

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

October 6, 2022, Meeting

10:00 AM–12:00 PM, 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 18, 2022

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 9.

2. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT*

There was none.

3. Executive Director's Report—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

T. Teich announced an addition to the Boston Region MPO staff. Ethan Lapointe has joined the MPO staff as the new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Manager.

T. Teich invited E. Lapointe to introduce himself.

E. Lapointe, MPO staff, introduced himself and stated that MPO members would soon receive emails from him regarding the TIP for the upcoming year.

T. Teich stated that MPO staff is continuing to engage with subregions this fall and met with the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) subregion on October 4, 2022. MPO staff will meet with the Inner Core Committee (ICC) next on October 19, 2022. There will be additional subregional engagement meetings in November and December.

T. Teich announced upcoming events, including the Transit Working Group Coffee Chat: Launching and Marketing the Berkshire Flyer on November 1, 2022, at 4:00 PM,

as well as the Transit Working Group Coffee Chat: The Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Coordinated Plan on November 16, 2022, at 4:00 PM.

Discussion

Lenard Diggins, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, stated that the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Coordinated Plan have the same cycle, and he commended MPO staff for the work on those plans. L. Diggins further highlighted the subregional booklets that have been published and stated that they were helpful and contained good information.

4. Public Comments

Jim Nee, MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA), spoke on behalf of the MWRTA and stated that the MWRTA was formed in 2007 and works to make its 16 member communities, with a population of 325,000, more diverse, equitable, and inclusive through public transportation. The MWRTA's communities represent a number of Environmental Justice districts most in need of representation. The MWRTA requests a voting seat on the Boston Region MPO. MWRTA stands alone as one of the only Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) of the 15 in Massachusetts that is not directly represented on their MPO board. While the MetroWest Regional Collaborative has a seat on the board, the specific needs of public transportation in the MetroWest region are silenced by the lack of RTA representation. MWRTA urges the MPO to create a seat for the MWRTA as a requirement for good governance.

Matthew Petersen, TransitMatters, highlighted the Boston Region MPO's unique position of being permanently chaired by MassDOT. This, in combination with the number of state agencies on the MPO board, results in a regional organization largely driven by state agencies rather than regional agencies or local municipalities.

M. Petersen urged the MPO to investigate other governance methods and further urged the MPO to work to increase staff capacity through the development of the Operations Plan. The MPO serves a crucial role in providing planning capacity for the region and more staff would enable the MPO and CTPS to provide technical assistance to more communities and perform more studies.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, gave an update on the MPO elections. E. Bourassa stated that October 3, 2022, was the deadline for nomination for the four open subregional seats. For the MAGIC subregional seat, the MPO received no nominations. E. Bourassa requested MPO members approve extending the nomination deadline to October 12, 2022, to give more time for the MAGIC communities.

E. Bourassa stated that he was confident the MPO would receive a nomination if the deadline was extended.

David Koses, City of Newton, asked for E. Bourassa to go over the nominations received. E. Bourassa responded that for the MetroWest Regional Collaborative seat, the City of Framingham was nominated. For the South Shore Coalition seat, the Town of Hull was nominated. For the Inner Core Committee seat, the City of Somerville was nominated.

D. Mohler asked if any members had objections to the nomination extension and suggested that E. Bourassa extend the nomination if no objections were raised. The members had no objections.

Brian Kane, MBTA Advisory Board, stated that the Administration and Finance (A&F) Committee had met prior to the MPO board meeting to continue discussions of the Operations Plan. On October 20, 2022, the A&F Committee will meet to hold a quarterly finance meeting.

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

L. Diggins stated that the Advisory Council had not met since the last MPO board meeting and that the Advisory Council would meet with MPO staff member Michelle Scott during the next meeting on October 12, 2022, to discuss the Long-Range Transportation Plan's vision, goals, and objectives for *Destination 2050*.

7. Action Item: Approval of August 18, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [August 18, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes \(pdf\)](#)
2. [August 18, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes \(html\)](#)

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 18, 2022, was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane). The motion carried.

8. Presentation: Federal Certification Public Meeting—*Leah Sirmin, Federal Transit Administration (FTA); Cassandra Ostrander, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Boston Region MPO Public Meeting Notice \(pdf\)](#)

2. [2022 Federal Certification Review \(pdf\)](#)

L. Sirmin gave a short overview of the federal recertification process. The federal government is required to review and certify the transportation planning practices of metropolitan planning organizations in urbanized areas with a population of more than 200,000. FHWA and FTA jointly review the metropolitan transportation planning process at least once every four years to ensure compliance with federal requirements. The last certification review decision for the Boston Region MPO was April 24, 2019.

L. Sirmin explained that this meeting was to give MPO board members, as well as members of the public, opportunities to provide public input regarding the transportation planning and decision-making process administered by the Boston Region MPO. Comments received at this meeting, as well as those received by e-mail or mail, will be taken into consideration and summarized in the final report. Comment submissions will close on Friday, October 14, 2022. A certification determination will be made approximately 90 days after this review.

C. Ostrander explained that the metropolitan transportation planning process is based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive process that informs transportation decisions, including how projects are selected and prioritized for implementation within a region. The metropolitan transportation planning process is important because it helps decide how federal dollars are allocated within the region. With limited funding, the MPO must prioritize regional needs and determine those projects that best meet performance goals and objectives and have the most public benefit. The process lays the framework for the future transportation system.

C. Ostrander requested input from MPO board members and members of the public.

Discussion

Brad Rawson, City of Somerville, stated that the ICC and municipalities have consistently asked for guidance on how to best support the MBTA as it works with federal partners to improve overall safety, and he requested that the federal partners discuss specific processes on how the agencies should work together.

E. Bourassa stated that while the Boston Region MPO is currently operating in a virtual format, he would like to see how other MPOs are conducting their business and meetings.

M. Petersen suggested improvements to the MPO's public involvement process for members of the public, and he further suggested that the Boston Region MPO develop

more informational materials to increase the publicity and knowledge of the Boston Region MPO.

D. Koses stated that he was impressed by all of the ways the MPO allows for public input.

Daniel Amstutz, Town of Arlington, suggested that the Boston Region MPO bring in more people at the local level, especially with intersection and corridor studies, to help show more of what the MPO does.

Jacob Deck, member of the MBTA Rider Oversight Committee, suggested shortening the existing timeline of project development from design to construction to further connect the MPO to the projects it helps develop. J. Deck further suggested that the MPO give feedback to those who have given public input on projects.

9. Presentation: First Look at 2050 Demographic Projections and Land Use Scenarios—*Tim Reardon and Brandon Stanaway, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)*

T. Reardon explained that new projections are required for the 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan, *Destination 2050*. The new projections will be used for project planning and environmental permitting and are useful for many other planning applications, such as housing production plans and water demand forecasting. The new projections are a multi-year effort with MassDOT, the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, and other regional planning associations. The product will be a “business-as-usual” forecast, with MAPC producing alternative scenarios in the near future.

T. Reardon explained that MAPC is responsible for municipal and sub-municipal (at the transportation analysis zone [TAZ] level) allocation of households and jobs. The statewide UrbanSim Land Use Allocation model was developed in partnership between MassDOT and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The UrbanSim model accounts for zoning and regulatory constraints, access to jobs and amenities, recent and anticipated development, changing household characteristics and industry sectors, and development feasibility. Households and jobs are allocated from regions to census blocks, and there are no predetermined or fixed municipal control totals. Demographic projections are based on patterns of the last ten years. The model also assumes no major changes in household formation rates and labor force participation rates.

B. Stanaway explained the factors driving population growth in Massachusetts. The number of births and deaths are relatively stable and changing slowly. Migration is the largest uncertainty when it comes to population trends. International immigration rose steadily from 2009 to 2017, then dropped to below levels of the 2000s. Domestic migration varies widely, driven by jobs, wages, and home prices in Massachusetts compared to the rest of the United States. The pace of population growth is likely to slow considerably. Massachusetts grew by seven percent from 2010 to 2020, and half as much growth is projected for the next 30 years. The growth in the over-60 population accounts for all the net population increase. The school age population declined 2.5 percent since 2010 and is likely to drop an additional five percent by 2050. Working age populations, those 20 to 50, remain essentially unchanged by 2050.

B. Stanaway explained the various factors influencing economic growth in the region. The pandemic recession caused Massachusetts employment to drop by eight percent in 2020. All regions are projected to recover some or all jobs by 2030. A limited labor force availability in western Massachusetts, Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and the south coast regions will be a major constraint on economic recovery and growth. These regions may see net job declines between 2019 to 2050. The Boston region (MAPC's planning area) and the Merrimack Valley region are projected to grow faster than the state overall.

The Boston region population is projected to grow by 9.6 percent from 2020 to 2050. Households are projected to grow faster than the population at 13.3 percent, equal to 175,000 new households. A growing senior population will drive rapid growth of single-person households, an increase of 20 percent, equal to 75,000 new households. Total household change masks the influence of household formation and turnover. Residents born after 1990 may form 235,000 new households over the next ten years. Those born before 1970 are likely to free up 170,000 households. Many others will have changing housing needs as they start a family, become empty-nesters, or develop mobility impairments.

The Boston region is projected to recover jobs rapidly and see employment growth from 2020 to 2030, and the region is projected to maintain steady employment afterwards. The fastest growing sectors include information technology, education, and health services, as well as professional and business services. The biggest declines are projected to be in leisure and hospitality, manufacturing, construction, and government employment. These job shifts raise implications for firm location choices, trip production, and other issues.

T. Reardon stated that MAPC is now finalizing the draft “business-as-usual” allocation of jobs and households to census blocks. Draft projections will be shared with municipalities in late October. There will be a four-week period for community comment. MAPC will incorporate community comments and release a final “business-as-usual” scenario in late 2022. In the next phase, MAPC will develop alternative scenarios based on different assumptions about migration, household formation rates, and zoning. These scenarios can be used to evaluate impacts on vehicle-miles traveled, greenhouse gas emissions, and other topics. The UrbanSim model will be maintained over time with updated information about zoning and development activity.

T. Reardon invited questions and discussion.

Discussion

D. Koses asked what the model considers to be an international immigrant. T. Reardon responded that an international immigrant is someone who reported on the American Communities Survey as having moved from another country to the United States in the past year. An international immigrant could be documented or undocumented.

D. Koses asked who MAPC was planning to contact in the various communities.

T. Reardon stated that MAPC would be reaching out to all municipalities and will ask municipalities to coordinate among different departments to provide a response.

L. Diggins asked T. Reardon to explain what “future model runs would not presume municipal control totals” meant. T. Reardon explained that once municipal feedback is received, MAPC will have a set of assumptions to add to the model to produce the “business-as-usual” scenario for use in the Long-Range Transportation Plan. As inputs are updated over time, model outputs will retain their regional control totals, but there might be less or more growth on the level of individual municipalities.

L. Diggins asked if MAPC had a good idea of the age distribution for the international immigrant population growth and demographics, and if the international immigrant trends would be extrapolated to predict growth by 2050. T. Reardon answered that the age distribution among international immigrant populations is known and available, and that the average growth rate for the specific measured period is held constant for the “business-as-usual” scenario.

L. Diggins asked in regard to the census, what other sources of information were used to determine population projections. T. Reardon answered that the US Census’ PL-94 redistricting data groups the population into groups of those under 18 and those over 18, so there is no age distribution available. To create an age distribution for those under 18, the Donahue Institute used information from the American Community Survey

and from population estimates, then merged the data sources together to derive a distribution of ages for those under 18.

J. Deck asked what was driving the increase in the number of people moving to Massachusetts and what would drive an increase in the birth rate in the state.

B. Stanaway answered that to increase the number of people moving to Massachusetts, the state could work to increase the number of good paying jobs, as well as keep the cost of goods and services affordable. A factor for people starting families is access to opportunities and affordable cost of living. T. Reardon added that the *MetroCommon 2050* report addresses many of these issues.

J. Deck asked what population growth modeling would look like if there was unrestrained housing growth. B. Stanaway answered that if there was a larger supply in housing, there could be a growth in population, but those data are unknown.

Jim Fitzgerald, Boston Planning & Development Agency, stated that the City of Boston finds MAPC's work to be more helpful and accurate than other models in the past.

J. Fitzgerald asked if municipalities would have opportunities to give input on the modeling assumptions. T. Reardon answered yes, MAPC is looking to municipalities to help update their development capacity assumptions.

B. Rawson stated that the City of Somerville already has implemented an equitable and diversity-oriented development agenda. The City, for example, requires developers to apportion 20 percent of housing towards affordable housing, which is protected by the development's deed.

10. Members' Items

Derek Krevat, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, stated that MassDOT is seeking projects for the Safe Routes to School Infrastructure grant. This is a competitive solicitation that MassDOT will be holding now until November 18, 2022. Applications can be completed through the Massachusetts Project Intake Tool Portal.

11. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Amira Patterson) and seconded by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council, Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce (Tom O'Rourke). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members

Representatives and Alternates

At-Large City (City of Everett)	Eric Molinari
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Daniel Amstutz
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)	Heather Hamilton
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Bill Conroy
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
	Cassandra Ostrander
Federal Transit Administration	Leah Sirmin
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Brad Rawson
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	John Bechard
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Jillian Linnell
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
	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)	Austin Cyganiewicz
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Rockland)	Jennifer Constable
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Peter Pelletier
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke
	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Jacob Deck	MBTA Rider Oversight Committee
Jackie DeWolfe	
JR Frey	Town of Hingham
Joy Glynn	MWRTA
Michelle Ho	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Abby Jamiel	
Josh Klingenstein	MBTA
Derek Krevat	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Gene Manning	
Benjamin Muller	MassDOT District 6
Jim Nee	MWRTA
Sheila Page	Town of Lexington
Matthew Petersen	TransitMatters
Tim Reardon	MAPC
Amrita Sawhney	
Erin Schaeffer	Town of Reading
C. Senior	MassDOT District 5
Jon Seward	
Derek Shooster	MassDOT
Brandon Stanaway	MAPC
Tyler Terrasi	MWRTA
Kate Timberlake	Department of Public Utilities
Andrew Wang	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Scott [last name not recorded]	

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Logan Casey

Jonathan Church

Annette Demchur

Hiral Gandhi

Betsy Harvey

Sandy Johnston

Stella Jordan

Ethan Lapointe

Marty Milkovits

Meghan O'Connor

Sean Rourke

Michelle Scott

Judy Taylor

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Title VI Specialist

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857.702.3700 (voice)

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