

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

May 16, 2019 Meeting

10:00 AM–12:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Steve Woelfel, Chair, representing Stephanie Pollack, Secretary, and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

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

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of April 11, 2019
- Release the draft federal fiscal year (FFY) 2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for a 30-day public review period

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 12.

2. Public Comments

State Representative Michelle L. Ciccolo (15th Middlesex District) and Jim Malloy (Town Administrator, Town of Lexington) advocated for the inclusion of the Route 4/225 (Bedford Street) and Hartwell Avenue project in Lexington in the MPO's next Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Destination 2040*. A public comment letter signed by Representative Ciccolo, State Senator Cindy F. Friedman, State Senator Michael J. Barrett, and State Representative Kenneth I. Gordon is posted to the [MPO meeting calendar](#). Representative Ciccolo stated that the project corridor is a gateway to Hanscom Air Force Base, home to more than 10,000 employees. Hanscom is currently expanding and expected to add 1,000 jobs. The existing transportation infrastructure is limited, with congestion and safety issues, and needs to be upgraded to support future development. The Town of Lexington has invested \$9M in infrastructure improvements in anticipation of the project, including water main and bridge improvements.

Representative Ciccolo stated that the federal base, Massport airport facility, local roads, and state highway combine to create a complex project that requires the support of multiple agencies. The Town is in the midst of advancing a full rezoning of this area

to support smart growth, increased density, and mixed-use development. This rezoning must be accompanied by transportation improvements to address resident concerns.

J. Malloy added that Bedford Street and Hartwell Avenue comprise a key commuter route to Lincoln Labs, the Towns of Lexington and Bedford, and the Hartwell Avenue and Maguire Avenue office parks. J. Malloy stated that there are approximately 30,000 to 35,000 jobs in the area. J. Malloy stated that four Highway Safety Improvement Program crash clusters are within the project limits. J. Malloy stated that the project will improve safety, capacity, clean air, transit access, and economic vitality. J. Malloy stated that the Town of Lexington will be meeting with MassDOT to review the project scope and is seeking design funds in 2020. J. Malloy asked that the MPO include the project in the FFYs 2025–29 time band of *Destination 2040*.

Eric Bourassa (Metropolitan Area Planning Council [MAPC]) asked whether the Town of Lexington plans to encourage housing development, noting that this will help Lexington meet its 40B housing goals while promoting the long-term vitality of the area. J. Malloy stated that the rezoning efforts are focused on promoting housing and other mixed use.

Tegin Teich (Regional Transportation Advisory Council [Advisory Council]) asked whether there are plans to promote transit to reduce congestion. Representative Ciccolo stated that the Town of Lexington operates shuttles to Alewife Station, adding that she has initiated funding in the state budget for a feasibility study of developing additional shuttle service. J. Malloy added that the town recently completed a transit study with the Towns of Bedford and Burlington in hopes of improving coordination among transit services operated by the towns.

3. Chair's Report—*Steve Woelfel, MassDOT*

There was none.

4. Committee Chairs' Reports—*Bryan Pounds, Chair, UPWP Committee*

B. Pounds reported that the UPWP Committee met prior to this meeting and recommended that the draft UPWP be forwarded to the MPO board for approval to release for a 30-day public review period.

5. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Tegin Teich, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

T. Teich reviewed the content of the Advisory Council's comment letter regarding the FFYs 2020–24 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The letter asks that staff work to better explain project lengths, commends the funding goals in the TIP, asks that the MPO pay particular attention to air quality and equity when revising evaluation

criteria, and supports a conversation about barriers to advancing projects. The letter expresses concern over the late addition of the Sumner Tunnel Reconstruction project given the shortened public comment periods, and stresses the importance of sharing this change with the public.

6. Executive Director's Report—*Scott Peterson, Co-Interim Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

S. Peterson thanked the municipalities of Framingham, Hamilton, Hingham, and Arlington for their participation in the UPWP study *Transportation Access Studies of Commercial Business Districts*. S. Peterson added that there would be no off-site MPO meeting in May.

7. Approval of April 11, 2019, MPO Meeting Minutes—*Róisín Foley, MPO Staff*

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of April 11, 2019, was made by the SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (Glenn Trindade) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent). At-Large City (City of Everett) (Jay Monty) and the North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly) (Aaron Clausen) abstained. The Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce) (Tom O'Rourke) noted that page one of the minutes states that project #87790 (Interchange Improvements at I-95/I-93/University Avenue and I-95 Widening in Canton and Westwood) is estimated to cost approximately \$31 million, but the correct estimated cost for this project is approximately \$200 million. With this change, the motion carried.

8. Draft UPWP—*Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff*
Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Draft FFY 2020 UPWP](#)
2. [Draft FFY 2020 UPWP: Appendices](#)
3. [Staff Presentation: Draft FFY 2020 UPWP](#)

The UPWP describes federal funds used by MPO staff and MAPC for transportation planning in the 97 municipalities of the Boston region throughout the next FFY. These funds are split approximately 70/30 between 3C PL funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Section 5303 funds from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The overall funding is split approximately 80/20 between MPO staff and MAPC. This funding supports the MPO's core certification activities, studies and technical analyses undertaken by MPO staff, travel demand modeling activities, ongoing programs like transit and bicycle/pedestrian planning, and one-time discrete studies. The UPWP also lists funds for support activities like information technology and work

conducted on contract for MassDOT, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), and other agencies.

The UPWP is guided by the vision of the LRTP, and helps to develop project concepts for the TIP and LRTP. The UPWP is developed annually beginning with public outreach in the fall, and includes meetings of the MPO's UPWP Committee and consultation with the Advisory Council.

The breakdown of the FFY 2020 UPWP budget is presented in the table below.

	3C PL Funds	Section 5303 Funds	Proposed FFY 2020 Budget
CTPS	\$3,089,299	\$1,355,757	\$4,445,056
MAPC	\$724,650	\$348,225	\$1,072,875
3C Budget Subtotal	\$3,813,949	\$1,703,982	\$5,517,931
Agency-Funded CTPS Work			\$1,146,757
FFY 2020 UPWP Budget			\$6,664,688

S. Johnston asked that the MPO vote to release the Draft FFY 2020 UPWP for a 30-day public review period to begin on May 17 and end on June 17.

Discussion

E. Bourassa commended S. Johnston for improvements made to the UPWP document.

Ken Miller (FHWA) asked whether the MPO has a policy regarding which outside agencies MPO staff may contract with, particularly regarding the contract for the Weymouth Union Point project. S. Peterson replied that MPO staff does not usually enter into contracts with private entities. The Southfield Redevelopment Authority is the local governmental agency at the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station, responsible for the Union Point project.

Vote

A motion to release the draft FFY 2020 UPWP for a 30-day public review period was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (John Romano) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

9. Interactive TIP Database—*Matt Genova, MPO Staff*

M. Genova presented the newly redesigned [Interactive TIP Database](#). This application is part of an effort to make the TIP more easily understood by members of the public. The application provides information for projects funded with FHWA funds in the FFYs 2020–24 TIP. The project pages highlight the information used to score TIP projects and provide a detailed breakdown of scores by criteria. Each project page features a funding summary detailing how funds are allocated to the project across programming years. This application provides the most up-to-date information the MPO staff has on each project. In the coming months, this platform will be expanded to include more information on past TIP projects as well as additional TIP-related content.

10. LRTP: Continued Discussion of Major Infrastructure Projects and Investment Programs—*Anne McGahan, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Staff Presentation: Destination 2040 Projects and Programs](#)
2. [Major Infrastructure Universe of Projects Summary and Evaluations](#)
3. [Additional Project Summaries: Boston](#)
4. [Staff Recommended Scenarios](#)
5. [Written Public Comment Letters Received Following May 2, 2019](#)

A. McGahan reintroduced the discussion of major infrastructure projects for inclusion in *Destination 2040*. At the meeting on May 2, 2019, the MPO reached a consensus that no more than 30 percent of funding should be programmed for major infrastructure projects. The following are additional policy questions for the MPO to consider when selecting projects for *Destination 2040*.

- Should the MPO continue funding projects that are currently in *Charting Progress to 2040* that have not yet been programmed in the TIP?
- Should the MPO establish a policy of not programming any single project that requires more than 30 percent of funding in a five-year time band?
- Should the MPO flex highway funding to transit projects?
- Should the MPO leave some funding unallocated in later time bands for projects that may emerge in the future, or for projects with cost overruns?
- Should the MPO include illustrative projects? These projects could not be funded in the financially constrained plan, but the MPO would prioritize if additional funding were to become available.

Project Information

Staff revised the [Major Infrastructure Universe of Projects Summary](#) handout based on comments from MPO members. Projects where MPO members voiced support were reclassified as municipal priorities. The City of Boston submitted detailed project information for [three additional projects](#).

Public Comments

MPO staff received four public comment letters following the meeting on May 2, 2019. These are posted to the [MPO meeting calendar](#) and express support for the Canton Interchange, Woburn Interchange, Woburn Washington Street Bridge, and Lexington Route 4/225 projects.

Staff Recommended Scenarios

Staff developed four funding scenarios for *Destination 2040*. All four scenarios include the draft FFYs 2020–24 TIP as the first time band of the LRTP. Staff attempted to keep the investment program funding goals established at the May 2, 2019, meeting constant across all scenarios. Project costs are inflated by 4 percent per year.

Scenario 1 shows new projects that could be funded under the 30 percent goal for major infrastructure. This scenario includes the four projects in *Charting Progress to 2040* and programs seven additional projects that are municipal priorities. This scenario programs one project with no municipal feedback but MassDOT action to advance the project, the Saugus Walnut Street Interchange project. This scenario has a surplus of approximately \$40 million in the last time band to account for cost overruns. In this scenario, projects in the 2035–40 time band are projects where action is being taken now. This scenario shows that funding would not be available for another 15 to 20 years to actually construct these projects.

Scenario 2 shows the effect on the plan when including the Canton Interchange project. This scenario funds the four projects in *Charting Progress* and the Lynn Western Avenue project. This project was evaluated for the TIP but was not considered because of its cost. By including the Canton Interchange, the MPO would exceed the 30 percent major infrastructure goal. The results would be the same if the MPO were to program any of the other larger interchanges, such as the I-93/I-95 interchange in Woburn. In this scenario, staff reduced the Complete Streets investment program by \$110 million in the 2035–40 time band to ensure that the LRTP would be financially constrained.

Scenario 3 includes the Canton Interchange and other smaller interchanges. To include the Canton Interchange with no deficit and retain investment program goals, the MPO would have to rethink the four projects that are in *Charting Progress*. This scenario

keeps Bridge Replacement at Route 27 over Route 9 in Natick and McGrath Boulevard in Somerville. Staff recommended these projects because they are further along in the study and design process. This scenario would eliminate Route 4 and 225 in Lexington and Route 126/135 in Framingham. This would allow the Canton Interchange to be funded along with three smaller interchange projects. The investment programs would maintain the goals agreed upon on May 2, 2019. There would be a surplus of about \$13 million in the last time band for cost increases.

Scenario 4 only programs projects in the current LRTP and the Lynn Western Avenue project. This scenario leaves the majority of the final time band unallocated, with the exception of the remaining funding needed to complete the Framingham project. This leaves about \$284 million unallocated. The MPO could use this funding to program any of the projects the MPO wants to prioritize, or leave it unallocated to fund projects that may emerge in the future. A. McGahan stated that Scenario 4 represents a baseline from which the MPO can consider the policy questions.

During the development of *Charting Progress*, the MPO conducted a scenario planning process resulting in the consensus that the MPO should focus on funding smaller operations and management projects. In addition, at the time of the plan's adoption, MassDOT's Capital Investment Plan was not complete, nor were MassDOT Project Selection Committee project evaluations, or the MBTA's Focus40 plan. Therefore, the MPO decided to leave most of the outer time bands unprogrammed. In so doing, the MPO was able to program 12 LRTP projects in the intervening TIPs. In past plans, larger projects were continually moved to later time bands and never constructed. The MPO now has only four projects remaining from the previous plan.

Discussion

T. Teich stated that projects with design work completed now may not remain relevant if they are programmed in time bands 15 to 20 years from now. Leaving funding unallocated allows flexibility.

J. Monty advocated for Sweetser Circle in Everett, Route 2A in Arlington, the Silver Line to Everett, and the MPO flexing funds to transit in general.

Laura Gilmore (Massport) stated that the description of the Cypher Street Extension project included in the project summary handout is not consistent with the scope of the MassDOT project. L. Gilmore asked staff to work with MassDOT to include the full scope of the project, and indicated Massport's support for the project. L. Gilmore stressed the project's importance for regional economic vitality.

E. Bourassa expressed support for not programming projects in later time bands due to the rapid pace of technological advancement and other unknown variables.

Richard Canale (At-Large Town) (Town of Lexington) echoed public comments from the Lexington Town Manager stating that Lexington has invested \$9 million in projects associated with Bedford Street/Hartwell Avenue and asked that staff ascertain how this might influence the total cost to the MPO.

R. Canale asked whether staff have analyzed the different scenarios for geographic equity. A. McGahan replied that staff had not done this, stating that all the projects in the LRTP are regionally significant so geographic distribution does not necessarily show the impact of projects.

T. O'Rourke noted that one reason the MPO cannot accommodate all the projects is because of the 30 percent funding goal for major infrastructure and asked whether such a goal is common among other MPOs. S. Woelfel replied that most other MPOs in the state do not have the kinds of large projects that exist in the Boston region.

K. Miller reiterated points he has made at previous meetings that the threshold from major infrastructure (\$20 million in cost and/or adding capacity to the system) would include most Complete Streets projects, and stated that current federal guidance does not include any specific dollar amount threshold. He acknowledged that it may be too difficult to change the definition mid-development of the plan, but noted that the MPO should be cognizant of the fact that if the definition were to be changed, some projects would become part of the normal TIP process. K. Miller stated that by having smaller projects in the LRTP, the MPO may lose focus on the intent of the LRTP process, which is to prioritize larger projects that take a long time to implement and send a signal to proponents to advance ideas.

S. Woelfel stated that MassDOT's position is that the definition of a major infrastructure project should be any project that must be modeled due to air quality and capacity impacts, stating that MassDOT is in agreement that the definition does not need to be so rigid.

A. McGahan noted that some of the projects listed cost less than \$20 million but do have capacity impacts.

T. Teich stated that the MPO should reconsider funding projects via the major infrastructure program that only add capacity to the system by increasing the ease of single-occupancy vehicle trips.

Rick Reed (Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination) (Town of Bedford) asked whether a project like the Canton Interchange would have to be in the LRTP if MassDOT decided to fund it with statewide funding. S. Woelfel stated that any project with air quality impacts must be in the LRTP, regardless of whether it is MPO or MassDOT funded.

There was some discussion of the inclusion of illustrative projects. These are projects that could not be funded in the financially constrained plan, but the MPO would list in the LRTP as priorities if funding were to become available. The MPO last listed illustrative projects in the plan prior to *Charting Progress*.

S. Woelfel stated that illustrative projects are not necessarily helpful because they give the sense that projects are advancing that are in fact not.

K. Miller noted that while the MPO has direct discretion over one-third of the federal funds allocated in the region, the MPO programs all of the federal and state funds allocated by the state in its TIP and doesn't have to limit itself to including projects for target funding in the LRTP. If the MPO thinks a certain project is important, it could include it in the plan to signal to the state that it is a long-term priority.

There was some discussion of the history of the Canton Interchange project's inclusion in the LRTP. S. Woelfel, A. McGahan, Tom Kadzis (City of Boston) (Boston Transportation Department), and T. O'Rourke discussed how the project was included in the LRTP with MPO target funding, was then amended to include statewide funds because of an increase in the state gas tax, and later removed due to the repeal of the gas tax increase.

T. O'Rourke added that Phase I of the project was completed with a MassWorks grant and Phase II is ongoing. The main portion, the reconstruction of the interchange, remains, and has been a local priority for many years.

J. Monty stated that if projects currently classified as major infrastructure could be funded under the Complete Streets program, there will be more projects competing for that; it is worth including at least some of these projects in the outer time bands or as illustrative projects to signal the MPO's priorities. The MPO can always reconsider in the future.

S. Woelfel stated that it would be helpful to know for the next meeting which projects should be modeled without the strict \$20 million threshold. A. McGahan replied that staff would attempt to do that, noting that some projects are still highly conceptual.

R. Reed stated that the MPO could include a statement in the LRTP about its support for the Canton Interchange without dedicating funds, given that the impact of the project is regional. T. Kadzis added that a statement like that could include a ballpark commitment of target funds should additional funding become available.

K. Miller added that there is a precedent for the MPO funding statewide projects, including the Route 128 corridor improvements project and the Green Line extension.

E. Bourassa questioned what a number of the projects in the outer bands, particularly interchange projects, achieve in terms of the MPO's goals for the region. E. Bourassa noted that the Governor's Commission on the Future of Transportation focused on moving people over moving vehicles, and expressed concern that interchange projects are simply displacing vehicles to other regional bottlenecks. E. Bourassa stated that there are lower cost, smarter ways to address congestion with technology and pricing that the state should pursue. E. Bourassa added that the circular conversation around flexing highway money to transit, given the MBTA's struggle to expend the capital it has, creates a situation where people continue to be frustrated by congestion and the only answers offered are the old solutions of increasing highway capacity.

T. Teich expressed Advisory Council support for E. Bourassa's points, stating that the MPO should not be focusing on funding specific interchanges or commit to designs that do not solve the problems the region will have in 2040.

Daniel Amstutz (At-Large Town) (Town of Arlington) and J. Monty expressed agreement with E. Bourassa and T. Teich.

A. Clausen stated that the MPO is addressing some of those concerns by restricting the amount of money allocated to major infrastructure, noting that 30 percent is already quite constrained.

T. Kadzis wondered whether pursuing some projects that increase capacity at least forestall congestion becoming worse. E. Bourassa replied that MAPC has attempted to develop quantitative tools to understand how increasing capacity affects land use. E. Bourassa stated that increases in congestion are the result of people and jobs being located where land is cheaper but not transit accessible. Some rural municipalities might say they want to attract jobs to lower density areas, but if roadway capacity increases it will induce some growth in inaccessible areas, with more growth in more accessible area, and roads across the region will continue to be congested. If solving congestion is the goal, there are better solutions, although they may be more politically challenging ones.

D. Amstutz noted that his impression from the discussion is that members are interested in some combination of Scenarios 1 and 4. S. Woelfel requested that staff bring a hybrid Scenario of the two to frame next week's discussion, and use the policy questions as the agenda.

T. Bent noted that the Green Line to Route 16 is included in Focus 40. A. McGahan stated that the MPO could allocate some funding to this project in the outer time bands.

Samantha Silverberg (MBTA) clarified that the MBTA's plan is to advance initial feasibility planning for the Green Line Extension, Phase II, the Silver line to Everett, and the Red/Blue connector with its own funds. None of these will move past that stage without full construction funding.

Paul Regan (MBTA Advisory Board) added his impression that the MBTA's Fiscal and Management Control Board would not approve funds for expansion projects given the existing repair backlog and that, generally speaking, the funding source for transit expansion is the state.

T. Bent stated that projects that will take many years to implement should be listed somewhere, lest they be forgotten.

P. Regan expressed the opinion that illustrative projects do not add much value, and often depend only on who is in the room.

A. McGahan asked members to think about their project priorities and positions on the policy questions for the next meeting.

D. Amstutz asked MPO staff to distribute the policy questions to members.

11. Members Items

E. Bourassa reported that MAPC would be hosting an event on incorporating art into transportation planning on May 17, 2019, in the Transportation Board Room at the State Transportation Building.

S. Woelfel stated that the public meetings for MassDOT's Capital Investment Plan would begin on May 21, 2019.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (G. Trindade) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan). 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)	Daniel Amstutz
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	Richard Canale
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Steve Woelfel
MassDOT Highway Division	John Bechard
	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Samantha
	Silverberg
Massachusetts Port Authority	Laura Gilmore
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)	Rick Reed
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Aaron Clausen
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Tegin Teich
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)	
SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Glenn Trindade
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Timothy Paris	MassDOT D4
Michelle Borge	Danvers Town Hall
Frank Tramontozzi	City of Quincy
Sara Scully	MWRTA
Thomas Nally	A Better City
Steve Olanoff	TRIC Alternate
Bryan Pounds	MassDOT
Mason Heilman	MA House of Representatives
Todd Baldwin	Town of Saugus
Jim Malloy	Town of Lexington
Representative Michelle Ciccolo	15 th Middlesex District
Wig Zamore	
Brad Rawson	City of Somerville

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Annette Demchur, Co-Interim Executive Director
Scott Peterson, Co-Interim Executive Director
Mark Abbott
Róisín Foley
Hiral Gandhi
Matt Genova
Sandy Johnston
Alexandra (Ali) Kleyman
Anne McGahan
