



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

August 12, 2020, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–4:15 PM, Zoom

Lenard Diggins, Chair, representing the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Ridership Oversight Committee

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Lenard Diggins called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM. (For attendance list, see page five.)

2. Advisory Council Meet and Greet—*Lenard Diggins, Chair*

Lenard Diggins asked meeting attendees to talk about themselves and the organizations they represent. He also asked people to discuss why they are interested in participating in the Advisory Council and what they would like the Advisory Council to explore and discuss during the next year.

Scott Zadakis

Scott Zadakis, Vice Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, said he represents CrossTown Connect, a Transportation Management Association serving Acton and surrounding towns to address transportation issues in the area. He said CrossTown Connect also works with the local business communities, including providers of commuter shuttles and emergency rides home. S. Zadakis said he is interested in working with the Advisory Council because the Advisory Council's input affects available funding, which affects his work with CrossTown Connect, and because he wants to have a positive impact on the region.

Franny Osman

Franny Osman said she represents the Acton Transportation Advisory Committee. She explained that she first became involved when trying to get a shuttle launched for ecological reasons; she soon realized that there were other needs for improved transportation, due to disability or age, for example. F. Osman discussed working to integrate some of the disparate transportation solutions that were being pursued by neighboring towns or even within the same town. She mentioned the Community Innovation Challenge grants program that became available during Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick's administration. F. Osman discussed her experiences trying to connect the services of more than two regional transit

authorities (RTAs). She said suburbs typically get less transportation programming than urban hubs, so individuals and organizations need to advocate for more attention to suburban transportation issues.

Dan Martin

Dan Martin said he represents the Town of Brookline, where he and Todd Kirrane work for the transportation division of the engineering department. D. Martin said that a lot of the issues discussed at the Advisory Council impact Brookline, such as the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) funding and the Allston Multimodal Project.

Andy Reker

Andy Reker said he represents the City of Cambridge, where he works in the community development department. He said he is interested in being part of the Advisory Council because he has learned quite a bit about transportation planning at the state and regional levels. A. Reker said he used to work as staff to the Boston Region MPO; he said working now for a municipality, he brings a different perspective to the meetings. A. Reker said Cambridge is constantly trying to navigate its relationship with Boston regarding transportation issues.

Lenard Diggins

Lenard Diggins, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, said he represents the MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC). He said the ROC was created in 2004 as a result of the 2003 MBTA fare increase. L. Diggins discussed his experiences as a public member of the ROC and the importance of forming good relationships based on respect and trust with people the ROC needed to work with. L. Diggins said when he became chair of the ROC's capital investment and finance subcommittee, he had to learn more about funding and finance aspects behind transportation planning.

Kate White

Kate White, MPO staff, said she works at the MPO as Public Outreach Coordinator. K. White said she previously worked in community engagement at 2Life Communities, an agency that provides affordable housing to older adults. She said prior to that she did volunteer recruitment and management at Community Servings, an organization that provides free meals to people experiencing different illnesses. K. White said she enjoys working to connect people to policy development. She stressed the importance of connections and relationships to any public process.

Matt Archer

Matt Archer, MPO staff, said he started at the MPO as a part-time data collector and has performed a number of similar roles there, although his formal background was in video production. He said he is from the Boston area and has been interested in transportation for a

very long time. M. Archer said he really enjoys his current role as Advisory Council Coordinator.

David Montgomery

David Montgomery said he represents the Town of Needham, where he first got involved in civic affairs as a town meeting member. D. Montgomery said he has been involved with the Advisory Council for several years, including a term as chair, and he mentioned some former members who taught him a lot about transportation issues, including Frank DeMasi. D. Montgomery discussed the [Needham-Newton Corridor Project](#), which is an important project for the Town of Needham. He said the project is finally moving forward after waiting many years in the MPO programming process. D. Montgomery encouraged the Advisory Council to look for speakers outside the MPO staff.

Discussion

F. Osman said she would like the Advisory Council to explore how things actually get decided at the MPO and MPO board meetings. F. Osman and D. Montgomery also said they would like the Advisory Council explore the topic of the North–South Rail Link.

A. Reker said he would like the Advisory Council to explore regional equity issues in the context of the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) [Priority Corridor and Subarea Studies](#). F. Osman said she would like to explore solutions to the transportation challenges of low-income communities of color, where many individuals face long, stressful commutes.

A. Reker said he is also interested in hearing more about what the MPO is doing with outreach and engagement that involves technical activities for the more technical UPWP studies.

D. Montgomery said the scoping report for the [Allston Multimodal I-90 Project](#) was recently released. He said he wonders if the Advisory Council could study that and provide comment. L. Diggins and Matt Archer discussed whether the Advisory Council can officially comment on work scope reports. M. Archer said that previously Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager on the MPO staff, had raised the idea of getting the Advisory Council involved during the creation of work scope reports so that members could provide comment at that time. D. Montgomery said the project will have a lot of regional impacts.

D. Montgomery, L. Diggins, K. White, F. Osman, and S. Zadakis discussed having the Advisory Council make an effort to expand the membership to bring in new perspectives and to more fully represent the interests and stakeholders in the region.

S. Zadakis discussed working with legislators and planners to structure funding in a way that would incentivize cooperation among regional planning authorities or other transportation

groups. He said he likes learning about transportation interactive databases, such as the [Transportation Improvement Program Web Application](#).

3. Chair's Report—Lenard Diggins, Chair

Lenard Diggins said that at its last meeting the MPO board had funded a new project called Mobility for All by endorsing [Amendment Seven to the federal fiscal years 2020–24 Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\)](#). He explained that Mobility for All will allow the MetroWest RTA to explore a new accessibility model with complementary technology for demand response services to expand access to transportation options for seniors and individuals with disabilities within the MetroWest region.

L. Diggins mentioned two other items that were covered at the last MPO meeting:

- Bradley Putnam, MPO Staff, presented a [guidebook to operating a successful shuttle program in the Boston region](#).
- Matt Genova led a discussion of [proposed revisions to the Economic Vitality criteria](#) used in scoring for the TIP.

4. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

L. Diggins, F. Osman, and D. Montgomery discussed the formation of the Advisory Council Election Committee to oversee the election process for the next term of office for chair and vice chair. F. Osman agreed to chair and D. Montgomery agreed to serve on the Election Committee, which needs to present nominations for each office at the next Advisory Council meeting in September.

5. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned.

Attendees

Member Municipalities

Representatives and Alternates

Town of Brookline
City of Cambridge
Town of Needham

Dan Martin
Andy Reker
David Montgomery

Member Citizen Advocacy Groups

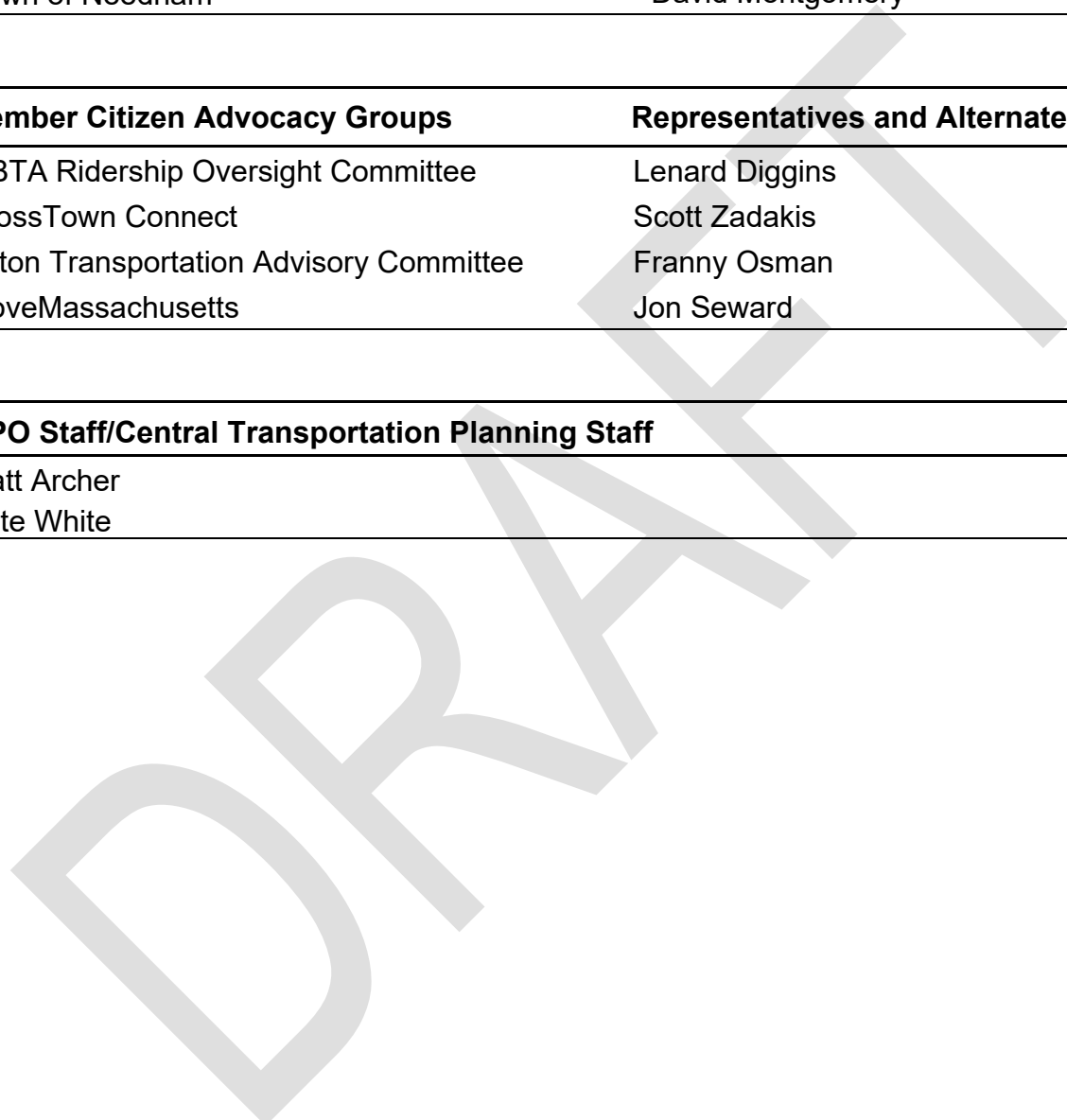
Representatives and Alternates

MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee
CrossTown Connect
Acton Transportation Advisory Committee
MoveMassachusetts

Lenard Diggins
Scott Zadakis
Franny Osman
Jon Seward

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Matt Archer
Kate White



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