

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

December 21, 2023, Meeting

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

Eric Bourassa, Vice Chair, representing the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreed to the following:

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of November 2, 2023
- Release the Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2024–28 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Three for its 21-day public review period

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 7.

2. Chair’s Report—*Eric Bourassa, MAPC*

There was none.

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

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

T. Teich stated that staff are soliciting ideas for transportation studies and technical assistance, through a survey that closes on February 1, 2024.

4. Public Comments

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC), stated that the Canton–Dedham Steet corridor project was recently completed in the TRIC subregion.

Josh Ostroff, Town of Newton, stated that the NewMo microtransit service will be discussed later in the meeting during the discussion on the agenda item on the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment Three. He thanked the MPO for its support.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

Jen Rowe, City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department), stated that the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee met to discuss the NewMo microtransit service and the FFYs 2025–29 TIP Universe of Projects.

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

L. Diggins stated that the previous meeting of the Advisory Council featured a workshop on the Performance-Based Planning Dashboard and a discussion of Unified Planning Work Program study ideas.

7. Action Item: Approval of November 2, 2023, MPO Meeting Minutes Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. November 2, 2023 meeting minutes ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of November 2, 2023, was made by the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) (J. Rowe) and seconded by the Town of Arlington (John Alessi). The motion carried.

8. FFYs 2024-28 TIP Amendment Three—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff* ***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

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

E. Lapointe stated that Amendment Three proposes a scope change for Newton's Newton in Motion (NewMo) service. E. Lapointe discussed the service background of NewMo. E. Lapointe reviewed ridership trends and the impact of scope changes.

E. Lapointe stated that the scope change focuses on providing service to seniors and persons with disabilities and is no longer serving all groups, as stated in original applications. The service area has expanded slightly, while the same service hours were offered. The scope change will allow for a more conservative approach to be taken to the service, in order to ensure its long-term success.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked about the importance of the unique rider metric in microtransit services. E. Lapointe stated that this is a method to evaluate the quantity of converted vehicle trips.

E. Bourassa clarified that this amendment is a scope change, but funding is retained at the same level.

Ken Miller, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), asked if the MBTA's The Ride operates in Newton. K. Miller stated that the FHWA has requested performance metrics from microtransit service operators. K. Miller asked if means testing is used to evaluate eligibility for NewMo service. J. Ostroff stated that riders who use the service are asked to provide confirmation that they are involved in other means-tested programs, such as subsidized housing or Mass Health.

Melisa Tintocalis, North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington), asked how the NewMo service can be seen as a model for future microtransit services.

E. Bourassa stated that the Community Connections program is an opportunity to pilot new projects. E. Bourassa stated that an observed challenge is finding opportunities to fund microtransit projects beyond the initial pilot period that the MPO programs.

Ali Kleyman, MBTA, asked if there have been conversations with nearby employers to contribute to funding the NewMo service. J. Ostroff stated that employer contributions have been limited to date and that the City is looking to develop a diverse funding stream for the service.

L. Diggins asked what is necessary to ensure success of the service. J. Ostroff discussed potential future directions that NewMo and other microtransit services can move towards.

J. Rowe asked what resources the MPO could contribute to advancing learning of best practices for microtransit services. E. Lapointe discussed the existing agencies with ongoing investigations into microtransit shuttles.

Vote

A motion to release the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment Three for its 21-day public review period was made by the North Suburban Planning Council (M. Tintocalis) and seconded by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried.

9. Project Universe for the FFYs 2025-29 TIP—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. FFYs 2025–29 TIP Project Universe ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

E. Lapointe stated that the project universe was discussed in more detail at the December meeting of the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee.

E. Lapointe stated that the project universe contains an individual line item for each project that may seek funding in the Boston region in the near future.

E. Lapointe stated that the FFYs 2024–28 TIP allocated \$150.2 million to 21 new projects, funding a total of 58 projects with \$697.5 million in Regional Target funding. There has been a downward trend in applications received; most applications have been directed to smaller dollar value programs, such as Community Connections. E. Lapointe discussed the lifecycle of a project that passes through the MPO for funding. Key thresholds for funding include project initiation and scoping to qualify for the Project Design Pilot, approval by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation’s (MassDOT) Project Review Committee to apply for construction funds, and 25 percent design status as a superior candidate for funding.

Summary information about the project universe can be found in Table 1.

Table 1
FFYs 2025–29 TIP Project Universe

Subregion	Total in Universe	Complete Streets	Intersection Improvements	Bicycle/ Pedestrian	Major Infrastructure	Community Connections
ICC	46	18	8	11	6	3
MAGIC	15	3	2	5	3	2
MWRC	10	3	3	3	1	0
NSPC	10	5	3	1	0	1
NSTF	18	12	2	3	1	0
SSC	7	5	2	0	0	0
SWAP	23	11	7	4	1	0
TRIC	14	9	3	1	1	0

E. Lapointe stated that a list of projects seeking funding will be shared in January.

Discussion

J. Rowe stated that the City of Boston is working on Bluebikes applications for the Community Connections program and discussed other future projects to pursue.

E. Bourassa asked how the TIP universe has changed since the last year. E. Lapointe stated that the universe increased by 38 projects.

A. Kleyman asked how projects applying for the Project Design Pilot will be evaluated. E. Lapointe stated that scoring criteria is the same for construction projects, with the acknowledgement that the level of detail for these projects will be lower than that of projects further along in the design process.

10. Examining Curb Use Changes in the Boston Region—*Sophie Fox, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. Examining Curb Use Changes in the Boston Region ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

S. Fox stated that that this study built on past work, which provided examples of curb management strategies and a guidebook of best practices for planners. The objective of this study was to demonstrate the effectiveness of data collection and analysis strategies and provide municipalities with tools and guidance. Staff examined two case studies: Porter Square, Cambridge, and Moody Street, Waltham.

S. Fox stated that the City of Cambridge initiated its Porter Square project in the summer of 2022 with the objective of achieving a safe street design for people of all ages and abilities. The redesign resulted in a decrease of 13 metered parking spaces, upgraded bike lanes, the addition of a 30-minute loading zone, and an accessible parking space.

S. Fox stated that data was collected before and after the redesign throughout various times of the day and days of the week, and she discussed assumptions made in the study. The analysis focused on changes in parked vehicle totals, changes in occupancy percentage, changes in parking duration, and changes in authorized parking.

S. Fox stated that Moody Street in Waltham has been closed to vehicular traffic from May 1 to October 31 every year for the last few years, intending to create more space for safer outdoor dining and to support local businesses. In this case study, staff sought to develop methods to address questions about whether pedestrianizing actions led to parking demand exceeding supply and if the changes have resulted in a more efficient use of public space. S. Fox stated that staff conducted an occupancy analysis of parking.

S. Fox stated some lessons learned from this study: limited case studies may not provide sufficient data for inferential statistical methods; it is best to focus on broader statistics and trends; it is important to be mindful of resources and time management strategies; and it is important to consider the wider study area rather than only the specific corridor.

Discussion

David Koses, City of Newton, discussed the environment needed for pedestrianizing streets such as Moody Street. S. Fox stated that it would be beneficial to better

understand the perspectives of residents and business owners near innovative curb spaces.

E. Bourassa asked what influenced the decision to count the people using additional curb space, instead of the cars. T. Teich stated that the use of a person metric offers a way to shift the perspective of how a space can be used most efficiently.

Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee, asked if the number of parking spaces lost was tracked. S. Fox stated that Porter Square lost 13 metered parking spaces and gained a loading zone. T. Bent asked if business owners were consulted in the study. S. Fox stated that this would be useful information in a future study.

Derek Shooster, MassDOT, discussed the Future of the Commonwealth Curb Study, inspired by Phase I of the Future of the Curb study, and commended staff for their work.

A. Kleyman stated that a follow-up study could examine the analysis of curb usage when converted into a bus lane.

11. Members' Items

There were none.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by the Town of Arlington (J. Alessi). The motion carried.

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)	Claire Ricker
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)	Erin Chute
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency) (BPDA)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jen Rowe
Federal Highway Administration	
Federal Transit Administration	Leah Sirmin
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Derek Krevat John Bechard
MassDOT Highway Division	
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Ali Kleyman
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa Julia Wallerice
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	Melisa Tintocalis
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Hull)	
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Wrentham)	Rachel Benson
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Miranda Briseño	MassDOT
Ron Chick	
Daniela Espinosa	BPDA
Glenn Geiler	MBTA
Joy Glynn	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)
Marah Holland	MAPC
Sandy Johnston	MBTA
Raissah Kouame	MassDOT
Jackie LaFlam	Cape Ann Transportation Authority
Adi Nochur	MAPC
Josh Ostroff	City of Newton
Cheryll-Ann Senior	MassDOT
Judy Shanley	Easterseals
Derek Shooster	MassDOT
Tyler Terrasi	MWRTA

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Logan Casey
Annette Demchur
Sophie Fox
Ryan Hicks
Dave Hong
Jia Huang
Stella Jordan
Ethan Lapointe
Erin Maguire
Rose McCarron
Rebecca Morgan
Srilekha Murthy
Gina Perille
Sarah Philbrick
Bradley Putnam
Sean Rourke
Judy Taylor
Sam Taylor

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Title VI Specialist

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