



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

August 10, 2022, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–4:15 PM, Zoom

Lenard Diggins, Chair, representing the MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Lenard Diggins called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 6.)

2. Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Application—*Rebecca Morgan, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

Rebecca Morgan, MPO staff, presented on the SS4A Grant Application and the benefits it can bring for the region. The SS4A grant was created through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to support the National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS) and the goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on the nation's roadways. The US Department of Transportation (US DOT) describes this program as a roadway safety program with a strong equity component. This program is consistent with the MPO's mission and with the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Destination 2040's goals and objectives. Destination 2040's safety goal includes reducing the number and severity of crashes and safety incidents for all modes, as well as reducing serious injuries and fatalities from transportation.

The transportation equity goal includes prioritizing MPO investments that benefit equity populations and promoting investments that are accessible to all people regardless of their abilities. Further, the grant supports work that the MPO is already engaged in, including performance-based planning and programming. The MPO has adopted roadway safety targets related to fatalities and serious injuries to meet federal performance requirements annually since 2018. The MPO's most recent safety targets were set in February 2022. As part of this program, staff engage in similar activities, such as developing targets on reduction of fatalities and serious injuries, gathering data to analyze trends, and monitoring and reporting performance outcomes.

The SS4A grant supports funding local initiatives to prevent death and serious injury on roads and streets, commonly referred to as “Vision Zero” or “Toward Zero Deaths” initiatives. A total of \$5 billion has been appropriated for funding for federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2022–26, with up to \$1 billion for allocation in FFY 2022. MPOs, political subdivisions of the state, tribal governments, and multijurisdictional groups are eligible to apply for funding. Notably, state departments of transportation are not eligible to apply for funding.

There are two grant types being offered: the Action Plan grant and the Implementation grant. Action Plan grants are to develop or complete a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (Vision Zero Plan) and to conduct supplemental action planning activities in support of an existing Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. Implementation grants are used to implement projects and strategies, to conduct planning and design, and to conduct supplemental action planning activities in support of an existing Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. Since the MPO does not currently have an action plan, the MPO would apply for an Action Plan grant. If awarded, these funds would be used to develop a Regional Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. The Regional Comprehensive Safety Action Plan will allow access to implementation funds in future years.

MPO staff and Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) staff plan to apply jointly on behalf of the MPO. There is a 20 percent minimum local match required, which can include in-kind contributions. The MPO staff is committed to collaborating on this initiative and has been working with partner agencies, as well as other groups and committees, to get the word out about the joint application. The MPO staff has been coordinating with MassDOT and has been reaching out to cities and towns through meetings, emails, and other forums to coordinate on this application.

Discussion

David Montgomery, Town of Needham, stated that the goal of zero deaths is great, but that he preferred the goal of reducing fatalities instead of eliminating fatalities because it may not be possible to achieve the goal of eliminating all deaths. R. Morgan responded that goal setting was split into two parts. First, if the MPO was to receive the Safety Action Planning grant, it would allow MPO staff to set traffic fatality and serious injury goals through research and analysis to help understand what a realistic timeframe would be. Secondly, the Vision Zero initiative is the goal towards zero road deaths. It has been proven that shifts in roadway design could reduce the impacts of crashes and accommodate human errors. There is a risk in a goal of zero deaths, but through analysis, MPO staff will be able to determine what is feasible.

John McQueen, WalkBoston, asked if a rail trail project would qualify for funding under the SS4A program. R. Morgan responded that she would have to investigate that. One part to identifying eligible projects is identifying roadways where there is a high risk of serious injuries and fatalities.

J. McQueen asked if there would be a way to educate drivers on new driving and roadway standards. R. Morgan responded that that would be something MPO staff would identify as part of the Safety Action Plan. The SS4A grant would allow MPO staff to administer the implementation grant and collaborate with the Registry of Motor Vehicles on developing policies and procedures.

Andy Reker, City of Cambridge, stated that he would like to see detailed analysis of roadway characteristics that lead to a higher risk of injury and fatalities. R. Morgan responded that MPO staff has materials that could be shared. MPO staff has researched Denver, Colorado's Safety Action Plan, regional Safety Action Plans, as well as local Vision Zero plans such as the City of Cambridge and the City of Boston. There are several materials MPO staff has been reviewing and there are some commonalities to reducing fatality rates.

Owen MacDonald, Town of Weymouth, stated that, from a regional perspective, the urban and suburban crash reduction methods may be different. O. MacDonald asked how the MPO is considering the needs of the region. R. Morgan responded that there will be different strategies that will be employed based on the specific needs of the region. MPO staff is working closely with subregions and municipalities to create a task force for the SS4A grant to ensure all insights from municipalities can be brought up. MPO staff is still in the process of developing an engagement plan, but it is a priority to focus on different areas within the regional plan. Travis Pollock, MAPC, added that the differences in the region would be a challenge to address, but overall the Safety Action Plan would be a benefit to the region. MAPC is looking at a task force to gain municipality input. Many of the challenges addressed by the SS4A grant span multiple municipalities.

Collette Aufranc, Town of Wellesley, stated that Wellesley has spent time developing a Sustainable Mobility Plan. Municipalities know where their hotspot areas are, and the regional plan has a lot to offer for municipalities. C. Aufranc asked if the MPO funds a Regional Safety Action Plan, would that enable municipalities to apply for implementation funding. R. Morgan responded that MPO staff still needs clarification on this question. If the MPO was to apply for the SS4A grant application, other municipalities can still apply. US DOT has also stated that municipalities can apply for funding in future years. T. Pollock added that municipalities can apply for implementation grants and use funding for supplemental planning and design.

L. Diggins suggested that the business community should be included in the engagement process. L. Diggins stated that it would be interesting to see how the Safety Action Plan would work with current Complete Street initiatives, as well a new MBTA housing policies. L. Diggins further stated that some municipalities do not have adequate planning staff, so the MPO funding positions to assist municipalities in planning would be helpful. R. Morgan responded that the MPO is building capacity of municipal support by planning to involve a consultant firm to support development of the SS4A grant.

J. McQueen asked if municipalities could apply SS4A funding to Complete Streets projects or Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program projects. R. Morgan stated that municipalities could apply funding to both types of projects but would have to outline how the Safety Action Plan would be used to support the project.

Jen Rowe, City of Boston, stated that part of her work has been to update Boston's high-crash network dataset. J. Rowe stated that it would be great to collaborate with other municipalities on how to improve high-crash networks.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2022, meeting was made by Town of Needham (David Montgomery) and seconded by WalkBoston (John McQueen). The minutes were approved.

4. Action Item: Approval of 3C Committee Letter—*Lenard Diggins, Chair*

A. Reker introduced the draft 3C Committee letter and requested that RTAC members discuss the letter and suggest final changes.

Discussion

D. Montgomery suggested capitalizing "Board" in "MPO Board" and capitalizing "Advisory Council" in the letter.

J. Rowe stated that the letter was well written, and J. Rowe appreciated A. Reker's work.

J. McQueen stated that he was unsure whether to include his name on the letter due to his objections with the process by which the UPWP was developed.

D. Montgomery stated that the letter is written in the name of the whole Advisory Council, and that the Chair should sign on behalf of the Advisory Council.

Vote

A motion to approve the 3C Committee letter was made by MoveMassachusetts (Jon Seward) and seconded by Town of Needham (David Montgomery). The motion passed.

5. Chair's Report—*Lenard Diggins, Chair*

L. Diggins stated that at the last MPO Board meeting on August 4, 2022, the MPO Board discussed and approved the MBTA Bus Network Redesign Work Plan to allow MPO staff to help in the development of signage for the Bus Network Redesign.

6. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

A. Reker acknowledged that recently many City staff members have been dealing with the closures of the MBTA Green Line and Orange Line. A. Reker stated he was unsure if the

Advisory Council could do anything to help, but suggested MPO staff study how to plan for future travel disruptions and what transit riders do in response to these disruptions.

J. McQueen suggested the MPO study how to plan for future transit disruptions and how to minimize impact to riders.

7. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by WalkBoston (John McQueen) and seconded by the Boston Society of Civil Engineers (AnaChristina Fragoso). The motion carried.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
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Boston	Jen Rowe
Cambridge	Andy Reker
Needham	David Montgomery
Wellesley	Colette Aufranc
Weymouth	Owen MacDonald

Citizen Advocacy Groups	Attendees
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Boston Society of Architects	Schuyler Larrabee
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	AnaChristina Fragoso
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
MoveMassachusetts	Jon Seward
National Rural Transit Assistance Program	Scott Zadakis
WalkBoston	John McQueen

Agencies (Non-Voting)	Attendees
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Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Travis Pollock
Old Colony Planning Council	Bill McNulty

Other Attendees	Affiliation
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Sid Kashi	Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.
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MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Stella Jordan
Rebecca Morgan
Steven Andrews

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Title VI Specialist

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By Telephone:

857.702.3700 (voice)

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