

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

September 15, 2022, Meeting

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

David Mohler, Chair, representing Jamey Tesler, Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

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

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of August 4, 2022
- Approve the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Adjustment One
- Approve the Public Engagement Plan Amendment

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 8.

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 that CTPS had hired a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Program Manager for the MPO Activities group, Ethan Lapointe. E. Lapointe comes from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation where he worked as an Economic and Policy Analyst since 2020. E. Lapointe led a rewriting of the Rhode Island Statewide TIP and has experience to bring to CTPS. E. Lapointe will start on October 3, 2022.

MPO staff has submitted the Safe Streets for All Action Plan Grant on behalf of the MPO and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC).

The next Transit Working Group Quarterly meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 20, 2022, at 3:00 PM. There will be guest speakers from TransitOps, as well

as Marco Chitti, who is a transit scholar speaking about Montreal's recent fare integration efforts.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will hold a second public forum to speak about the federal recertification at the next MPO meeting on October 6, 2022.

The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is expected to be adopted in 2023, as happens every four years. MPO staff is starting fall engagement groups that are coordinated by MAPC. During these meetings MPO staff will discuss subregional priorities and engagement opportunities. These meetings serve as an important input into MPO staff's LRTP work. Another announcement in support of the LRTP, MPO and MAPC staff have been working with a statewide socioeconomic projections committee to develop population, household, and employment forecasts for 2050. These inputs support the work staff does with the travel demand model to understand future travel demand, and how selected LRTP projects may influence that. There will be discussions on these projections in more detail at future meetings of the MPO.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

Derek Shooster, MassDOT, stated that the UPWP Committee met the morning of September 15, 2022, to discuss and endorse UPWP Adjustment One for discussion and approval by the MPO Board.

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

L. Diggins reported that the Advisory Council last met with representatives from FTA and FHWA regarding the Certification Review and had a good conversation. The next meeting of the Advisory Council will be with Michelle Scott of MPO staff to discuss visioning, goals, and objectives for the LRTP.

7. Action Item: Approval of August 4, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [August 4, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes \(pdf\)](#)
2. [August 4, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes \(html\)](#)

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 4, 2022, was made by the MAPC (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (Amira Patterson). The motion carried.

**8. Action Item: FFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
Adjustment One—Jonathan Church, MPO staff**

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [FFY 2022 UPWP Adjustment One \(pdf\)](#)
2. [FFY 2022 UPWP Adjustment One \(html\)](#)

J. Church introduced FFY 2022 UPWP Adjustment One and noted that UPWP Adjustment One had been approved by the UPWP Committee. MPO staff has proposed adjustments to the UPWP based on the continued evolution of some project line item needs since the approval of FFY 2022 UPWP Amendment Two. FHWA allows for adjustments of budget line items, so long as the adjustments are no more than 25 percent of each budget line item. UPWP Adjustment One falls below the FHWA adjustment threshold.

UPWP Adjustment One proposes increased funding to budget line items including Support to the MPO, Computer Resource Management, UPWP, Intersection Improvement Program, Congestion Management Process, and staff-generated research and technical assistance. The remaining budget line items in the adjustment with decreasing funding will continue to have enough budget to complete the work that is needed in Fiscal Year 2022. The result of UPWP Adjustment One is a net zero change of the overall FFY 2022 UPWP Budget.

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 4, 2022, was made by the MAPC (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the At-Large Town, Town of Arlington (Daniel Amstutz). The motion carried.

**9. Action Item: Public Engagement Plan Amendment—Stella Jordan,
MPO staff**

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Amended Public Engagement Plan \(pdf\)](#)
2. [Amended Public Engagement Plan \(html\)](#)

S. Jordan introduced the Public Engagement Plan (PEP) Amendment and stated that on July 21, 2022, the MPO Board voted to release the PEP Amendment for a 45-day

public comment period. This amendment proposes allowing the MPO Board to waive the 21-day public comment period for future UPWP Amendments. This proposal is in line with Federal guidelines, which do not require a public comment period for UPWP Amendments. During the public comment period, MPO staff received one comment letter from the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF), which has been included in the meeting materials. The letter described concerns that the proposed amendment would limit public engagement opportunities and expressed CLF's belief that the MPO had not provided a strong justification for why the amendment is necessary. Earlier in the week, MPO staff met with CLF staff to discuss its concerns and had a productive conversation.

This proposed change came from multiyear discussions with the UPWP Committee about project scoping and program funding, which resulted in a recommendation from the UPWP Committee in the spring to move forward with changing the amendments procedure in the FFY 2023 UPWP, as well as amending the PEP accordingly. The basis for this change was the recognition that the 21-day public comment period often inhibits the MPO's ability to adjust quickly when priorities and needs shift, often as a result in changes in staff capacity, as well as program expectations. In the past, the lengthy public review process has resulted in MPO staff not being able to pivot to pursue time sensitive projects, or not being able to produce the highest quality work products due to time constraints.

In recognition of the agility required to quickly make changes to the UPWP, federal guidelines do not require public comment periods for UPWP amendments. That said, the MPO is committed to providing opportunities for the public to engage in the MPO processes. When the UPWP committee recommended that MPO staff pursue this change, the expectation is that the 21-day public comment period would still be the default in most cases. This amendment provides the MPO Board with the option to waive the public comment period in necessary circumstances. MPO staff is also taking steps to increase transparency and engagement at all stages of the UPWP cycle, including during selection, development, and scoping of studies. This work is being supported by the expansion of the MPO's Communication and Engagement staff over the past year.

Discussion

L. Diggins requested that in the future the MPO publish letters it received during the public comment period, including the responses from MPO staff.

Vote

A motion to approve the Public Engagement Plan Amendment was made by the MAPC (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Lenard Diggins). The motion carried.

10. Presentation: Travel Demand Management Follow-Up—*Sandy Johnston, MPO staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Travel Demand Management Memo \(pdf\)](#)
2. [Travel Demand Management Memo \(html\)](#)

S. Johnston presented the Travel Demand Management (TDM) Follow-Up presentation. TDM is policies and programs designed to support and incentivize healthier, more environmentally sustainable transportation behaviors. TDM is also described as the behavioral side of transportation planning. The purposes of the TDM study were to research peer MPO TDM practices, continue regional stakeholder engagement and document needs relating to TDM in the Boston Region MPO area, and to identify potential roles that the MPO and its staff could assume to improve TDM in the region.

The TDM study was created in an open-ended, informational way and does not recommend policy or programs, nor identifies a staff-favored option. S. Johnston explained that the research methods for the TDM study included a literature review, interviews, and surveys to peer MPOs and regional stakeholders, as well as presentations and discussions at Transit Working Group Coffee Chats, Inner Core Committee (ICC) Transportation Planners' Group, and MPO Open House events.

S. Johnston presented the survey results of the peer MPOs TDM survey, as well as key peer MPO feedback, which can be found in the TDM memo. S. Johnston next presented the regional stakeholder survey results, which asked respondents what they would like to see the MPO do to support TDM, which also can be found in the TDM memo. The top five responses from the peer MPO survey and the regional stakeholder survey were nearly identical, although regional stakeholders responded that including TDM in the congestion management process as their highest priority, while transit-oriented development was ranked as the sixth most requested element.

S. Johnston then presented regional stakeholder feedback, which can also be found in the TDM memo. S. Johnston presented the MPO board with policy options such as taking no action, further studying TDM, pursuing creation of a TDM program in *Destination 2050*, or incorporating TDM principles into MPO planning policy, which could include requiring study of TDM alternatives for capital projects, analyzing TDM

funding in the TIP, and incorporating relevant legislation into MPO planning and requirements.

MPO staff requested that the MPO decide upon and direct staff towards a course of action for determining future MPO and staff involvement in the practice of TDM.

Discussion

E. Bourassa stated that through the Community Connections program the MPO has funded TDM activities. Moving forward, the MPO Board should focus on strengthening MPO planning activities and the commitment towards MBTA communities zoning requirements. MAPC has carved out funding to support technical assistance for MBTA communities zoning requirements to show municipalities can incorporate TDM into their local zoning requirements.

L. Diggins stated that he would like to see TDM included as part of the next LRTP, with an emphasis on working with multiple entities, while also continuing to support smaller projects.

Ken Miller, FHWA, asked if MPO staff had discussions with Transportation Management Associations (TMA) and what kind of strategies would MPO staff recommend thinking about with TDM.

S. Johnston stated that MPO staff had extensive conversations with TMAs during Fiscal Year 2021, such as during the ICC Transportation Planners meeting as well as during Transit Working Group Coffee Chats. S. Johnson noted that due to the pandemic, TDM has been happening for almost two years, which to some extent proves the theory of demand reduction and that there may be a need for the field to pivot. Some people are thinking about residential areas and how to manage transportation for all purposes by modes other than single occupancy vehicles. The problem is that TDM blends into other forms of transportation planning.

D. Amstutz, Town of Arlington, stated that regarding the requirement of TDM alternatives analysis for capital projects, TDM alternatives may not be relevant to the project at hand, especially Complete Streets project.

D. Mohler asked if this was enough guidance from MPO board members to direct MPO staff to pursue a specific course of action.

S. Johnston answered that there was not enough guidance to decide at this meeting, but the TDM memo can be represented during the presentation of the LRTP for further discussion.

11. Members' Items

E. Bourassa stated that nominations for the MPO elections were open and due by Monday, October 3, 2022. The seats up for nomination are the ICC, the MetroWest Regional Collaborative, the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination, and the South Shore Coalition.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MAPC (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (Tom Bent). 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 Brookline)	Todd Kirrane
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Bill Conroy
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)	Laura Gilmore
	Jillian Linnell
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	Amira Patterson
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Burlington)	
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Rockland)	Jennifer
	Constable
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Joy Glynn	MWRTA
C Senior	MassDOT District 5
Michelle Ho	MassDOT
Derek Shooster	MassDOT
Tyler Terrasi	MWRTA
Raissah Kouame	
Andrew Wang	MassDOT Planning
Miranda Briseño	MassDOT
Jeanette Rebecchi	
Frank Tramontozzi	
Jon Seward	
Sheila Page	Town of Lexington
Michael Garrity	MassDOT
Sophia Galimore	
Adi Nochur	MAPC

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Logan Casey
Sandy Johnston
Jonathan Church
Hiral Gandhi
Betsy Harvey
Gina Perille
Stella Jordan
Annette Demchur
Michelle Scott
Srilekha Murthy
Sean Rourke
Judy Taylor
Marty Milkovits
Silva Ayvazyan
Rebecca Morgan

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Title VI Specialist

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