



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

February 14, 2024, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–4:15 PM, Zoom

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

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

L. Diggins called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM. (For attendance list, see page 6.)

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 8, 2023, meeting was made by the Boston Society of Civil Engineers (AnaCristina Fragoso) and seconded by WalkMassachusetts (John McQueen). The minutes were approved.

3. Roadway-Pricing Discussion—*Seth Asante, MPO Staff*

S. Asante presented findings from the [Learning from Roadway-Pricing Experiences](#) study. He discussed five case studies on roadway pricing, lessons learned, explored the implications for the Boston region, and possible next steps for the Boston Region MPO.

Informed by feedback from the Congestion Management Process (CMP) Committee, MPO staff developed a selection of criteria for the case studies. The five case studies selected include roadway-pricing programs in San Francisco, Minneapolis and St. Paul, Chicago, Washington, DC, and New York City. S. Asante stated the selection criteria for case studies as

- CMP workshop participants recommended the program;
- program goals align with the Boston Region MPO planning process;
- ease of implementation in the Boston region;
- Environmental Assessment completed before implementation;
- program directly addresses equity concerns; and
- opportunity to learn from challenges.

S. Asante discussed that roadway-pricing strategies can support multiple goals. Direct goals include reducing congestion and generating revenue for transportation investments. Indirect goals include supporting economic vitality, air quality, and safety.

S. Asante discussed the following lessons learned from the case studies:

- political leadership and legislation are essential
- emphasize engagement focused on environmental justice and underrepresented communities early in the process
- show that revenue uses are beneficial, transparent, and linked to transit and active transportation infrastructure improvements
- pair pricing programs with transit and active transportation modes

S. Asante discussed potential next steps for the Boston Region MPO as

- conducting a stakeholder analysis,
- engaging equity and traditionally underrepresented populations,
- identifying pricing strategies that are most technically feasible in the Boston region,
- workshopping goals with the full MPO board and develop policy frameworks, and
- developing concepts for scenarios that could be analyzed in the next Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

S. Asante facilitated a discussion seeking feedback on how the MPO should move forward.

Discussion

John McQueen (WalkMassachusetts) inquired about Washington State's program, which uses vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) charges as opposed to tolling, and why it was not a part of the study. S. Asante responded that the Washington State program was reviewed by the CMP Committee. Based on their feedback, the selection criteria created was focused on congestion pricing programs. S. Asante discussed that VMT charges are a strategy that states are researching. J. McQueen asked why the selection criteria excluded VMT programs because of their significance to managing congestion. S. Asante responded that VMT programs could be investigated as a part of the next steps in the study.

J. McQueen asked about the implications of roadway pricing on electric vehicles. S. Asante responded that this incentive will be removed for electric vehicles in the future since the number of electric vehicles on the road is likely to increase. J. McQueen stated that money from tolls should be invested in funding transit to a state of good repair and more money should be allocated to enabling electric vehicles.

Franny Osman (Acton resident) stated that the MPO should not delay implementing a roadway-pricing pilot program. AnaCristina Fragoso (Boston Society of Civil Engineers) agreed with F. Osman's statement that funding should go towards a pilot program. S. Asante

discussed that while the study demonstrated the ability of congestion pricing to address various issues, further studies to understand public perception and to build stakeholder collaboration are necessary. F. Osman stated that the private sector should be involved in the stakeholder discussions on roadway pricing.

4. Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2025-29 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project Scoring Update—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

E. Lapointe presented a brief scoring update including project portfolio overview, projects by investment program, and the application of new criteria on the FFYs 2025-29 TIP.

MPO staff have received 30 project applications for the FFYs 2025-29 TIP cycle, which include

- 10 projects in the Community Connections program,
- 15 projects in the Project Design Pilot program,
- four projects in the Core Investment programs, and
- one project in the Transit Transformation program.

E. Lapointe shared an overview of scoring with new criteria for each program and noted that project scores are not the sole determinant of programming. E. Lapointe discussed point spreads for project scores in each investment program.

Discussion

F. Osman asked the total number of points a project is scored on. E. Lapointe responded that projects are scored on a range of 100 points.

J. McQueen and A.C. Frago asked about the overlap between the Complete Streets, Intersection Improvement, and Major Infrastructure programs. E. Lapointe agreed that there is a significant overlap between the programs and differences are dependent on the extent the project engages in multiple kinds of activities.

J. McQueen asked if the benefits of bike share projects would be limited by weather. E. Lapointe noted there is a scoring consideration of whether facilities are accessible year-round.

J. McQueen inquired about the programming of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Phase 3 project. E. Lapointe noted that the only prerequisite to get projects on the TIP is to obtain Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Project Review Committee approval, although reaching a 25 percent design threshold could give additional certainty that projects will stay on track.

L. Diggins asked how long the public comment period will be for the upcoming TIP draft. E. Lapointe responded that it is a minimum of 21 days. L. Diggins discussed logistics for the Advisory Council to plan and draft a 3C comment letter on the draft TIP.

A.C. Fragoso asked if the cost of inflation between 25 percent design to 100 percent design is considered. E. Lapointe responded that there are contingencies built in and a four percent per year inflation factor.

J. McQueen asked about how the Department of Conservation and Recreation Rail Trail projects are funded and if they are a part of the TIP process. E. Lapointe discussed that the MPO is one of many resources and mechanisms that municipalities have been using to advance their rail trails.

A.C. Fragoso asked about the coordination of funding mechanisms and scoring for projects. E. Lapointe responded that the MPO does not factor in how other parties are scoring projects, but the MPO's scoring process is complementary to MassDOT's. E. Lapointe discussed that the MPO is working to understand how these programs are interacting to better coordinate across organizations and agencies.

5. Vision Zero Action Plan Update—*Ali Kleyman, MPO Staff*

Discussion

A. Kleyman stated that the MPO is developing a regional Vision Zero Action Plan under the Safe Streets and Roads for All federal grant programs. Vision Zero is a policy adopted internationally that shifts the way people think about roadway safety. A. Kleyman discussed the Vision Zero Task Force that the MPO convened to help shape the plan, which includes representation from various departments at the municipal and agency level and leaders from mobility and safety advocacy groups. She stated that the task force is one part of the engagement for the Vision Zero Action Plan, and staff will work with consultants to develop an engagement plan and analyze safety-related data, among other tasks. A. Kleyman noted her plans to keep the Advisory Council up to date and engage at key points throughout the development of the Vision Zero Action Plan.

6. *Destination 2050* Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Needs Assessment Chapters 2 and 3 Discussion

L. Diggins facilitated a discussion on Chapters 2 and 3 of the *Destination 2050* Needs Assessment StoryMaps: "Transportation in the Boston Region Today" and "Projected Future Conditions and Travel Demand," available [online](#).

Discussion

J. McQueen stated that an issue of the Needs Assessment and the LRTP is the limited time frame of available data. J. McQueen discussed that the data do not comprehensively acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 on the transportation system. L. Diggins discussed that

the pandemic has affected staff resources and caused delays in study work. L. Diggins noted that LRTP development aligns with the Census, so updated information wasn't available when staff were conducting initial modeling. J. McQueen noted that it is important to include these data to understand changes to mobility. L. Diggins stated that there is a need to improve analysis to better understand and prepare for unprecedented events.

L. Diggins noted his interest in seeing what distributions of population spreads or mode availability have larger effects on projections of mode use or other factors. L. Diggins asked why any given projection is better or worse than another.

F. Osman noted that she would like to see population information broken down by MBTA communities in addition to Regional Transit Authorities with an emphasis on identifying if a community is within an urban core or in the outskirts. L. Diggins stated that the information might be available but not quantifiable in a similar way to the Needs Assessment.

7. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Acton resident (Franny Osman) and seconded by WalkMassachusetts (John McQueen). The motion carried.

Attendees

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

Citizen Advocacy Groups	Attendees
Boston Society of Architects	Schuyler Larrabee
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	Ana Cristina Fragoso
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
National Rural Transit Assistance Program	Scott Zadakis
WalkMassachusetts	John McQueen
Acton Resident	Franny Osman

Agencies (Non-Voting)	Attendees
MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)	Tyler Terrasi
MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)	Jim Nee

Other Attendees	Affiliation
JR Frey	Town of Hingham
Ryan Hicks	
Daniel Milbrandt	
Mahir Saagar	
James McDermott	

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Seth Asante
Abby Cutrumbes
David Hong
Jia Huang
Stella Jordan
Ali Kleyman
Ethan Lapointe
Srilekha Murthy
Gina Perille
Sean Rourke
Sam Taylor

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