

Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Ad Hoc Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Committee Meeting Summary

September 20, 2023, Meeting

12:30 PM–2:15 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Tom Bent, Chair, representing the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) and Mayor Katjana Ballentyne.

Meeting Agenda and Summary of Discussion

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 5.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Discussion: Processes and Themes for Updates—*Tom Bent, Chair, and Tegin Teich, Executive Director*

T. Teich stated that the worksheet used for the meeting is a work in progress and is intended to facilitate further discussion.

T. Bent stated that one topic for discussion is whether topic deliberations should be held in a full board or committee meeting.

John Romano, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), stated that the board may benefit from topic deliberations going through a separate committee before recommendations are presented to the full board.

Jen Rowe, City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department), stated that the committee should also identify key decision points along the way to layout for the board.

T. Teich reviewed topics that have surfaced to date, including staff-led content, regional transportation authority (RTA) representation, the Regional Transportation Advisory Council, committee governance, the fiduciary agent agreement, refined descriptions of agency collaboration, and expectations for board member development.

T. Bent asked about the timeframe for the completion of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council's revised role. Lenard Diggins, Regional Transportation Advisory

Council, stated that the revisions can be completed in line with a timeline that the committee settles on.

Brian Kane, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Advisory Board, stated that he wants to further discuss the overall goal of revisions to the MOU and suggested going through a process where the majority of the municipalities in the region approve the MOU. T. Teich stated that the initial proposed process for updates includes a kick-off review of peer MOUs, establishing the intent and primary audience of the document, and engaging communities in the Boston region. B. Kane encouraged that the revision process begins with a discussion of the big picture of the document. Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, stated that federal laws regulate MPOs and suggested that staff distribute these regulations. Derek Krevat, MassDOT, stated that the current MOU contains references to the regulations. T. Teich stated that if the MOU is revisited as a whole, that federal guidance signals that the governor has final approval.

T. Teich restated proposed ideas for processes to deliberate topics. L. Diggins stated that there is variability in MPO governance structures, so it is unclear what can be summarized from a peer review. E. Bourassa stated that example MOUs would be helpful for reference.

T. Bent spoke of the benefits of peer exchanges to bring in new ideas.

T. Bent stated that the State chairing an MPO board is unique to Massachusetts. D. Krevat stated that his understanding of the State acting as the chair is due to MassDOT providing the state matching funds for projects along with the strong design guidance that MassDOT issues. J. Rowe asked if the committee should bring the topic of the role of the chair to the full board. T. Teich suggested referring to interviews with board members from the 2022 Federal Certification Report, which featured comments and observations on reactions to the governance structure. L. Diggins stated that it is worth discussing the governance structure, especially with the other MPOs in the state.

E. Bourassa stated that the MPO should follow its conventional public review process for the MOU, in addition to doing direct outreach to municipalities. L. Diggins stated that the updates provide a good opportunity to reach out to municipalities. T. Bent stated that the primary audience of the MOU is the full board and staff, but that outreach should still occur. J. Rowe advocated modifying the MOU language to be accessible to a more general audience.

T. Bent discussed the method of engaging communities. E. Bourassa stated that there are benefits to a survey, subregional outreach, and emails.

T. Teich reviewed the format for proposed processes, beginning with the staff-driven content. J. Romano stated that the overall process should be streamlined to be sent to the committee tasked with updating the MOU before sharing with the full board. J. Rowe suggested sharing a track-changes version of staff-led updates with the full board to provide an opportunity for a larger audience to weigh in.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham), spoke in support of the proposed committee and suggested the periodic review of updates to the full board to ensure that the content is aligned with the initial target.

T. Teich discussed the process to discuss the RTA role in decision-making. Options include staff meeting with the RTAs to discuss their needs and desires or inviting the RTAs to converse with the established committee directly. D. Giombetti stated that he would like the committee to engage with RTAs directly. D. Krevat discussed inviting both the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority and the Cape Ann Transportation Authority to meet with the committee during the same meeting. E. Bourassa stated that a key factor in this decision is what the motivation is to request a board seat.

T. Teich introduced the Regional Transportation Advisory Council's role revisions process.

T. Teich discussed the committee governance process. E. Bourassa stated that this topic would be better suited for the Operations Plan.

T. Teich reviewed the process for agency collaboration and decision points, which include the level of detail on what collaboration looks like. D. Krevat discussed existing coordination points that are not included in the MOU.

T. Teich stated that staff will revise the working document to reflect the discussed committee forum. L. Diggins asked how explicit of a framework the ad hoc committee wants to put forth for the standing committee.

T. Bent discussed the revision timelines and potential committee composition. T. Bent stated that the goal of the proposed committee is to present a draft MOU to the full board for its ultimate approval.

4. Members Items

There were none.

5. Next Meeting

October 19, 2023

6. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by MassDOT (J. Romano). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jen Rowe
Inner Core Committee, City of Somerville (Chair)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	John Romano
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Office of Transportation Planning)	Derek Krevat
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
MetroWest Regional Collaborative, City of Framingham	Dennis Giombetti
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Dan Jaffe	

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Annette Demchur
Erin Maguire

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