

MPO Meeting Minutes

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

December 3, 2020, Meeting

10:00 AM–11:56 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

David Mohler, 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 November 5, 2020
- Approve Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2021–25 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Adjustment One
- Release FFYs 2021–25 TIP Amendment Two for a 21-day public review period
- Approve the work program for *Trip Generation Rate Research*
- Approve the work program for *Addressing Priority Corridors from the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Needs Assessment* for FFY 2021
- Approve the work program for *Addressing Safety, Mobility and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways* for FFY 2021
- Approve the work program for *Regional Travel Demand Management (TDM) Strategies Coordination*

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on pages 8–10.

2. Chair’s Report—David Mohler, MassDOT

There was none.

3. Executive Director’s Report—Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)

T. Teich announced the hire of CTPS Deputy Executive Director, Gina Perille, and provided an overview of recent staff outreach activities.

4. Public Comments

Brad Rawson (Director of Mobility, City of Somerville) commented on the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (MBTA) *Forging Ahead* effort. B. Rawson stated that the MBTA and MassDOT are being forced into premature, damaging, and unique austerity measures, and called for the state legislature to deliver emergency funding to the MBTA to address the overlapping crises in public health, social equity, economic recovery, and climate change. B. Rawson stated that the proper forum for discussion of changes to bus routes is the MBTA's bus network redesign project. B. Rawson stressed Somerville's commitment to partnership with the MBTA and MPO to preserve transit that is essential for the entire region.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

Jay Monty (At-Large City) (City of Everett) stated that there would be a Congestion Management Process Committee meeting on December 17, 2020.

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

L. Diggins stated that the next Advisory Council meeting would be December 9, 2020.

7. Action Item: Approval of November 5, 2020, MPO Meeting Minutes—*Barbara Rutman, MPO Staff*

1. [MPO Meeting Minutes 11-5-2020](#)

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of November 5, 2020, was made by the At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) (Daniel Amstutz) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent). The motion carried.

8. Action Item: FFYs 2021-25 TIP Adjustment One—*Matt Genova, MPO Staff*

1. [FFYs 2021-25 TIP Draft Adjustment One Simplified](#)

M. Genova clarified that Adjustment One is not to be confused with Amendment One, which the board released for public review at the meeting on November 19, 2020. TIP adjustments are not required to be released for a public review period. Adjustment One includes one project: the awarding of a grant from the Federal Transit Administration to the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA). This adjustment will allow MWRTA to move forward with the project in FFY 2021.

Vote

A motion to approve the FFYs 2021–25 TIP Adjustment One was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) (D. Amstutz). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: FFYs 2021–25 TIP Amendment Two—*Matt Genova, MPO Staff and Samantha Silverberg, MBTA Staff*

1. [FFYs 2021-25 Draft TIP Amendment Two MBTA Forging Ahead Tables](#)
2. [FFYs 2021 25 Draft TIP Amendment Two MBTA Forging Ahead Presentation](#)

M. Genova stated that Amendment Two, part of the MBTA's *Forging Ahead* effort, reallocates transit capital funds to cover operating expenses in response to the loss of fare revenue and ridership during COVID-19. M. Genova stated that a vote at this meeting would be the first step in the amendment process, releasing the proposed amendment for a 21-day public review period. Amendment Two would be considered for a final vote of approval on January 7, 2020.

S. Silverberg stated that the MBTA is projecting a large budget shortfall for fiscal year 2022 and is proposing to fill it with a mix of internal savings initiatives, capital resource reallocations, and service reductions. S. Silverberg stated that the MBTA is proposing two capital funding changes. One would flex federal formula funds from capital projects to preventative maintenance and the other would allocate capital planning employee salaries to project budgets, consistent with law and guidance. S. Silverberg stated that the MBTA expects 95 percent of the fiscal year 2021 Capital Investment Plan would continue as planned and the MBTA would be able to achieve the overall investment goal of \$1.75 million set earlier in the year. S. Silverberg stated that the Commonwealth has committed an additional \$140 million in the state bond cap for MBTA projects, allowing the MBTA to accelerate some projects and reduce the impact of the proposed reallocation on the capital program. The legislature also enacted changes to allow the MBTA to charge staff costs to project budgets, consistent with general accounting principles and federal guidance.

If approved, this TIP amendment would allow the MBTA to reallocate an additional \$380 million in fiscal year 2021–22 federal formula funds to preventative maintenance. This includes \$171 million in fiscal year carryover funds, \$179 million in fiscal year 2021 funds to be provided once congress enacts full year appropriations, and \$30 million in anticipated FFY 2022 funds. If endorsed, MassDOT would submit a revised Statewide TIP to the Federal Highway and Federal Transit Administrations (FTA). In January, the MBTA would begin to submit grant applications for preventative maintenance. In

February, the MBTA would execute FTA grants and begin to draw down funds for eligible preventative maintenance expenses.

Discussion

Brian Kane (MBTA Advisory Board) stated that the MBTA Advisory Board would not traditionally support shifting funding from capital to operating expenses, but given the increase in capital investment in recent years, the board felt this budget fix is allowable. B. Kane acknowledged the sacrifice made by riders and expressed the hope that funds can be found elsewhere to not lose too much time on critical projects.

L. Diggins expressed support for the amendment and stated that there is a need for more state or federal funding for MBTA operations.

J. Monty expressed concerns about the difficulty of bringing back service and capital investment once it is removed, noting the ongoing bus network redesign and commuter rail planning processes. J. Monty stressed the importance of following through on prior planning and investment decisions.

E. Bourassa asked about the \$40 to \$73 million budget surplus the MBTA still expects to have at the end of fiscal year 2021. S. Silverberg stated that the MBTA is still trying to end fiscal year 2021 in surplus so that those savings can be rolled over into 2022, since that is the year where there are currently no federal funds available and projections still show lower ridership.

D. Amstutz asked what impact these reallocations have on proposed service changes. S Silverberg replied that these capital reallocations are built into the baseline for service changes and without them deeper cuts may be necessary.

Jim Fitzgerald (City of Boston) (Boston Planning & Development Agency) asked whether the MBTA is proposing the maximum amount of capital reallocations possible. S. Silverberg stated that there is more formula funding available but this is the amount the Fiscal and Management Control Board was comfortable with; however, she could note to the board that some members of the MPO board were interested in going further to reduce service changes.

T. Bent stated that his biggest concern is that some of the proposed cuts to bus service will affect essential workers.

Vote

A motion to release FFYs 2021–25 TIP Amendment Two for a 21-day public review period was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

10. Presentation/Discussion: *Innovations in Estimating Trip Generation Rates*—Ariel Patterson and Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff

1. [Memorandum: *Innovations in Estimating Trip Generation Rates*](#)

A. Patterson and S. Johnston presented an overview of innovative practices in the analysis of trip generation and a framework for ongoing research and efforts into developing improved methods. This study was funded by the MPO in the FFY 2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). This research stems from the understanding that the standard trip generation rates provided by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) often perform poorly in dense urban areas and inadequately capture travel by modes other than single-occupancy vehicles. Trip generation rates are commonly used in the development and infrastructure review processes, and travel demand modeling. The report includes a literature review, case studies of municipalities using alternative methods of trip generation analysis, research on policy frameworks that use or proceed from these methods, current and potential applications of trip generation rates by CTPS, and next steps.

11. Action Item: Work Scope, Trip Generation Rate Research—Drashti Joshi, MPO Staff

1. [Trip Generation Research 2020 Work Program](#)

D. Joshti stated that ITE produces trip generation rates that can be used as another estimate of travel behavior to accompany travel demand modeling. This MPO-funded study will produce a detailed literature review of the current and alternative practices in the use of trip generation rates, support coordination efforts to provide new data to ITE, and explore new land use categories as a way of segmenting trip generation rates. The study is expected to take approximately eight months and is budgeted at \$45,000.

Discussion

J. Monty noted the struggle for developers to finance projects without parking. He stated that this is in part because banks are familiar with traditional ITE modeling. He expressed support for tools to overcome that problem. J. Monty added that, going forward, municipalities could ask developers to demonstrate a meaningful reduction in single-occupancy vehicle trips.

D. Amstutz stated that a regional approach is needed because not all municipalities have the capacity for localized data about the kinds of trips developments create, and when consultants create traffic impact assessments, the consultants generally reference ITE data. S. Johnston responded that staff heard clearly from municipal staff in Cambridge and Washington D.C. that they see an arrow of causality running from greater parking to greater single-occupancy vehicle trips. The conclusion is that the most important factor is parking provision. D. Joshti added that there are ongoing efforts to provide better data to ITE.

L. Diggins asked about scheduling further meetings to discuss these issues. D. Mohler suggested bringing up the topic at a UPWP or Congestion Management Process Committee meeting.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for *Trip Generation Rate Research* was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried.

12. Action Item: Work Scope, Addressing Priority Corridors from the LRTP Needs Assessment for FFY 2021—Seth Asante, MPO Staff

1. [Work Program FFY 2021 LRTP Priority Corridors](#)

S. Asante stated that this MPO-funded study is expected to take 10 months to complete and cost \$137,000. This study addresses arterial segments identified in the Needs Assessment of the LRTP as needing safety improvements and modernization to address congestion, multimodal transportation, and Complete Streets issues. The objectives of the study are to select an arterial segment, identify transportation-related problems and needs, and work with municipalities and MassDOT to develop multimodal transportation solutions.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for *Addressing Priority Corridors from the LRTP Needs Assessment for FFY 2021* was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) (D. Amstutz). The motion carried.

13. Action Item: Work Scope, Addressing Safety, Mobility and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways for FFY 2021—Chen-Yuan Wang, MPO Staff

1. [Work Program FFY 2021 Subregional Priority Roadways](#)

C. Wang stated that this study is estimated to take 10 months and cost \$127,900. This study parallels the priority corridor study but focuses on arterial and collector roadways not identified in the LRTP Needs Assessment. Through input from the MPO's subregional meetings, this program aims to address safety, mobility, and access on the subregional priority roadways for all users.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for *Addressing Safety, Mobility and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways for FFY 2021* was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

**14. Action Item: Work Scope, Regional TDM Strategies Coordination—
Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff**

1. [Work Program Travel Demand Management Strategies](#)

S. Johnston stated the budget for this MPO-funded study is \$10,000. This work program will allow MPO staff and MAPC to jointly host two forums on the topic of TDM. One of the forums will cover the challenges of TDM in a post-COVID-19 world and the other will cover legislative and other challenges to implementing TDM measures in Massachusetts. S. Johnston stated that MPO staff hope to create a durable framework for discussing TDM issues in the Boston region, perhaps a working group or similar entity.

Discussion

L. Diggins suggested that MPO staff look into combining virtual and in-person attendance should one of the forums be in person.

Ken Miller (Federal Highway Administration) suggested that MPO staff engage MassCommute in this effort.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for *Regional TDM Strategies Coordination* was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried.

15. Members Items

There were none.

16. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by MAPC (E. Bourassa). 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 (Brookline)	Todd Kirrane
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	David Mohler
	John Bechard
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Samantha Silverberg
Massachusetts Port Authority	Laura Gilmore
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Thatcher Kezer III
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Rockland)	
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Peter Pelletier
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset River Regional Chamber)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Aleida Leza	
Ben Muller	MassDOT
Rachel Benson	Town of Wrentham
Rich Benevento	World Tech Engineering
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT Division 3
Joe Collins	
Johannes Epke	Conservation Law Foundation
Joy Glynn	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Michelle Ho	MassDOT
Jeff McEwen	
Erika Oliver-Jerram	City of Framingham
Constance Raphael	MassDOT Highway Division 4
Steve Olanoff	TRIC Alternate
Jon Seward	
Darin Takemoto	
Frank Tramontozzi	City of Quincy

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Mark Abbott

Blake Acton

Matt Archer

Seth Asante

Jonathan Church

Annette Demchur

Julie Dombroski

Róisín Foley

Matt Genova

Betsy Harvey

Sandy Johnston

Bill Kuttner

Anne McGahan

Marty Milkovits

Ariel Patterson

Scott Peterson

Barbara Rutman

Michelle Scott

Chen-Yuan Wang

Kate White

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