections in FFYs 2025 and 2026

**Table 1
 Earmarks**

Project Name	Change Type	Budget	Description
Arlington – Mystic River Path to Minuteman Bikeway Connection Design	New Project	\$1,250,000	This earmark will fund design for a link between the northern end of the Alewife Brook Greenway to the Minuteman Bikeway in Arlington Center.
Brookline – Beacon Street Bridle Path Design	New Project	\$2,500,000	This earmark will fund design for a new shared-use path along Beacon Street in Brookline to reconstruct the original Bridle Path.
Dover–Needham – Centre Street/Central Avenue Bridge Design	New Project	\$2,500,000	This earmark will fund design to reconstruct parts of the Centre Street/Central Avenue Bridge over the Charles River in Dover and Needham.

Table 2
Schedule Changes for CATA Projects

Project ID and Name	Current Budget	New Budget	Explanation
CATA011616: CATA — Replacement of Two Replica Trolleys	\$0	\$1,280,000	This project was previously amended onto the FFYs 2023–27 TIP in fiscal year 2023, but the vehicles could not be procured in that year. The former project ID number was T00072.
RTD0010587: CATA – Repave Administration and Operations Facility Parking Lot	\$400,000	\$0	This project is being delayed into FFY 2025 to open matching funds for the delay of the trolley replacement project.
T00073: CATA – Rehab/Renovation of Administration and Operations Facility	\$50,000	\$0	The FFY 2024 funding for this project has been removed to accommodate the necessary increase in matching funds for the trolley replacement project. Funding remains in FFYs 2025 through 2028.
RTD0010587: CATA – Repave Administration and Operations Facility Parking Lot	\$0	\$400,000	This project is being delayed into FFY 2025 to open matching funds for the delay of the trolley replacement project.

The CATA’s On-Demand Microtransit Service Expansion to Rockport and Lanesville has been removed from FFY 2024, as the proponent was unable to advance the project in FFY 2023 and does not anticipate beginning operations in FFY 2024, and because its future funding is pending further discussions with the proponent.

E. Lapointe stated Project S12868, Arlington-Newton-Watertown—Bluebikes Expansion Project, is a new project being reintroduced from the FFYs 2022–26 TIP. The project did not advance previously due to contracting delays. Now, this proposed amendment would include a line item of \$340,000 in FFY 2024 of the Community Connections Program for bikeshare investments in Arlington, Newton, and Watertown.

E. Lapointe stated that the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment Two proposes updated set-aside amounts for FFYs 2025 and 2026 of \$909,679 and \$2,337,500, respectively, to reflect changes to the Community Connections Program in FFYs 2025 and 2026 from both Amendment Two and Adjustment One.

Discussion

K. Miller, FHWA, asked if the three congressional earmarks for design will be executed by MassDOT or contracted out to communities to develop. John Bechard, MassDOT, stated that he has been working with the three communities that will solicit and hire a designer to work through the MassDOT design process.

Vote

A motion to release the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment Two for its 21-day public review period was made by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by the City of Boston (BTD) (J. Rowe). The motion carried.

10. Action Item: FFYs 2024-28 TIP Adjustment One—*Logan Casey, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. FFYs 2024–28 TIP Adjustment One ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

L. Casey stated that the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Adjustment One proposes the following:

- Reprogramming of MassDOT Community Transit Grant matching funds, seen in Table 3
- Cost adjustments for MWRTA CatchConnect Microtransit Expansion Phase 2
- Minor cost adjustments for two Bluebikes expansion projects
- Minor cost adjustments and proposed scope changes for three bicycle parking projects

Table 3
MassDOT Community Transit Grant Matching Funds

Project ID and Name	Change Type	Funding Source	Current Budget	New Budget
MBTA011610: MBTA—City of Revere—Buy Replacement Van	New Start Year	General Obligated Bond (GOBOND)	\$0	\$10,422
MBTA011611: MBTA—Hull COA—Buy Replacement Van	New Start Year	GOBOND	\$0	\$10,422
MBTA011612: MBTA—Town of Randolph—Buy Replacement Van	New Start Year	GOBOND	\$0	\$10,422
CATA011593: Replacement Vans	New Start Year	GOBOND	\$0	\$199,107
MWRTA011619: MWRTA—FY23 MAP Replacement Vehicles (3 Type E)	New Start Year	GOBOND	\$0	\$63,600

L. Casey stated that the MWRTA CatchConnect Microtransit Expansion Phase 2 project budget has increased to account for the matching funds contributed by the MWRTA and other sponsors. The budget for FFYs 2024, 2025, and 2026 has increased to \$175,000, \$165,625, and \$162,500, respectively.

L. Casey stated that the budget for Project S12904, Medford—Bluebikes Expansion, has increased to \$159,100 to account for the match and a new quote from Lyft.

L. Casey stated that the budget for Project S12924, Cambridge—Electric Bluebikes Adoption, has decreased to \$315,000 to reflect an updated scope of work to procure 90 ebikes from Lyft.

L. Casey stated that the budget for Project S12803, Medford—Bicycle Parking (Tier 1), had a budget increase to \$37,840. Project S12805, Canton Public Schools Bike Program, had a scope change and budget increase to \$28,125. Project S12806, Canton Public Library Bicycle Racks, had a scope change and budget increase to \$12,500.

Vote

A motion to endorse the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Adjustment One was made by the City of Boston (BTD) (J. Rowe) and seconded by the City of Newton (David Koses). The motion carried.

11. Rutherford Avenue Update—*Jascha Franklin-Hodge, City of Boston Staff*

J. Franklin-Hodge provided an update on the Rutherford Avenue project in Boston. He stated that Sullivan Square is a key regional intersection that will have three new high frequency bus routes with the bus network redesign, and that it is a key corridor for bicycle connectivity. J. Franklin-Hodge stated that the City of Boston's priorities for the corridor include providing better connectivity from and to the neighborhood, safer crossings, and access to open space, as well as deterring cut-through traffic and increasing resilience.

J. Franklin-Hodge stated that the City of Boston is moving forward with an at-surface design with center-running bus lanes and two general traffic lanes in each direction. This design will feature safe and comfortable bike lanes. Residential parking permit boundaries will be tightened to limit spillover on local streets. The City will coordinate with the MBTA Maintenance Facility and the improvement project to the John J. Ryan Playground.

J. Franklin-Hodge stated that the City will work on the concept design and coordinate with MassDOT, the MBTA, Somerville, Everett, and Cambridge throughout winter 2023/24 to develop a finalized concept, targeted for February 2024. From 2024 through 2025, the City will explore early action opportunities. The City will work to bring the design to 100 percent from 2024 through 2026, including environmental review and permitting and right-of-way acquisition. Construction is anticipated to start in spring 2027.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked about resilience design features. J. Franklin-Hodge stated that the design will need to account for stormwater management and extend the tree canopy, while incorporating green infrastructure.

Julia Wallerce, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), asked what coordination has been like in relationship to the Silver Line Extension and Encore Casino.

J. Franklin-Hodge stated that there have been ongoing discussions with the MBTA to ensure that the design will accommodate future transit needs of the corridor.

David Koses, City of Newton, asked where to find additional information on the approach to residential parking permits. J. Franklin-Hodge stated that he should refer to PLAN Charlestown.

D. Mohler asked when an updated cost estimate is expected. Jim Fitzgerald, Boston Planning & Development Agency, stated that a cost estimate will likely accompany the 25 percent design.

12. MBTA Strategic Initiatives—*Lynsey Heffernan and Laura Gilmore, MBTA Staff*

L. Gilmore stated that the MBTA faces a unique opportunity to define internal goals to ensure that the agency adapts to and evolves alongside the changing region. Goals will help staff measure successes or determine course corrections using data-driven analytics. L. Gilmore reviewed the strategic planning framework, which includes setting the vision and goals, developing metrics to track progress, aligning teams to achieve initial actions, understanding the baseline and conducting gap analyses, engaging stakeholders in action planning, and assembling resources and implementing goals.

L. Gilmore stated that the process began internally with conversations with staff.

L. Gilmore stated that some value statements have been updated to better reflect where the agency is. The equity value statement was updated to reflect an assessment of impacts on riders, employees, and the regions served. A culture statement was added that centers people and their well-being and safety in all that the agency does.

The MBTA's eight strategic goals, aligned with the Healey-Driscoll Administration priorities, are as follows:

- Empower and support staff to develop a culture which prioritizes and promotes safety
- Modernize assets and improve connectivity, while ensuring MBTA property is maintained in a state of good repair
- Ensure the experiences and perspectives of staff and riders are accounted for through transparent decision-making
- Retain, attract, and invest in a diverse and qualified workforce that represents the ridership
- Support the economic vitality of the region by providing riders with dependable, frequent, and accessible service
- Increase the environmental sustainability and resilience of the transit system
- Attract new riders, retain existing riders, and increase the percentage of transit trips in the region

- Communicate openly about the costs and revenues needed to support the ongoing service and growth to the system

L. Gilmore stated that the goals will be used as a basis for required planning activities and will provide a public process for stakeholders such as the public and staff.

L. Gilmore stated that the final steps are to assess resources, implement projects, track and report progress, and further refine strategic planning.

Discussion

Erin Chute, Town of Brookline, encouraged the consideration of a goal focusing on collaboration, transparency, and responsiveness with MBTA communities.

L. Diggins encouraged the use of creative solutions.

Lynsey Heffernan, MBTA Staff, stated that the MBTA is working to develop its long-range planning and integrate goals into the next Program for Mass Transportation.

13. Summary of Federal Grant Awards in the Boston Region—*Kenneth Miller, FHWA, and Brandon Burns, Federal Transit Administration*

K. Miller stated that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provides more opportunities for local governments and nontraditional entities to pursue federal highway funding.

K. Miller stated that formula funding in Massachusetts has increased by 50 percent, totaling over \$5 billion from 2022 through 2026. K. Miller stated that the Boston region has been awarded 33 discretionary grant awards, totaling over \$18 million.

K. Miller stated that award recipients can enter a grant agreement directly with FHWA or contract through MassDOT. K. Miller stated that federal regulations, such as matching funds, programming in the TIP, and environmental permitting, apply.

B. Burns stated that the BIL increased federal transit funding by 40 percent in addition to discretionary grant opportunities. Recipients of Community Project Funding include the City of Salem's North Shore Workforce Career Mobility Program (\$2.3 million), the City of Salem's South Salem Commuter Rail Stop (\$372,000), the MBTA's Newton Commuter Rail Station Accessibility Improvements (\$7 million), and MassDOT's Wonderland Multimodal Connector.

Recipients of Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Grants include the City of Boston's Blue Hills Avenue project (\$15 million), MassDOT's Lynnway Multimodal Corridor (\$15 million), and the City of Boston's Roxbury Resilient Transportation Corridor (\$20 million).

Other discretionary grants were awarded to the Boston region are the Passenger Ferry, Bus and Bus Facilities, Low and No Emissions, Transit-Oriented Development, and All Stations Accessibility Programs.

14. A Method to Evaluate Flexible Bus Routing Opportunities—*Steven Andrews, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. A Method to Evaluate Flexible Bus Routing Opportunities ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

S. Andrews stated that MPO staff have created a methodology to evaluate demand patterns along bus routes using a synthetic population dataset and special route geometry. A successful flexible service needs potential riders outside the already serviced area, but not too many outside of the area, with demand spread throughout the route.

The methodology involves four key steps:

- Build a special representation of the route
- Process travel patterns for identified population
- Evaluate the relative demand across the route
- Evaluate whether to continue to investigate

S. Andrews stated that the methodology was applied to the Brockton Area Transit Route 12 and Lowell Regional Transit Authority's Route 13.

S. Andrews stated that the next steps could be to refine and test the methodology or to extend the research to identify the characteristics of areas where different styles of transit would be most successful.

Discussion

D. Mohler suggested additional outreach with regional transit authorities to determine the value of the work products.

J. Rowe asked about the applicability of this methodology with microtransit services and asked if there are opportunities to integrate a cost-benefit analysis. S. Andrews stated that additional work would be needed.

Susan Barrett, Town of Lexington, asked if there are opportunities to bring this methodology into MassDOT's comprehensive transit mapping project. D. Mohler stated that if the MPO decided to continue this body of work, it would ultimately be aligned with MassDOT's project.

15. Members' Items

L. Diggins invited members to the Regional Transportation Advisory Council's next meeting, which will be a workshop.

16. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the City of Boston (BTD) (J. Rowe) and seconded by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	John Alessi
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)	Erin Chute
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jen Rowe
Federal Highway Administration	Kenneth Miller
	Joshua Barber
Federal Transit Administration	Brandon Burns
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
	Brad Rawson
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	John Bechard
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Ali Kleyman
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Julia Wallerce
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	Kristen Guichard
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Hull)	
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Wrentham)	
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Janet Baker	
Susan Barrett	Town of Lexington
Miranda Briseño	MassDOT
Chinmai Deo	
Daniela Espinosa	Boston Planning & Development Agency
Andy Feldman	Office of Housing Stability
Alison Felix	MAPC
Jascha Franklin-Hodge	City of Boston
Glenn Geiler	MBTA
Laura Gilmore	MBTA
Lynsey Heffernan	MBTA
Amy Ingles	Town of Brookline
Sandy Johnston	MBTA
Derek Krevat	MassDOT
Jackie LaFlam	Cape Ann Transportation Authority
Owen MacDonald	Town of Weymouth
Vi Mai	MBTA
Anne McKinnon	
Zeke Mermell	Town of Watertown
Jim Nee	MWRTA
Josh Ostroff	City of Newton
Alwin Ramirez	MassDOT
Jeanette Rebecchi	Town of Bedford
Michelle Scott	MassDOT
Cheryll-Ann Senior	MassDOT District Five
Derek Shooster	MassDOT
Abby Swaine	
Tyler Terrasi	MWRTA
Andrew Wang	MassDOT

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Steven Andrews

Logan Casey

Kyle Casiglio

Abby Cutrumbes

Annette Demchur

Hiral Gandhi

Betsy Harvey

Dave Hong

Jia Huang

Stella Jordan

Ethan Lapointe

Erin Maguire

Rose McCarron

Marty Milkovits

Rebecca Morgan

Srilekha Murthy

Gina Perille

Sarah Philbrick

Bradley Putnam

Sean Rourke

Seth Strumwasser

Judy Taylor

Sam Taylor

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Title VI Specialist

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857.702.3700 (voice)

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