



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

May 10, 2023, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–4:15 PM, Zoom

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

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

L. 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. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Discussion

Advisory Council members spoke about meeting minutes that they need to abstain from, due to absence and other reasons. Advisory Council members decided to vote on each set of minutes individually, to allow for abstentions and substantive comments to be made.

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2023, meeting was made by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (Franny Osman) and seconded by the Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES) (AnaCristina Fragoso). The minutes were approved.

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2022, meeting was made by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (F. Osman) and seconded by WalkMassachusetts (John McQueen). The minutes were approved.

Discussion

A.C. Fragoso stated that the December 8, 2021, meeting contained a microtransit forum discussion and requested a follow-up at a future meeting.

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2021, meeting was made by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (F. Osman) and seconded by the BSCES (A.C. Fragoso). The minutes were approved.

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2021, meeting was made by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (F. Osman) and seconded by the BSCES (A.C. Fragoso). The minutes were approved.

Discussion

J. McQueen requested a follow-up on agenda items from the September 8, 2021, meeting.

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2021, meeting was made by WalkMassachusetts (J. McQueen) and seconded by the Town of Needham (David Montgomery). The minutes were approved.

Discussion

J. McQueen requested a follow-up on a presentation made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council at the July 14, 2021, meeting and a post-coronavirus analysis that was suggested in the meeting.

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2021, meeting was made by the League of Women Voters (F. Osman) and seconded by WalkMassachusetts (J. McQueen). The minutes were approved.

Discussion

D. Montgomery stated that Steve Olanoff, Town of Westwood, should be listed in the attendance of the June 9, 2021, meeting minutes as a non-voting member of the Advisory Council.

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2021, meeting was made by the BSCES (A.C. Fragoso) and seconded by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (F. Osman). The minutes were approved.

Discussion

J. McQueen requested a follow-up on the discussion in the April 14, 2021, meeting about analyzing the Complete Streets Program.

A.C. Fragoso requested a follow-up on providing project design help to municipalities.

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2021, meeting was made by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (F. Osman) and seconded by WalkMassachusetts (J. McQueen). The minutes were approved.

3. Transportation Resilience Discussion—*Judy Taylor, MPO Staff*

J. Taylor stated that key concerns relating to climate change in the Boston region include rising temperatures, sea level rise, and changes in precipitation, all elements of climate resilience. J. Taylor stated that transportation infrastructure such as bridges, roadways, public transit, tunnels, and airports are vulnerable to impacts from climate change. Vulnerability measures include an element's exposure to hazards, sensitivity to changes, and adaptive capacity to extreme events.

J. Taylor stated that resilience is incorporated into MPO work in different ways. Resilience is part of the Long-Range Transportation Plan's (LRTP) vision, goals, and objectives, analyses to support the Needs Assessment, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project selection criteria, and corridor and intersection studies, and it exists as a discrete program to further expand its place in MPO work.

J. Taylor shared ideas for future MPO work and various resources.

Discussion

Andy Reker, City of Cambridge, spoke of the urban heat island effect and asked if municipalities have incorporated humidity into heat index measures and if they are collaborating with public health experts.

A.C. Fragoso stated that the American Society of Civil Engineers has an Envision rating system to award points to projects and asked if additional weighting will be awarded to projects participating in the program.

Julie Wormser, Mystic River Watershed Association, stated that there will be a turning point when it will be more resource intensive to adapt existing infrastructure than it would be to construct, and she stated that understanding the factors driving this would be beneficial to the Boston region. J. Taylor stated that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology recently released a study quantifying the projected annual cost of sea level rise on the MBTA system.

J. McQueen recommended creating a separate resilience investment program to prevent resilience projects from competing for funding with more general infrastructure projects.

Sarah Traore, Charles River Watershed Association, spoke of the threat that stormwater poses to transportation infrastructure. J. Taylor encouraged the Charles River Watershed Association to connect with MPO staff to refine project selection criteria relating to stormwater.

Karl Alexander, Mystic River Watershed Association, encouraged including the expansion of tree canopies and available open spaces in project scoring criteria. J. Taylor stated that points are awarded for nature-based solutions, addressing the heat island effect, and expanding access to open spaces.

Leila Mekias, City of Cambridge, asked how municipalities can work to improve regional resilience and how local vulnerabilities could be impacted by regional work. J. Taylor spoke about the MPO's positioning as a regional entity to coordinate municipal plans.

J. McQueen stated that an idea from 2021 suggested that the MPO develop resources for municipalities to draw on for project and program development.

Caitlin Allen-Connelly, A Better City, asked how the capacity of the electric grid is incorporated into planning, especially in relationship to decarbonizing the industry.

4. Chair's Report—*Lenard Diggins, MBTA Rider Oversight Committee*

L. Diggins stated that the May 4, 2023, MPO board meeting contained a vote to adjust investment program allocation targets for the *Destination 2050* LRTP. On April 20, 2023, the board voted to include the following major infrastructure projects in the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2029–33 time band:

- Rutherford Avenue in Boston for \$154,000,000
- Route 126, Route 135, and MBTA and CSX Railroads in Framingham for \$145,500,000
- Routes 4 and 225, Hartwell Avenue, and I-95 Interchange in Lexington for \$57,000,000
- McGrath Boulevard in Somerville for \$33,800,000

During the development of the LRTP, the board decided to establish allocation targets for each of the investment programs. Initial decisions allocated 45 percent of funding to Complete Streets, 30 percent to Major Infrastructure, 12 percent for Intersection Improvements, five percent for Bicycle Network and Pedestrian Connections, five percent for Transit Transformation, two percent for Community Connections, and one percent for Bikeshare Support. The total cost of Major Infrastructure projects in the FFYs 2029–33 time band is \$390,300,000, which is approximately 47 percent of the funding available to allocate in this time band. To account for this imbalance, the board voted to decrease the Complete Streets program by 15 percent and Intersection Improvements by two percent in this time band.

L. Diggins stated that he was the only vote against this adjustment and explained that he thought further conversations should be had before adjusting allocations. L. Diggins requested feedback from the Advisory Council on this decision.

Discussion

A.C. Fragoso advocated for projects to be able to represent multiple investment programs at once.

J. McQueen spoke about the overlap between Complete Streets, Major Infrastructure, and Intersection Improvements investment programs.

5. TIP 3C Letter—*Franny Osman, Vice-Chair, League of Women Voters*

F. Osman reviewed the draft 3C letter, which has been worked on at special 3C Committee meetings of the Advisory Council. F. Osman invited meeting participants to provide feedback.

Discussion

A.C. Fragoso suggested including discussions of climate migration and resilience criteria in the letter.

Vote

A motion to approve the TIP 3C Letter with minor editorial changes was made by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (F. Osman) and seconded by the BSCES (A.C. Fragoso). The motion carried.

6. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

There were none.

7. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the BSCES (A.C. Fragoso) and seconded by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (F. Osman). The motion carried.

Attendees

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

Member Citizen Advocacy Groups	Attendees
American Council of Engineering Companies	Fred Moseley
Boston Society of Architects	Schuyler Larrabee
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	Ana Cristina Fragoso
League of Women Voters of Massachusetts	Franny Osman
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
MoveMassachusetts	Jon Seward
National Rural Transportation Assistance Program	Scott Zadakis
WalkMassachusetts	John McQueen

Agencies (Non-Voting)	Attendees
MBTA Advisory Board	Amira Patterson

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Karl Alexander	Mystic River Watershed Association
Karl Allen	City of Chelsea
Leila Mekias	City of Cambridge
Bill Deignan	City of Cambridge
Caitlin Allen-Connelly	A Better City
John Alessi	Town of Arlington
Tanya B.	
Susan Barrett	Town of Lexington
Emmanuel De Barrios	Alternatives for Community and the Environment
Conrad Crawford	Charles River Watershed Association
Jeff Frisch	Neponset River Watershed Association
Michaela Grenier	LivableStreets Alliance
Ali Hiple	Conservation Law Foundation
Ibrahim Lopez-Hernandez	North Suffolk Office of Resilience and Sustainability
Maya Noviski	City of Melrose
Sarah Traore	Charles River Watershed Association
Kat Torres Radisic	MBTA Riders Transportation Access Group

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Other Attendees

Affiliation

Julie Wormser	Mystic River Watershed Association
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MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Logan Casey
Stella Jordan
Ethan Lapointe
Erin Maguire
Bradley Putnam
Sean Rourke
Judy Taylor

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Title VI Specialist

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By Telephone:

857.702.3700 (voice)

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