

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

November 14, 2024, Meeting

9:30 AM–12:00 PM, State Transportation Building Boardroom and Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), and David Mohler, Chair, representing Monica Tibbits-Nutt

Decisions

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

- Elect the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) as Vice Chair of the MPO for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025
- Approve the minutes of the meeting of September 19, 2024
- Appoint standing committee slates for FFY 2025

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance starting on page 21.

2. Secretary's Comments—*Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt, MassDOT*

Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt expressed gratitude for the opportunity to meet with board members in person. She highlighted the importance of regional equity in the Boston area, stressing the need to pair housing investments with improved transportation infrastructure. She emphasized the significant impact that thoughtful, equitable investments can have on communities.

Secretary Tibbits-Nutt shared that MassDOT has been hosting stakeholder events across Massachusetts' districts. These events provide an opportunity for MassDOT to engage directly with the public and municipal staff on behalf of elected officials. She noted that many residents are often surprised to see MassDOT representatives visiting their regions, reflecting past challenges in connecting with the agency.

She also addressed challenges rural and small communities face in accessing Chapter 90 funding. Secretary Tibbits-Nutt commended the Healey administration for prioritizing regional equity, pointing out that having a lieutenant governor with a background as a mayor reinforces the administration's commitment. She highlighted the administration's efforts to streamline the grant application process through advancements in technology, including the integration of artificial intelligence.

Grant funding, she explained, is critical for economic development and addressing housing issues in municipalities. While recent legislation aims to tackle Massachusetts' housing challenges, MassDOT can serve as a key partner by collaborating with municipalities, board members, and other agencies to enhance housing affordability. Secretary Tibbits-Nutt expressed concern over the cost of living in Massachusetts, which is driving younger residents out of the state. Citing a study by the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, she noted that students graduating in the Greater Boston area often find it unaffordable to remain in the region. She emphasized the need for state governments to adopt innovative solutions to address these pressing issues.

Secretary Tibbits-Nutt acknowledged public uncertainty surrounding changes at the federal level and stressed the importance of reassuring residents that MassDOT's priorities will remain steadfast. She urged board members to keep the public at the forefront of transportation project discussions, emphasizing the "who" and "why" behind these efforts.

Finally, she encouraged board members to continue exploring the intersection of housing and transit in their conversations. She also called on elected officials to view MassDOT as a resource, ensuring their investments actively promote regional equity and serve the best interests of all communities.

3. State of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)—*Jonathan Gulliver, Highway Administrator*

Jonathan Gulliver, MassDOT Highway Division, presented on the Highway Division's capital program and its recent accomplishments. J. Gulliver presented the following information about the Highway Division:

- The Highway Division operates a \$2.4 billion capital program, has a \$800 million operating budget, and provides \$300 million in municipal assistance.
- More than 2,800 employees operate out of Headquarters and six Highway Districts.
- The Highway Division is one of the largest federal grant recipients in the United States.
- The Highway Division maintains 9,561 lane miles of interstate, numbered routes, and toll roads.
- The Highway Division owns 3,492 bridges and inspects 1,615 municipally owned bridges.
- The Highway Division maintains 35 lane miles of tunnels.

J. Gulliver stated that bridges continue to be one of Highway Division's biggest challenges as Massachusetts is a densely populated state with many hills and rivers.

J. Gulliver stated that there are 657 active maintenance and construction contracts in 2024, including 185 bridge projects, 98 roadway improvement projects, 79 roadway reconstruction projects, and more.

J. Gulliver stated that the value of construction projects under contract is scheduled to grow by 69 percent by 2026, from \$4.7 billion to \$7.9 billion, excluding upcoming mega projects, such as the Allston I-90 Multimodal project. When these mega projects are included, there is a 160 percent increase from \$4.7 billion to \$12.2 billion.

To manage these large projects, the Highway Division has utilized the Next Gen Bridge Program, which has allowed the division to add more than 350 staff members to support these projects.

J. Gulliver emphasized the importance of the Highway Division's advertising program for these projects, which identified areas for improvement and shortened time frames.

J. Gulliver presented a review of 2024, specifically drawing attention to the significant number of projects planned and programmed, delivery rates for the State Transportation Improvement Program, and the rate of on-time performance.

In addition, J. Gulliver stated that the Highway Division is rapidly funding improvements in transportation infrastructure and making the network safer and more resilient.

Investments have increased from \$1.052 billion in FFY 2020 to \$2.377 billion in FFY 2024.

J. Gulliver stated that the FFY 2024 construction expenditure equated to \$1.35 billion, which is the largest dollar amount spent in an FFY. The budget for FFY 2025 is \$1.675 billion.

Projects that were completed or partially completed in FFY 2024 included the following:

- Boston: Sumner Tunnel Reconstruction (\$135 million)
- Northampton: I-91 Bridge Reconstruction (\$42 million)
- Boston: North Washington Street Bridge (\$177 million)
- Canton-Norwood: I-95 Interchange Reconstruction (\$44 million)

Projects that were in their peak construction phase in FFY 2024 included the following:

- Hopkinton-Westborough: I-90/I-495 Interchange (\$394 million)
 - 35 percent complete
- Boston-Somerville: Maffa Way Superstructure Replacement (\$40 million)
 - 42 percent complete
- Montgomery-Russell: I-90 Bridge Preservation (\$48 million)
 - 68 percent complete
- Fall River: Route 79/Davol Street Corridor Improvements (\$115 million)
 - 54 percent complete
- Lynn-Saugus: Belden Bly Bridge Replacement (\$87 million)
 - 89 percent complete
- Charlton-Oxford: Route 20 Reconstruction (\$95 million)
 - 55 percent complete

Projects that commenced construction in FFY 2024 included the following:

- Andover-Lawrence: I-495 over Route 28 Bridge Rehabilitation (\$98 million)
- Boston: I-90 Tunnel Lighting (\$88 million)
- Holyoke-West Springfield: Route 5 Roadway Rehabilitation (\$54 million)
- Boston-Allston: I-90 Bridge Preservation (\$72 million)
- Newton-Weston: I-90/I-95 Interchange (\$318 million)
- Boston: Tobin Bridge Repairs (\$109 million)

J. Gulliver presented an overview of the FFY 2025 program, which included 81 Federal Aid projects and 102 non-federal aid projects.

J. Gulliver stated that the Highway Division is moving in the right direction and has very strong support from the Governor's Office and from the state legislature.

4. Board Member Comments

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), thanked the MPO staff, board members, the Secretary, and others for their work. K. Ballantyne expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve as a board member and represent the City of Somerville and the Inner Core. K. Ballantyne expressed pride in the work that the MPO has completed since the last Annual Meeting, particularly the federal investments made in the region's infrastructure. K. Ballantyne stated that the MPO has set the standard for how an MPO works together and maintains excellent working relationships with municipal, state, and federal agencies in addition to a variety of regional partners. K. Ballantyne encouraged board members to reach out and consider the City of Somerville a resource for the board and stated that she looks forward to the important work the MPO will continue to pursue.

Lynsey Heffernan, MBTA, expressed appreciation for the support that the MBTA has received over the last year and the longstanding partnership with the MPO and its constituent municipalities and staff. L. Heffernan spoke about the MBTA's engagement with regional priorities and its planning work under General Manager Phil Eng, who has worked to revitalize and rebuild the public transit system and establish proactive processes and systems to break a cycle of disinvestment and poor repair. L. Heffernan stated that the track improvement program, which has aimed to remove all the MBTA's slow zones in the system, is nearing completion. L. Heffernan stated the number of slow zones in the heavy and light rail systems has reduced from 191 to four in one year. L. Heffernan stated that the MBTA has several upcoming initiatives that demonstrate the MBTA's progress. In addition, L. Heffernan spoke about the MBTA's fiscal cliff and stated that the MBTA is grateful for the flexed funding the MPO has provided.

Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, City of Newton, expressed appreciation for MPO staff members, M. Tibbits-Nutt, and the opportunity to continue to serve on the MPO board. R. Fuller reiterated comments about the changing administration, the MBTA's fiscal cliff, and the Highway Division's amount and scale of projects. R. Fuller stated that many municipalities and agencies have more projects than funding, and that the MPO should work towards a solution for the gap between funding and projects. R. Fuller emphasized the complexity of transportation issues such as housing, land use, jobs, and economic development, and stated that, despite the challenge, she has confidence that the MPO board will continue to make the Boston region a great place to live and work in.

Jascha Franklin-Hodge, City of Boston, expressed appreciation for the MPO, MAPC, the Healey-Driscoll administration, MassDOT leadership, and the MBTA for their

partnership that allows the region to function. J. Franklin-Hodge stated that the City of Boston deeply values its partnership with the MPO, and that they are working together to invest in the region's safety, accessibility, and resilience to climate change, which offers the opportunity to promote economic development and reduce the region's inequities. J. Franklin-Hodge expressed appreciation for the City of Boston's opportunity to chair the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee that guides the MPO's capital planning to support projects that are regional priorities. J. Franklin-Hodge emphasized the importance of programs that benefit every community in the region and promote connectedness. J. Franklin-Hodge stated that safety remains at the heart of the City of Boston's transportation goals by aligning Boston's Vision Zero Action Plan with regional and statewide safety efforts. J. Franklin-Hodge also acknowledged transportation as a leading source of emissions contributing to climate change and stated that incentivizing transit is a powerful strategy to address these challenges, noting the MBTA's efforts to eliminate slow zones and the MBTA's fare-free pilot programs. J. Franklin-Hodge also spoke about the MBTA's fiscal cliff and its future implications.

Andy Reker, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, spoke about the Advisory Council's structural transition and stated that the Advisory Council recently held its last session with the current cohort and structure. A. Reker presented three main takeaways from the meeting, including the following:

- Advisory Council members expressed that they gained valuable information through the experience of participating in the Advisory Council, including individuals without a background in transportation.
- The Advisory Council has provided value in working to remind planners to focus on people moving around in the region, municipalities, and communities.
- The Advisory Council wishes that during the restructuring the focus can remain on the region as a whole and planning over administrative boundaries to continue promoting a cohesive transportation system.

Marc Draisen, MAPC, thanked members for their remarks, and spoke about TIP project readiness. M. Draisen stated that it is challenging for TIP projects to progress according to their schedules, resulting in MassDOT and the MBTA bringing alternative projects for consideration. This forces the MPO to make decisions to fund these projects on an expedited timeline. M. Draisen stated that while these projects are worthy of funding, many local projects are overlooked, which is not in alignment with the MPO's goals. M. Draisen expressed the importance of working together to determine the cause of project delays and finding solutions to allow projects to progress on time. M. Draisen recommended forming a committee with other MPOs in Massachusetts that may be facing similar issues.

J. Gulliver responded that the Highway Division recognizes the issue of project readiness, and there have been many discussions with the administration on how to resolve readiness issues. J. Gulliver stated that it is difficult to identify one solution to this issue, and that agencies will have to work together to maintain consistency in project readiness.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham), welcomed the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) as the newest board member and expressed appreciation for the MPO's federal partners who advocated for inclusion of the regional transit authorities (RTAs) on the MPO board.

Brian Kane, MBTA Advisory Board, expressed appreciation for the MPO staff members and their hard work supporting the MPO board.

Joi Singh, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), expressed appreciation for FHWA's partnership with the MPO, which has promoted improvements in safety, equity, and excellence in transportation in the Boston region. J. Singh congratulated the MPO for being awarded two Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grants, totaling \$9.6 million. J. Singh stated that approximately \$2 billion in grant funding has been distributed throughout Massachusetts to advance safety initiatives in many municipalities. J. Singh also expressed appreciation that the MPO updated the Memorandum of Understanding and adopted the revised Operations Plan, incorporating rights of the RTAs serving the region, and for the work the MPO is doing to identify and advance a sufficient pipeline of local and regionally developed projects to utilize target funding. J. Singh stated that FHWA looks forward to continuing its partnership with the MPO.

Peter Butler, Federal Transit Administration (FTA), reiterated comments commending the MPO's work and expressed support for comments related to housing and transportation. P. Butler stated that the FTA is proud of the MPO's work and the partnership with the MPO. P. Butler stated that because of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the FTA's Annual Program has grown from \$13 billion to \$21 billion, and Massachusetts has benefited from this growth. P. Butler stated that during the next year, the FTA expects to award \$600 million in discretionary funding to enhance transit in the Boston region. P. Butler stated that the FTA looks forward to working with the MPO in the upcoming year.

5. Welcome by the Executive Director—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Boston Region MPO Staff*

Tegin Teich, Executive Director of the MPO staff, welcomed the board members and audience to the second Annual Meeting for the MPO, which serves as an opportunity to celebrate new board members and the MPO's recent accomplishments.

T. Teich welcomed back returning board members, including the Town of Arlington, the Town of Burlington representing the North Suburban Planning Council, the City of Newton, and the Town of Norwood representing the Three Rivers Interlocal Council.

T. Teich welcomed new members, including the new RTAs representatives from the MWRTA and Cape Ann Transit Authority (CATA) who will hold a seat on the board on a rotating basis.

T. Teich emphasized the importance of the MPO's role in the regional planning process, which is established through federal legislation to ensure that federal funds are invested responsibly, particularly bringing together local and community needs.

T. Teich stated that the MPO's decision-making process is supported by a staff of 55 transportation planners, data analysts, data scientists, engagement and communications experts, and many others. T. Teich expressed appreciation for the MPO staff and their efforts to support the MPO board in making informed decisions.

T. Teich overviewed the rest of the agenda for the meeting, which included a presentation from the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organization's (AMPO) Transportation Planning Director, a ten-minute break, a public comment period, MPO staff presentations on grants, funding, and capital investments, the election of the MPO's Vice Chair, and the appointment of committee slates.

6. Action Item: Election of Vice Chair—*David Mohler, Executive Director of the Office of Transportation Planning, MassDOT*

Vote

A motion to approve MAPC as the MPO's Vice Chair was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by the City of Newton (R. Fuller). The motion carried.

7. Federal Policy Priorities—*Caitlin Cook, Transportation Planning Director, Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO)*

Caitlin Cook, AMPO, presented AMPO's legislative priorities for the upcoming reauthorization.

C. Cook stated that AMPO is the national association representing more than 400 MPOs across the nation. Its mission is to help communities thrive by strengthening the MPOs that plan for safe, reliable, and equitable and accessible multimodal transportation networks. C. Cook stated that AMPO represents MPOs of all sizes, regions, and needs, and AMPO strives to provide innovative approaches and curated solutions to help all MPOs.

C. Cook stated that at AMPO's recent conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, AMPO released its second iteration of Steering Ahead, AMPO's roadmap for reauthorization. AMPO's roadmap has five main priorities:

- Increase Planning Funds to Meet Federal Planning Requirements
- Shifting Certain Discretionary Funding to Formula Funding
- Reducing Local Match for Federal Transportation Programs
- Increasing Uniformity in Carryover of Federal Funds
- MPOs Becoming Direct Recipients for Certain Federal Funds

C. Cook spoke about shifting discretionary funding to formula funding. Survey results demonstrated that many participants found it challenging to apply for discretionary funds. The potential benefits of shifting from discretionary funds to formula funds include the following:

- Reduced cost and burden for applicants
- Equitable funding allocation
- Stability in long-term planning
- Enhanced project flexibility
- Improved project pipelines
- Capacity building
- Collaborative opportunities

C. Cook spoke about reducing local match requirements. C. Cook stated that FHWA funds are typically split by 80 percent federal funding and 20 percent local match. However, C. Cook stated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, municipalities showed difficulty meeting the local match requirements. C. Cook stated that the survey results demonstrated that most participants would prefer 100 percent federal funding or a ten percent local match. The potential benefits of reducing the local match include the following:

- Improved product delivery time
- Increased flexibility with funds
- Increased stability due to less reliance on local revenue sources
- Decreased balances

C. Cook spoke about the fourth priority, Increasing Uniformity in Carryover of Federal Funds. C. Cook stated that AMPO is considering improving uniformity in carryover funding nationwide and the ability to better anticipate balances and draw down with larger projects. C. Cook stated that the primary reason for accruing a balance is staffing shortages.

C. Cook spoke about the fifth priority, MPOs Becoming Direct Recipients for Certain Federal Funds, which is being explored as an opt-in program for larger, resourced MPOs interested in taking on the additional administrative task. Potential benefits to this include the following:

- Streamlined funding process
- Reduced requirements
- Faster project delivery
- Increased collaboration
- Enhanced accountability

C. Cook stated that 100 percent of MPOs that participated in the survey indicated that they would be interested in direct recipient status for PL/5303 funding.

C. Cook stated that AMPO's legislative priorities are interconnected, and they must work together to successfully benefit MPOs.

C. Cook stated that AMPO works in collaboration with many other national stakeholders, such as the National League of Cities, the National Association of Regional Councils, the National Association of Development Organizations, the National Association of Counties, and the United States Conference of Mayors. C. Cook stated that AMPO meets with these entities regularly to approach Congress with a unified voice that represents the transportation community.

In addition, C. Cook highlighted one of AMPOs recent resources, the MPO Institute, which supports the evolving role of MPOs, understands the need for MPO-centric training, and provides content to tackle the challenges posed by retirements and problems with staff retention. C. Cook stated that, on average, individuals that take the courses increase their knowledge levels by two levels and develop a better understanding of an MPO.

Lastly, C. Cook highlighted AMPO's 2025 conference, which will be held in Providence, Rhode Island, from September 15 through September 19, 2025.

Break, 10 minutes

8. Public Comments

Wig Zamore, Somerville resident, thanked board members for the Green Line Extension and Community Path Extension in the City of Somerville, a \$2.3 billion project that was completed on time and within its budget.

In addition, W. Zamore brought attention to the Urban Ring Project, which was proposed by the MBTA and MassDOT and would improve circumferential connections among the MBTA's transit lines. W. Zamore suggested that the project could connect the Longwood Medical area and Kendall Square, which are two of the top research areas in the United States. W. Zamore stated that one of the groups that is the most marginalized regarding transit equity and environmental equity is the Hispanic population. W. Zamore stated that the Hispanic population would benefit the most from the Urban Ring Project. W. Zamore suggested considering a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) study on this topic.

9. Boston Region MPO Funding Overview and Planning Spotlights— *Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Boston Region MPO Staff*

T. Teich reviewed the MPO's vision statement, which is defined in the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Destination 2050*, which states that the Boston Region MPO envisions a modern, well-maintained transportation system that supports a sustainable, healthy, livable, and economically vibrant region. To achieve this vision, the transportation system must be safe and resilient, incorporate emerging technologies, and provide equitable access, excellent mobility, and varied transportation options.

T. Teich spoke about planning investments, which are detailed in the MPO's UPWP. In FFY 2024, there was \$5.9 million in federal 3C PL and 5303 funds and local match, and \$3.2 million from other sources.

T. Teich overviewed capital funding in the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which included \$3.75 billion for the MBTA, \$1.59 billion for MassDOT priorities, \$727 million for the Boston Region MPO's priorities, and \$107 million for MWRTA and CATA. In total, there was \$6 billion in federal transportation funding for the Boston region in FFYs 2025–29.

T. Teich stated that approximately 30 percent of PL and 5303 funding is invested in each of three planning areas:

- Support to the MPO and committees and 3C documents
- MPO programs
- Computer resources, data, and the travel demand model

Support to the MPO and committees and 3C documents include the LRTP, the TIP, and the UPWP.

MPO programs include multimodal and modal programs, climate and resilience programs, and equity, engagement, the MPO's outcomes.

T. Teich stated that approximately 10 percent is invested in technical assistance, discrete project investments, and consultant support.

T. Teich focused on five planning spotlights, including the following:

- Transportation finance
- Freight decarbonization
- Travel demand modeling
- Engagement
- Safety

T. Teich stated that these spotlights represent compelling advancements in the MPO's work and emphasize what the MPO can accomplish with federal funding.

T. Teich stated that the MPO has been advancing foundational and innovative work related to transportation funding strategies. In FFY 2024, MPO staff completed an assessment of roadway-pricing strategies across the country to understand lessons learned and relevance for potential implementation in the Boston region. In addition, MPO staff completed an analysis of funding strategies for transit agencies. In FFY 2025, MPO staff plan to further study the impacts of roadway pricing.

T. Teich spoke about decarbonizing the freight sector. MPO staff completed their first study in this field, Sustainability and Decarbonizing in the Freight and Logistics Sector in the North Suffolk Area. This study proposed strategies for alternative fuels, air quality reporting, mode shift, and improved coordination. In FFY 2025, the MPO's freight program will study the use of cargo e-bikes for first- and last-mile freight connections.

T. Teich spoke about evolving data and tools, including the release of the MPO's new travel demand model, TDM23. This model is publicly available and has dynamic documentation that makes its structure transparent to users and the public. MPO staff's ongoing work on this effort includes expanding the suite of tools to support regional planning.

T. Teich spoke about enhancing engagement, and discussed the MPO's *Unlocking the Blue Hills* StoryMap, which received international recognition in 2024. In addition, MPO staff are piloting the Community Planning Lab, aiming to engage stakeholders who are traditionally less heard in the MPO planning process. The pilot program was a day-long educational engagement tool for community-based organizations to cultivate peer learning and empower them to effectively advocate for their community's transportation needs. The pilot program was developed in partnership with the Advisory Council, which represents broad stakeholder interest in the MPO's planning process. MPO staff are now in the process of restructuring the Advisory Council to advance its goals of

implementing best practices in diverse engagement and outreach. T. Teich stated that there was a closing ceremony for the Advisory Council on November 13, 2024, and expressed appreciation for Lenard Diggins, who has chaired the Advisory Council for five years and will continue to represent the Advisory Council on the board during the transitional period.

Lastly, T. Teich spoke about the MPO's efforts to expand investments in safety, which include the SS4A Vision Zero Action Plan and the SS4A Supplemental Planning and Demonstration Grant. T. Teich stated that MPO staff will continue advancing the plan and demonstration grants through FFY 2028.

T. Teich stated that she hopes these spotlights have helped illuminate what the MPO can accomplish using a unique and collaborative regional framework to advance transportation through the MPO's planning work. T. Teich stated that the MPO can demonstrate power and impact to leverage funding and planning work to implement change on a regional scale.

Discussion

David Mohler, MassDOT, asked if the MPO has selected communities for the SS4A demonstration grant.

Rebecca Morgan, MPO staff, responded that the MPO reached out to municipalities as a part of the application process and spoke with them about projects that would fit within the general structure that the MPO is developing as a part of the Vision Zero Action Plan. In addition, MPO staff conducted a safety analysis that identified high-risk locations, and the MPO will use that data to consider communities for the grant.

Julia Wallerice, MAPC, asked if the Travel Demand Model was developed in 2023.

T. Teich responded that the model was released in FFY 2024, but in the calendar year 2023.

Jen Rowe, City of Boston, emphasized the significance of the MPO's body of work in the last year, and congratulated T. Teich and the MPO staff for supporting the MPO board and tackling regional issues such as roadway pricing, decarbonizing freight, and safety.

10. Boston Region MPO Grants Strategy and Highlights—*Rebecca Morgan, Director of Projects and Partnerships, Boston Region MPO*

R. Morgan presented an overview of the MPO's federal grant strategy and the impact that this approach can have on transportation in the region.

R. Morgan stated that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is a once in a generation funding opportunity with \$550 billion available for discretionary funds for FFYs 2022–26.

R. Morgan stated that the MPO decided to pursue these federal funds as well as state grants.

R. Morgan stated that MPO staff considered the MPO's goals in the LRTP to determine which funding opportunities to apply for, including the following:

- Equity
- Safety
- Mobility and Reliability
- Access and Connectivity
- Resiliency
- Clean and Healthy Communities

Additional considerations for pursuing grant applications include the guiding principles that the MPO uses in selecting grants, including the following:

- Align with and further MPO goal(s)
- Address a regional or local need
- Fill a gap or remove a barrier
- Leading to further projects
- Increasing opportunity for additional funding
- Feasible

R. Morgan stated that the projects the MPO pursues are selected from a regional approach. R. Morgan stated that the MPO is investing in developing regional frameworks to support local needs.

R. Morgan stated that the MPO has applied for six grants, four of which have been successful. Successful grant applications are as follows:

- SS4A I: Vision Zero Action Plan
- SS4A II: Demonstration and supplemental planning projects
- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP)
- Mobility, Access, and Transportation Insecurity

Grant applications the MPO is still waiting to hear about include the following:

- Prioritization Process Pilot Program
- Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program

The MPO was awarded \$1.1 million for its MVP project, NO-HEAT. This project will create regional heat and mobility datasets, support a fine-scale analysis for the region, identify high-risk locations for people walking, biking, and rolling, support heat relief pilot implementation, and recommend safe and comfortable active travel methods.

The MPO was awarded \$2.7 million from the SS4A Grant program for its Vision Zero Action Plan. The action plan will develop a regional framework and roadmap to create safer streets, identify high-risk locations at a regional and local level, recommend policy, support projects with proven safety countermeasures, and identify timeframes and funding requirements for the entities responsible for each of the actions.

The MPO was also awarded \$9.3 million from the SS4A grant program for demonstration and supplemental planning projects. This will include a safety analysis to identify locations, walk and bike audits, a pilot of quick-build traffic-calming countermeasures, data collection, and engagement activities, and these findings will be incorporated into the MPO's regional plan.

R. Morgan stated that collaboration is essential for these efforts, especially with the owners of roads. R. Morgan stated that the MPO is looking forward to further collaboration as the MPO works toward solutions for these safety issues. R. Morgan also stated that these grants give the MPO the opportunity to pursue expedited progress towards its regional goals, provide data, tools, resources, and technical assistance for cities and towns, and potentially lead to capital and construction projects.

Discussion

Lynsey Heffernan, MBTA, stated that the MBTA recently released an internal climate assessment that demonstrates the work that the MBTA will need to pursue to respond to the changing climate, and she expressed interest in aligning with the MPO's NO-HEAT project.

Matt Moran, City of Boston, expressed appreciation for the MPO's partnership with the City of Boston on these grants, and expressed interest in partnership on the NO-HEAT project. He stated that the City of Boston has been prioritizing heat resiliency to promote equity.

11. Boston Region MPO Capital Investment Impacts—*Ethan Lapointe, Transportation Improvement Program Manager, Boston Region MPO*

Ethan Lapointe, Transportation Improvement Program Manager, presented an overview of the impact of the MPO's capital investments in the region, focusing on Complete Streets and Intersection Improvement projects, how the MPO's investments have

advanced the MPO's vision and goals, and the benefits the projects have had on the Boston region.

E. Lapointe presented a map of the MPO-funded projects that are completed or will be completed between October 2023 and November 2025. E. Lapointe stated that these projects demonstrate the impact of leveraging TIP funding. E. Lapointe stated that each of these investments are meant to work towards the MPO's LRTP goals, and he expanded on the following topics:

- Safety
- Access to Transit
- Equity
- Proximity to New Development
- Connecting Previous and Future Projects

E. Lapointe talked about safety and stated that many projects the MPO has supported began on corridors lacking quality, accessible infrastructure for people to safely walk and bike. E. Lapointe provided an example, Natick Reconstruction of Route 27. Route 27 is the primary north-south connection for the town of Natick, but its sidewalks greatly varied in condition, were obstructed by utility poles or vegetative overgrowth, or did not have a protective curb. E. Lapointe stated that these issues were addressed when the roadway was reconstructed with MPO funding, which has helped to extend access for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Natick Reconstruction of Route 27 project also pertains to access to transit. The reconstruction project resolved a significant last-mile gap to allow pedestrians to safely access this station and the area's bus routes.

E. Lapointe then spoke about equity and the focus on investing in transportation options in disadvantaged communities to fully meet residential transportation needs. E. Lapointe focused on two projects in the cities of Everett and Chelsea, both of which were in environmental justice communities. These corridors also support three MBTA bus routes that are planned to become high-frequency routes. Survey results showed that 85 percent of riders on these bus routes are low-income, and 94 percent of them walked to their bus stops. E. Lapointe stated that recent analyses by MassDOT have found that in the Boston area 50 percent of car accidents involving pedestrians occurred within 300 feet of a bus stop. This information highlights the need for improvements such as curb bump-outs to slow down vehicles approaching pedestrian crossings, protected bike lanes in main intersections, and lighting improvements.

E. Lapointe focused on the Proximity to New Development goal and highlighted the City of Newton's Needham Street Corridor Project that was recently funded. Needham

Street serves as an important retail and commuter corridor that provides key crossings over Interstate 95 and the Charles River. E. Lapointe stated that there is a proposed development of 800 new housing units, and residents have expressed concern about the effects this development could have on an already congested corridor. E. Lapointe noted that although there is an existing bus service connecting the new development to the Green Line and commuter rail, there is limited pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure available for those willing to use alternative travel modes. E. Lapointe stated that Complete Streets projects aim to provide safer infrastructure for vulnerable road users, encourage mode shift, and mitigate residential traffic concerns resulting from new development.

E. Lapointe spoke about how the MPO prioritizes projects that are connected to completed projects and potential future projects, highlighting projects that have helped to close gaps in the region's transportation network. In 2014, the MPO funded a bridge replacement project for several connections over Interstate 95, including the bridge carrying Highland Avenue in Needham, which added protected bike lanes and continuous sidewalks across the bridge. E. Lapointe stated that the recently completed Highland Avenue/Needham Street project extended the 2014 bridge replacement project into Needham and Newton. In addition, a third project seeking construction funding in the 2026–30 TIP would extend these connections further to Needham's commuter rail stations along Highland Avenue, providing a passage for people to walk, roll, and bike safely between the Needham commuter rail stations, over Interstate 95 and the Charles River, and through the developing Needham Street corridor into Newton Highlands.

E. Lapointe stated that there are additional ways to provide connectivity other than roadway projects. The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, for example, has been constructed in increments since 2009 and provides a seamless bike corridor across several municipalities.

E. Lapointe stated that the highlighted projects are only a snapshot of what the MPO funds within a given year. Some upcoming TIP projects include the following:

- Columbus Avenue Bus Lanes Phase Two (FFY 2025)
- Medford Mystic River Underpass at Route 28/Wellington (FFY 2025)
- Peabody Independence Greenway Extensions (FFY 2025)
- Phase One of the Belmont Community Path (FFY 2026)

In addition, E. Lapointe stated that the MPO will continue to support projects that appear in the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan, including the following:

- Boston-Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue

- Somerville-McGrath Highway Reconstruction
- Framingham-Designing Grade Separation of Route 126/135
- Lexington-Redesigning the Route 4/225 Interchange

E. Lapointe encouraged board members to reach out if they are interested in applying for TIP funding, and he expressed appreciation for Adriana Jacobsen, Capital Programming Planner, who contributed a significant portion of the work for the presentation.

12. Action Item: Approval of September 19, 2024, MPO Meeting Minutes

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. Meeting Minutes of September 19, 2024 ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of September 19, 2024, was made by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood) (Tom O'Rourke) and seconded by the City of Boston (J. Rowe). The motion carried. The following members abstained: Town of Brookline (Bernard Greene), SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Wrentham) (Rachel Benson), and MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (Jim Nee).

13. Action Item: Appointment of Committee Slates—David Mohler, Executive Director of the Office of Transportation Planning, MassDOT

D. Mohler presented the recommended committee slates shown in Table 1.

Table 1
MPO Committee Membership

UPWP	Administration and Finance	Congestion Management Process	TIP Process, Readiness, and Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MassDOT (Chair) • City of Boston • ICC, Somerville • MAPC • MBTA Advisory Board • MWRC, Framingham • City of Newton • Advisory Council • TRIC • Town of Wrentham 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MBTA Advisory Board (Chair) • City of Boston • MAPC • MassDOT • MWRC, Framingham • Advisory Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Everett (Chair) • City of Boston • MassDOT • Massport • MBTA Advisory Board • Advisory Council • Town of Arlington • TRIC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Boston (Chair) • ICC, Somerville • MAPC • MassDOT • MassDOT (Seat 2) • MAGIC, Acton • MWRC, Framingham • MWRTA and CATA • Advisory Council • Town of Arlington • Town of Brookline

CATA = Cape Ann Transportation Authority. ICC = Inner Core Committee. MAGIC = Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination. MAPC = Metropolitan Area Planning Council. MBTA = Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. MWRC = MetroWest Regional Collaborative. MWRTA = MetroWest Regional Transit Authority. TRIC = Three Rivers Interlocal Council.

New members to the committees included the addition of MWRTA and CATA to the TIP Process, Readiness, and Engagement Committee.

Vote

A motion to approve the MPO’s committee slates was made by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham) (D. Giombetti) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent). The motion carried.

14. Members’ Items

D. Giombetti expressed concern due to several projects that are not meeting their target completion date. D. Giombetti stated that residents are concerned about the delays in

some of the projects and stated that he wanted to bring this issue to the attention of the MPO board. D. Giombetti expressed concern about potential delays for future projects due to the growing number of MetroWest projects and asked the board to consider ways to address residents' frustration.

John Bechard, MassDOT, asked if D. Giombetti is referring to construction completion dates.

D. Giombetti responded that yes, there are projects in construction with initial target completion dates that are not being met. D. Giombetti stated that residents are concerned due to the disruption that construction causes.

T. Bent expressed appreciation for the MPO staff and board members who supported the Annual Meeting and stated that the meeting was very informative.

D. Mohler stated that the Annual Meeting is put together mainly by the MPO staff, and they do a great job.

T. Teich reminded board members that the next MPO board meeting is on November 21, 2024, at 10:00 AM.

15. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent) and seconded by the City of Boston (J. Rowe). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members

At-Large City (City of Everett)
At-Large City (City of Newton)

At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)

City of Boston

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
(MBTA)

Massachusetts Department of Transportation
(MassDOT)

MassDOT Highway Division

Massachusetts Port Authority
MBTA Advisory Board

Representatives and Alternates

Eric Molinari
Mayor Ruthanne Fuller
Jenn Martin
Ned Codd
David Koses
John Alessi
Bernard Greene
Erin Chute
Amy Ingles
Mike Sandman
Jascha Franklin-Hodge
Jen Rowe
Matt Moran
Joi Singh
Ken Miller
Peter Butler
Kirstie Tirandazi
Mayor Katjana Ballantyne
Tom Bent
Brad Rawson

Lynsey Heffernan
Laura Gilmore
Sandy Johnston

Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt
David Mohler
John Bechard
Derek Krevat
Administrator Jonathan Gulliver
John Romano
Sarah Lee
Brian Kane
Hanna Switekowski
Frank Tramontozzi

Members	Representatives and Alternates
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)	Marc Draisen Eric Bourassa Julia Wallerce
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Regional Transit Authorities (Cape Ann Transportation Authority [CATA] and MetroWest Regional Transit Authority [MWRTA])	Jim Nee Tyler Terrasi Felicia Webb
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	Francesca Arsenault Kristen Guichard
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	Melisa Tintocalis
Regional Transportation Advisory Board	Andrew Reker
South Shore Coalition (Town of Hull)	Irwin Nesoff Chris Dilorio
SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Wrentham)	Rachel Benson
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood)	Tom O'Rourke Steven Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Caitlin Cook	Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO)
Srilekha Murthy	BETA Group, Inc.
Eddie Marques	CATA
Nayeli Rodriguez	City of Boston
Heyne Kim	City of Boston
Mayor Jen Grigoraitis	City of Melrose
Neha Singh	City of Somerville
Samira Saad	FHWA
Anthony James	FHWA
Marjorie Weinberger	MAPC
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT
Michelle Scott	MassDOT
Barbara Lachance	MassDOT
Miranda Briseño	MassDOT
Derek Shooster	MassDOT
Stephanie Abundo	MassDOT
Andrew Wang	MassDOT
Angela Servello	MBTA
Wes Edwards	MBTA
Mike Malia	MBTA
Josh Ostroff	MBTA
Glenn Geiler	MBTA
Patrick Reed	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
Cam Sullivan	MWRTA
Joy Glynn	MWRTA
Jon Rockwell	TEC, Inc.
Dan Murphy	Town of Brookline
Chas Carey	Town of Brookline
Meghan McNamara	Town of Lexington
Sheila Page	Town of Lexington
Donna Cotterell	Town of Marblehead
Alex Eitler	Town of Marblehead
Jay Flynn	TransitMatters
Baraa Issam	
Paula Doucette	
Kevin Kang	
Nathaniel Kerr	
Ted Banken	
Wig Zamore	

Other Attendees	Affiliation
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Patricia S. Wada	
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MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Abby Cutrumbes Heerema

Adriana Jacobsen

Ali Kleyman

Annette Demchur

Betsy Harvey Herzfeld

Dave Hong

Erin Maguire

Ethan Lapointe

Gina Perille

Ken Dumas

Lauren Magee

Priyanka Chapekar

Rebecca Morgan

Sam Taylor

Sean Rourke

Stella Jordan

Steven Andrews

Tanner Bonner

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