



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

November 13, 2019 Meeting Minutes

3:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4,
10 Park Plaza, Boston

Lenard Diggins, Chair, representing the Rider Oversight Committee

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Lenard Diggins called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page [Number].)

2. Chair's Report—*Lenard Diggins, Chair, Rider Oversight Committee*

L. Diggins encouraged members to read the [Transportation Access Studies of Central Business Districts](#) (CBDs), which analyzed CBDs in four communities in the Boston Region.

3. MPO Outreach—*Kate White, Public Outreach Coordinator, MPO Staff*

K. White stated that MPO staff seek to include members of the public in a robust and inclusive transportation planning process. This outreach is not necessarily connected to a specific certification document; rather, input is used to connect members of the public to available resources, as well as to provide feedback to the MPO.

MPO staff approaches public outreach in two ways: in-person engagement and online engagement. With both approaches, MPO staff aim raise awareness of the MPO, educate individuals, connect them to resources that allow them to provide public comments on the MPO's activities. The focus of outreach efforts varies based on the targeted communities and organizations, to best engage individuals with projects and programs that are relevant to them. MPO staff seek to engage two to four stakeholder groups per month.

Using outreach for the Long-Range Transportation Plan's public comment period as an example, K. White discussed the venues and events in which MPO staff engaged the public in-person. This included the non-traditional outreach opportunities such as farmers' markets and community gatherings, ranging from tours of public art to networking events. Planned outreach events include a meeting at Framingham High School, with the goal of gathering input from younger members of the public on their transportation needs.

MPO staff continue to increase their online presence. Staff recently began live-tweeting MPO meetings and other events which cover relevant issues in the region. The workflow for blog posts has been streamlined to allow for more frequent updates. Blog post topics include one-to-two-page summaries of studies conducted by MPO staff.

K. White stated that MPO staff use several databases to analyze the impact of their outreach efforts. These include the stakeholder groups that MPO staff have engaged; public comments received through engagement efforts, as well as public comment periods for 3C documents; and events in which MPO staff have solicited public feedback.

Discussion

John McQueen supported outreach efforts to Framingham High School students. Noting several transportation projects in the City, including Phase Three of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, he suggested that the students could be regularly engaged by MPO staff to gauge their transportation needs. K. White stated that MPO staff seek to receive continual input from stakeholder groups, including students at Framingham High School.

AnaCristina Fragoso asked how MPO staff conduct outreach regarding resiliency. K. White stated that MPO staff collect input on resiliency during their outreach efforts. This input is then given to staff overseeing resiliency work. She noted that resiliency is a frequent subject during subregional meetings.

Scott Zadakis asked how the MPO's database of contacts is updated. K. White stated that any organization that interacts with MPO staff is added to the database. In addition to contact information, the database includes topics of interest for each organization.

Franny Osman asked if the general perception of how the public should participate in the MPO aligns with MPO staff's perception. K. White stated that members of the public can interact with the MPO in numerous ways. As an example, she stated that while some people choose to solely comment on Transportation Improvement Program projects, others prefer to suggest study ideas for the Unified Planning Work Program. A benefit of the MPO's work is that organizations, municipalities, and individuals can interact with the MPO on the issues they identify with.

Andrew Reker commended MPO staff's outreach efforts. He asked how MPO staff ensures that connections are made with communities that have been underserved by regional planning processes. K. White stated that Betsy Harvey, Transportation Equity Program Manager, created a comprehensive index which identifies the stakeholders who the MPO works with, the populations that these stakeholders serve, and where MPO staff's outreach efforts could be improved. MPO staff make a concerted effort to reach out to people with limited English proficiency and people of color.

David Montgomery asked how many members of the MPO staff work on outreach. K. White stated that staff in the Certification Activities group is the most forward-facing and conduct much of MPO staff's outreach. However, input received during public outreach is given to relevant MPO staff working in other groups.

4. Introduction of the Executive Director of Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, CTPS*

T. Teich, previous chair of the Advisory Council, stated that her goals have changed since transitioning to her new role: her goal continues to be to promote a resilient and sustainable. However, there is not a “one size fits all” solution to transportation: the Boston Region is diverse, with different needs in different communities, which necessitates bringing many stakeholders into the MPO process. The framework for her work includes determining how best to improve quality of life in the region and achieve the economic development goals of the MPO.

CTPS is well-positioned to modernize its thinking in how it addresses the transportation challenges in the region. Recent work indicates that CTPS is on this trajectory. This includes forging new partnerships with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the fiduciary agent of CTPS; comprehensive development of updated project selection criteria; and the expansion of public outreach efforts.

T. Teich explained her goals during her first year as Executive Director, which include:

- Recruit and retain talented staff in a manner that is communicative with current staff.
- Initiate a strategic planning process, which CTPS has not undergone since its creation in 1974.
- Expand outreach to include stakeholders that have historically not interacted with the MPO.

T. Teich stated that the Advisory Council should strive to have discussions that include a broad range of voices. She encouraged the Advisory Council to be forward-thinking on outreach efforts, both in recruiting new members and in advising MPO staff on their outreach efforts. In addition, she encouraged the Advisory Council to continually reassess what their role is in the MPO and how best to convey their thoughts.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked how best to reach out to stakeholders and recruit new members. He expressed a desire to expand representation of subregions, increase feedback on certification documents, and encourage municipalities to participate in the TIP process. T.

Teich suggested working with MPO staff to determine areas that could be bolstered and how the Advisory Council can best support the MPO.

L. Wiener stated that she feels that the Advisory Council reviews planning documents well into their development, frequently at a point where the draft documents are a foregone conclusion. As such, she expressed that the input of the Advisory Council can be somewhat limited in its impact. D. Montgomery expressed a similar opinion, stating that the Advisory Council has a relatively small voice at the MPO. T. Teich stated that she frequently felt similarly and emphasized the importance of transparency in the MPO process. In addition, she supported an iterative conversation for certification documents. She stated that this issue should be included in the strategic planning process.

L. Diggins stated that he would work with T. Teich and MPO staff to determine the earliest dates that the Advisory Council can provide input on certification documents. Stating that useful input in the early stages of document development necessitates a firm understanding of the planning process, he suggested that MPO staff could work with the Advisory Council to ensure that its members are sufficiently educated on their work.

Schuyler Larrabee expressed a desire for ongoing conversations within the Advisory Council that extend beyond public meetings. He noted that many issues prompt in-depth discussions that cannot be accommodate at a public meeting with a fixed schedule. T. Teich agreed while acknowledging that open meeting law can be restrictive. While there are potential workarounds that would follow open meeting law while allowing ongoing conversation, these options would need to be open to the public. F. Osman stated that she appreciates open meeting law, as it ensures that members will not be excluded from discussions.

5. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

There were none.

6. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned without objection.

Attendees

Member Municipalities

Acton
Cambridge
Needham
Watertown

Representatives and Alternates

Franny Osman
Andrew Reker
David Montgomery; Rhain Hoyland
Laura Wiener

Citizen Advocacy Groups

Attendees

Association for Public Transportation	Barry M. Steinberg
Boston Society of Architects	Schuyler Larrabee
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	AnaCristina Fragoso
CrosstownConnect	Scott Zadakis
MassBike	David Ernst
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
MoveMassachusetts	Jon Seward
Riverside Neighborhood Association	Marilyn Wellons
WalkBoston	John McQueen

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Kate White
Ariel Patterson
Matt Archer

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