



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

December 8, 2021, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–4:10 PM, Zoom

Scott Zadakis, Vice Chair, representing the National Rural Transit Assistance Program

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

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

2. Perspectives on Regional Transit Authorities—*Colette Aufranc, Wellesley Select Board, and Meghan Jop, Wellesley Executive Director of General Government Services*

Colette Aufranc presented aspects of Wellesley's recent piloting of microtransit. She gave details about current services and future plans of the pilot and stressed the need to keep microtransit services as simple and convenient as possible.

C. Aufranc summarized how microtransit can provide a more seamless rider experience by focusing on key learnings about regionalization, simplified fare collection, mobile app experiences, marketing efforts, website updates, and data sharing and analysis across different microtransit pilots.

Discussion

S. Zadakis, C. Aufranc, David Montgomery, Town of Needham, and John Strauss, Town of Burlington, discussed how Wellesley is currently funding its microtransit pilot through the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA), which is the primary decision-making body. They discussed that MWRTA is developing a microtransit mobile app, but that other municipalities, such as Newton and Salem, are using a national vendor called Via.

J. Strauss and M. Jop discussed how Wellesley microtransit pilot fares are not currently subject to *surge* pricing because services are limited to weekday hours only.

Franny Osman, Acton Transportation Advisory Committee, Andy Reker, City of Cambridge, and C. Aufranc discussed the impact and efficiency of microtransit services versus circular, fixed-route services.

Alexis Walls, Massachusetts Public Health Association, and C. Aufranc discussed the impetus to adopt a microtransit solution in Wellesley and how mobile device data can be used to identify and address gaps in transportation needs.

3. Trucks at the Southampton Street Bottleneck—*Bill Kuttner, MPO Staff*

Bill Kuttner explained that PM peak traffic queues are a persistent problem in the South Bay area near the key freight junction at Widett Circle. He presented some analysis of data he had gathered about daily and peak period traffic flows, especially trucks versus private autos. His major conclusions included the following:

- Unrestricted *northbound* use of the Boston Bypass Road is not a contributing problem.
- Adding unrestricted *southbound* use by private autos would exacerbate PM queues.
- Trucks are *not* a major problem during peak PM queues.
- Queues in South Bay area will be reduced only by adding Interstate 93 capacity.

Discussion

F. Osman and B. Kuttner discussed how completion of the proposed North–South rail link would shorten peak traffic queues but would not eliminate bottlenecks in areas with no alternate route.

A. Reker and B. Kuttner discussed the effectiveness of studying queues versus reliability of travel times. A. Reker indicated that Cambridge, Boston, and other area cities have shifted their thinking to prioritize safety rather than capacity of major highway systems.

4. Chair’s Report—*Lenard Diggins, Chair*

L. Diggins discussed a recent Congestion Management Process Committee meeting, which focused on bike parking at MBTA stations. He described a presentation to the MPO board by Betsy Harvey, MPO Staff, on ten years of Blue Bikes in the Boston area. L. Diggins also mentioned MPO staff’s publication “Managing Curb Space in the Boston Region: A Guidebook” and having the authors present at a future Advisory Council meeting.

5. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

L. Diggins wants to further explore asking Advisory Council members to serve as subject matter experts on their specialty topic. L. Diggins mentioned asking F. Osman to be subject matter expert on regional transit associations and asking Jon Seward, MoveMassachusetts, to take the lead on Big Ideas.

6. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by MoveMassachusetts (J. Seward) and seconded by the Acton Transportation Advisory Committee (F. Osman). The motion carried.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
City of Cambridge	Andy Reker
Town of Needham	David Montgomery
Town of Weymouth	Owen MacDonald

Member Citizen Advocacy Groups	Representatives and Alternates
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
Acton Transportation Advisory Committee	Franny Osman
American Council of Engineering Companies	Fred Moseley
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	AnaCristina Fragoso
MoveMassachusetts	Jon Seward
National Rural Transit Assistance Program	Scott Zadakis
WalkBoston	John McQueen
Boston Society of Architects	Schuyler Larrabee

Agencies (Non-Voting)	Attendees
MassMobility	Rachel Fichtenbaum

Other Attendees

Affiliation

Jen Rowe	City of Boston
Alexis Walls	Massachusetts Public Health Association
Julia Sheehan	Massachusetts Public Health Association
Dan Martin	Town of Brookline
John Strauss	Town of Burlington
Sandy Lasky	Town of Sudbury
Meghan Jop	Town of Wellesley
Colette Aufranc	Town of Wellesley
Steve Olanoff	Town of Westwood
Matthew Petersen	TransitMatters
Andree Entezari	Resident
B Casey	Resident

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Matt Archer
Bill Kuttner

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