



Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

December 12, 2018, Meeting Minutes

3:00 PM–4:30 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 4,
10 Park Plaza, Boston

Tegin Teich, Chair, representing the City of Cambridge

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Chair Tegin Teich called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 13.)

2. Chair's Report—*T. Teich, City of Cambridge*

T. Teich summarized the agenda of the December 6, 2018, Advisory Council meeting. Staff of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) shared updates about the Community Transportation Program and staff from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) described the demographic projections that will inform the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). T. Teich expressed enthusiasm for new tools MAPC has developed to improve these projections.

3. 3C Planning Process, *Jen Rowe, Public Participation Program Manager, MPO Staff*

J. Rowe explained her aim of providing a high-level overview of how the MPO's plans and programs work together to improve transportation in the region. MPOs are decision-making boards made up of representatives from local governments and transportation authorities. They conduct federally required metropolitan transportation planning and serve as a forum for cooperative decision-making. As such, they are the mechanism by which the federal government allocates transportation dollars for all modes except airplanes and ports.

Federally mandated metropolitan transportation planning began in the 1960s. At that time, the Interstate Highway System had been largely constructed, connecting regions across the country to one another. Next, federal and state authorities began planning routes through and around urban areas. Many of these projects encountered local opposition because there was no mechanism for local input, and people organized protests and demonstrations. In the Boston region, for example, there was opposition to the Southwest Corridor project, which would have connected I-95 with downtown Boston, and the Inner Belt project.

These projects, and similar tensions across the US, prompted Congress to require that projects receiving federal funding in urbanized areas be based in cooperative, continuing, comprehensive planning processes (the “three Cs”). MPOs were created to carry out this planning process and ensure local input in all aspects.

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) planning area includes 97 communities, approximately the area within Interstate 495, and has a 24-member board. MPO members include local, federal, state and regional entities, and this Advisory Council, which is represented by the Advisory Council Chair, Tegin Teich, and occasionally the Vice Chair, AnaCristina Fragoso. The local representatives include two permanent members from Boston, two at-large members elected to represent cities, two at-large members elected to represent towns, and eight members elected to represent each of the MPO’s subregions. State entities on the MPO board include the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, which has three seats, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and the Massachusetts Port Authority. MAPC is the sole regional entity. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are non-voting members.

MPOs prepare three major documents to support transportation decision-making. The first is a Long-Range Transportation Plan, which is a twenty-year coordinated vision for transportation. The MPO updates its LRTP every four years to address current and future mobility needs. The LRTP allocates money for major projects—those costing over \$20 million or adding capacity to the transportation system—and also sets aside funding for smaller projects in investment programs. Examples of major projects include the Green Line Extension and the reconstruction of Highland Avenue in Newton. In the past, the MPO’s investment programs have included Complete Streets, Intersection Improvements, Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections, and Community Transportation programs. The MPO is updating its LRTP and looking for input this winter and spring.

The MPO implements the LRTP by programming funding for major projects over the life of the LRTP. Some projects, such as the Green Line Extension, are programmed to receive funding over a series of federal fiscal years (FFYs). The MPO also selects individual projects to fund within the LRTP’s investment programs. For example, the MPO programmed funding for a portion of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail as a Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections project in FFY 2020. These decisions are documented in the MPO’s second major document, a rolling, five-year capital plan called the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The MPO updates the TIP every year. This year’s TIP is also in development this winter and spring.

The MPO’s third major document is the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP documents MPO staff’s activities and budget for the upcoming FFY. Besides recurring work to support the MPO’s decision-making, staff also conducts discrete studies each FFY on a variety of topics as diverse as planning for transit signal priority to creating a report card to evaluate the pedestrian experience at specific locations. MPO staff is looking for input on

transportation needs, studies ideas, and priorities through the beginning of January. For more information about opportunities to participate in the development of the MPO's three major documents, please refer to the MPO's [timeline](#).

There is also a fourth plan included on the timeline: a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HST). While this plan is not one of the MPO's three major documents, it enables organizations in the region to be eligible for funding from the FTA's Section 5310 program. MPO staff is updating the region's CPT-HST with input from seniors, people with disabilities, and the people who support them. For more information, please contact [Betsy Harvey](#).

Finally, the best way to follow the MPO process is by [signing up](#) for the MPO's email updates and the Advisory Council's updates. (You may also follow the MPO on Twitter [@BostonRegionMPO](#).) Subscribers receive updates about MPO and Advisory Council meetings, public comment periods, and other opportunities to participate in regional transportation planning.

The Advisory Council is another avenue for participation in the MPO's decision-making. As members know, the Council offers important, independent advice to the MPO and has a seat on the MPO board. The Council's membership is open to any municipality, agency, or organization that does not otherwise have a seat on the MPO board.

Discussion

John McQueen asked whether the MBTA's The RIDE service and the Boston region's regional transit authority (RTA) systems would be included in the CPT-HST. Ali Kleyman explained that the CPT-HST aimed to document unmet transportation needs. Needs already met by existing services would not be included.

J. McQueen asked whether gaps in The RIDE service or the need to more efficiently complement and/or coordinate The RIDE with other services could be included. A. Kleyman said she would inquire with B. Harvey.

J. McQueen asked whether the Advisory Council would have a chance to hear MPO staff report about studies conducted over the previous year. T. Teich explained that she invites staff to speak on certain studies. She encouraged members to review the list of FFY 2018 studies and to share which they felt to be of interest. J. McQueen suggested, as an alternative, that staff make a public presentation of all the FFY 2018 studies, which would provide a comprehensive view of what the previous year's UPWP accomplished. T. Teich suggested it might be most interesting to focus such a presentation on the study outcomes. J. Rowe explained that most studies are completed around the same time in the fall.

Franny Osman expressed her interest in such a presentation and in improving the accessibility of study results. While MPO staff occasionally studies transportation issues within a particular municipality or subregion, outside entities may benefit from learning about staff's recommended interventions. As an alternative to a public presentation, staff could also create videos to share online.

F. Osman echoed J. McQueen's interest in more information about the CPT-HST. She also urged MPO staff to compile and present information about the different public transit and human service options available throughout the Boston region. For example, if you live in Lexington, what options are available to you? RTAs must provide dial-a-ride service to people with disabilities only in those areas with fixed-route service. This means that people who live far from fixed-route service also lack access to dial-a-ride services. Their only option is through Councils of Aging (COAs). The MPO could play a role in helping state agencies understand similar inequities and also any redundancies in service.

J. McQueen agreed with F. Osman and suggested Venn diagram-style visualization. Noting the interest in the topic, T. Teich suggested that the Council return to it at another meeting. J. Rowe also offered that the topic could also be explored through a UPWP study.

Barry Steinberg asked about the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO). A. Kleyman shared that AMPO is a great resource. Staff attend conferences coordinated by AMPO and have also been asked to share information about the Boston Region MPO's approaches to planning and programming.

Dee Whittlesey expressed her opinion that the MBTA's The RIDE service be extended to additional areas.

4. Approval of September 12, 2018, Meeting Minutes—*T. Teich, City of Cambridge*

T. Teich made a motion to approve the September 12, 2018, minutes and the motion carried.

5. Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Update, *Anne McGahan, LRTP Manager, MPO Staff*

A. McGahan announced her intention to discuss two items available for public review and comment:

- [Draft Summary and Recommendations for the Needs Assessment](#)
- [Proposed changes to the MPO's Existing Vision, Goals, and Objectives](#)

Over the past year, MPO staff has conducted outreach in order to develop a Needs Assessment for transportation in the Boston region. The Needs Assessment includes data

and analyses about existing transportation systems, and population and employment conditions and projections of future travel demand. It also incorporates the public's input on transportation needs and opportunities to improve the transportation system. MPO staff compiled public input, conducted analyses, and reviewed past studies to inform the Draft Summary of Needs and Recommendations, which was presented at the November 15, 2018, MPO meeting.

The Draft Summary includes information on each of the six goal areas defined in the LRTP:

- Safety
- System Preservation
- Capacity Management and Mobility
- Clean Air and Clean Communities
- Transportation Equity
- Economic Vitality

For each goal area, there is a needs statement, a table summarizing related needs identified through analysis and public outreach, and draft recommendations to address those needs. The recommendations come in the form of existing, planned, or potential UPWP studies and existing or potential LRTP, TIP, and UPWP programs.

The recommended programs will inform the MPO's discussion of LRTP investment strategies. In the most recent LRTP, *Charting Progress to 2040*, the MPO established a number of investment programs. The MPO's Major Infrastructure Program funds projects that cost more than \$20 million and/or add capacity to the transportation system. These projects must be listed in the LRTP before being funded in the TIP. The other investment programs provide funding for smaller projects:

- Intersection Improvement Program
- Complete Street Program
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Connection Program
- Community Transportation Program

MPO staff recommend continuing each of the existing investment programs and staff propose a number of new ones for the next LRTP, *Destination 2040*:

- Dedicated Bus Lane Program
- Enhanced Park-and-Rides Program
- Connect Elderly Adults with Transportation Program
- Interchange Modernization Program
- Coordinating Car Sharing and Transit Program
- Transit State of Good Repair and Modernization Program

The MPO will select investment programs at upcoming MPO meetings. In the meantime, staff's recommendations are available for public review, along with the Draft Needs Assessment. Staff welcomes feedback from the public on both documents before they are finalized later this winter.

Also at the November 15, 2018, MPO meeting, staff proposed changes to the MPO's existing vision, goals, and objectives, which guide future transportation investment in the region and structure the MPO's evaluation criteria for LRTP and TIP projects and programs. The proposed changes were informed by staff's public outreach and data analysis around transportation needs. Most identified concerns were already addressed by the MPO's existing vision, goals and objectives. However, some changes were warranted to better align the objectives with the roles and responsibilities of the MPO and to incorporate additional feedback and new planning requirements.

Staff proposed a few minor changes to the existing vision, which already incorporates themes from all of the goal areas. The vision now includes "*a well-maintained and resilient transportation system*" that "*incorporates emerging technologies.*"

The most substantive proposed changes to the goals and objectives relate to the Transportation Equity goal area. The changes reflect public input and analyses from the Needs Assessment and guidance from the FTA and FHWA about Title VI, environmental justice, and other nondiscrimination concerns.

The proposed Transportation Equity goal statement reads: "*Ensure that all people receive comparable benefits from, and are not disproportionately burdened by, MPO investments, regardless of race, color, national origin, age, income, ability, or sex.*" This goal reflects guidance from the FTA and FHWA to consider the needs of additional populations (people who are 75 years old or older, people who are 17 years old or younger, people with limited English proficiency, and people with disabilities).

Staff also proposed changes to the Transportation Equity objectives. The first objective would read "*Ensure that all equity populations receive benefits comparable to those received by non-equity populations from MPO investments.*" As such, the objective focuses on the effects of transportation on people, rather than on the areas people live, and includes all equity populations.

The second objective would read "*Minimize potential harmful environmental, health, and safety effects of MPO-funded projects for all equity populations.*" Again, the rewording includes all equity populations. It also specifies the types of impacts to be addressed, which relate to other MPO goal areas.

Finally, staff proposed removing an existing objective (“*Break down barriers to participating in MPO-decision making*”) because it relates to the transportation-planning process, rather than its system-level outcomes. This and other process-oriented objectives will be described in a future revision to the MPO’s Public Participation Plan and included in the public-outreach chapter of the upcoming LRTP, *Destination 2040*.

Finally, staff suggested to adding two new objectives: (1) “*Promote investments that support transportation for all ages (age-friendly communities)*” and (2) “*Promote investments that are accessible to all people regardless of ability.*” These objectives emerged as themes in staff’s public outreach.

After finalizing updates to its vision, goals, and objectives, the MPO will choose investment programs and projects to include in the next LRTP, *Destination 2040*. As part of that process, the MPO will develop a Universe of Programs for the LRTP and a Universe of Projects for both the LRTP and TIP (the FFYs 2020–24 TIP will describe investments in the upcoming five federal fiscal years, which are also the first five years of the twenty-year LRTP). In its outer years, the LRTP may include conceptual projects that staff has seen described in studies or heard about through public outreach. Staff plans to present a [draft Universe of Projects](#) list at the December 20, 2018, MPO meeting, after which the Universe will be available for public comment.

Discussion

J. McQueen suggested that staff consider equity in terms of the effects of transportation both on people and also on the areas where people live. He noted that there is an initiative in the Baker Administration to create more affordable housing, including housing for older adults and people with disabilities, outside of Boston’s inner core. At the same time, the suburbs do not have the public transit options available in the inner core. A. McGahan reiterated that the MPO wants to ensure that populations receive an equitable share of benefits and burdens. She noted that the LRTP includes an equity analysis.

F. Osman asked how much cooperation occurs between Massachusetts’s MPOs when developing LRTPs. A. McGahan described monthly Transportation Managers Group meetings and a committee coordinating demographic projections across MPOs.

A. McGahan urged Advisory Council members to take a survey about proposed changes to the MPO’s existing vision, goals, and objectives and the Draft Summary and Recommendations for the Needs Assessment before the MPO’s January 17, 2018, meeting. She also explained how the Needs Assessment will serve as the first of two volumes of the LRTP and how the demographic information will remain consistent between the two volumes.

5. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Update, *Ali Kleyman, Certification Activities Group Manager, MPO Staff*

After introducing the MPO's new TIP Manager, Matt Genova, A. Kleyman discussed the upcoming schedule for developing the TIP. MPO staff has reached out to MassDOT, municipal officials, and MAPC's subregional groups about projects advancing through MassDOT's design process. Staff is now gathering data about projects eligible for funding in the next five FFYs and will be evaluating those projects. A. Kleyman expects to present results to the MPO in February. Afterwards, the MPO will prioritize projects for funding. A draft FFYs 2020–24 TIP is expected in April and a final version in May.

A. Kleyman encouraged Advisory Council members to familiarize themselves with the MPO's TIP development webpages where staff posts all of the decision-making tools that the MPO uses to program projects in the TIP, including the TIP Universe of Projects, evaluation results, project descriptions, analyses of programming by geography and investment program, and a "First-Tier List" that summarizes priority projects' scores, costs, readiness, and other planning priorities and constraints.

The TIP includes about 100 projects in five FFYs. About 30 of those are regionally prioritized. The remaining 70 state prioritized projects are mostly related to bridge and interstate maintenance. This amounts to approximately \$250 million to \$300 million of infrastructure funding per year for approximately 20 projects (six to 12 regionally prioritized and 10-15 state-prioritized projects).

A. Kleyman explained that the TIP Universe of Projects includes major infrastructure projects that would have to be programmed in the LRTP before being funded in the TIP and smaller projects that can be programmed directly in the TIP within one of the MPO's four other investment programs. A. Kleyman presented tables and graphs showing the number of active, unfunded projects. There are six active, unfunded, smaller projects that have already been evaluated by MPO staff in previous FFYs and twelve more that staff plans to evaluate this winter. As a result, there will be about 18 projects for the MPO to consider funding in the FFYs 2020–24 TIP, likely in its outer year. (There are also 30 active, unfunded, smaller projects that, for a variety of reasons, are not ready to be evaluated at this time.)

A. Kleyman explained that, in addition to the smaller projects, there are four major infrastructure projects programmed in the current LRTP that have yet to be programmed in the TIP. The MPO will consider these for funding in the FFYs 2020–24 TIP. (There are also 25 major infrastructure projects that have yet to be programmed in either document.)

Discussion

T. Teich noted that there will be a lot to process and discuss in February related to the TIP and LRTP. She urged members to start thinking about what types of input they would like to

contribute. A. Kleyman encouraged members to let MPO staff know if there are other ways they would like to see information communicated.

J. McQueen asked why the TIP Universe of Projects did not include rail trail and multi-use trail projects such as the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) from Sudbury to Framingham. A. Kleyman explained that that phase of the BFRT had already been programmed for funding and the Universe only includes unfunded projects.

Paul Moyer asked whether projects were selected based on their evaluation scores.

A. Kleyman explained that there are also other considerations.

6. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Update, *Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager, MPO Staff*

S. Johnston introduced the UPWP as the document that lays out the MPO's studies and analyses for the upcoming year. The MPO has a yearly budget of approximately \$5 million, 80 percent of which funds the work of MPO staff (the remaining 20 percent funds transportation work by MAPC). MPO staff uses this funding to maintain its core planning functions. In addition, it conducts six to ten discrete studies each year. The largest studies cost as much as \$120,000. Study ideas come from staff, MPO members, Advisory Council members, and the public. A UPWP Committee of the MPO then selects which studies to fund. S. Johnston noted that the committee has tended to prioritize studies of regional relevance. T. Teich has served on the UPWP Committee for several years.

Since November 2018, MPO staff has been gathering study ideas from the public.

S. Johnston encouraged Advisory Council members to share ideas and complete a forthcoming online survey by the end of January. Finally, S. Johnston alerted members to the availability of funding for technical assistance projects related to Complete Streets upgrades, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and transit planning. Municipalities and transit providers are eligible to apply.

S. Johnston asked members for their input on study ideas.

Discussion

T. Teich asked S. Johnston if he could update the Council on staff's effort to create a database tracking the implementation of UPWP study recommendations. S. Johnston explained that staff has compiled UPWP study recommendations going back to FFY 2008 and reached out to all the communities to which the recommendations were made.

S. Johnston has heard back from very few communities thus far.

T. Teich expressed her desire to understand the impact UPWP studies have had on the region's transportation system and her interest in hearing more about the database at another time.

J. McQueen asked if the database could identify when a study had duplicated previous planning efforts.

S. Johnston explained that the database could help for tracking progress on some types of studies such as the MPO's corridor studies, which make specific recommendations for improvements on particular stretches of roadway. Staff can ask municipal officials which recommendations have been implemented. However, tracking other types of studies will be different. For example, staff's FFY 2019 study, *New and Emerging Metrics for Roadway Usage*, is about knowledge building. It will be useful to go back in a few years and ask whether staff had adopted any of the new metrics.

J. McQueen conveyed that sharing staff's understanding of the findings to-date would also be helpful. He suggested that staff provide an opportunity for people to learn about the studies conducted over the past year. The presentations would discuss the studies' intent, recommendations, key findings, and other benefits. These presentations could allow municipalities to unite around study recommendations.

T. Teich suggested that staff consider funding an effort to understand the implementation of additional UPWP study recommendations.

F. Osman reiterated her recommendation that staff attempt visualize the types of transportation services available to people across the region and the costs of those services. She also recommended a cost-benefit analysis of agencies' practices of determining eligibility for transportation services and collecting fares.

S. Johnston noted that staff is performing a Title VI equity analysis for the MBTA's adoption of its next fare collection system, an effort that could be relevant to F. Osman's study proposal.

F. Osman noted that too much money is spent on infrastructure for determining eligibility for transportation services and collecting fares. She also suggested that staff coordinate with the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) to collect data about the possession of drivers' licenses and other forms of identification. The absence of a drivers' license could be an indicator of transportation need or a factor in an individual's eligibility for transportation services.

S. Johnston explained that he thought a similar study had been proposed in the past and staff had looked into the possibility of using RMV data. He said he would look into what had become of the effort.

S. Johnston described how staff had attempted to visualize service coverage provided by regional transit authorities (RTAs) last year when the MPO was discussing adding RTA representation to the MPO board. Staff researched and mapped the fixed-route services and paratransit services that RTAs provided in the Boston region. Staff also looked into which

RTAs received assessments from which municipalities. S. Johnston noted that it is a complex picture. For example, some municipalities have fixed-route service provided by one RTA and paratransit service provided by another RTA. Last year, a similar UPWP study was proposed to study the border areas between RTAs, particularly situations where paratransit services refused to carry people across those border areas.

D. Whittlesby reiterated her opinion that the MBTA's The RIDE service be extended to areas further from fixed-route service.

F. Osman explained that people living in Lowell, Tewksbury, and Tyngsborough have access to paratransit service during the hours when the Lowell Regional Transit Authority runs fixed-route service. In contrast, people living in Acton and Concord do not have access to paratransit through the MBTA's The RIDE service and must rely on their towns' COAs. While The RIDE will take passengers anywhere within The RIDE service area, COA vans usually do not take passengers very far outside passengers' municipality of residence.

S. Johnson suggested that a UPWP study looking into a regional policy for paratransit might start to address F. Osman's concerns.

J. McQueen suggested that staff also create Venn diagrams and/or maps of the types of services available to different constituencies (older adults, low-income individuals, etc.). This type of visualization could identify gaps in service, redundant services, and opportunities to better coordinate services that are running independently or supported by different funding sources. He noted past innovations such as when the MBTA's The RIDE had explored using taxis.

A. Fragoso asked whether UPWP studies could explore both operational changes and capital improvements to the transportation system. S. Johnston explained that both types of studies were possible.

T. Teich proposed that staff increase study budgets to allow for more robust stakeholder engagement. UPWP studies could benefit from more conversations with stakeholders and from community forums. Allowing stakeholders to learn about and engage with ongoing studies would increase buy-in and improve the implementation of the study recommendations.

S. Johnston proposed a UPWP study to explore ways to incorporate more robust stakeholder engagement in future studies. For example, the Albany Area MPO has advisory committees for all of their studies. S. Johnston also noted that he had recently read a 1976 report describing how Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), the staff to the MPO, used to devote ten percent of every project budget to engagement and outreach.

J. Rowe noted that the institutional precursor to CTPS, the Boston Transportation Planning Review (BTPR) study team, had community organizers on staff.

D. Wittlesey asked whether MPO staff could study a connection between North and South Stations.

S. Johnston explained that MassDOT is nearing the end of a feasibility assessment of a potential North South Rail Link. He also offered to discuss other ideas after the meeting.

F. Osman suggested three studies: (1) a study of Uber and Lyft usage, paired with an exploration of how to best expand their use; (2) a study of the role transportation management associations play at the borders of RTAs; and (3) a study of possible coordination with the RMV.

B. Steinberg asked about the FFY 2019 study, *The Future of the Curb*. S. Johnston explained that the study is projecting the demand for curbside road space in the future and exploring methods for prioritizing curbside uses. While curbs are often used for parking, demand is increasing for bike lanes, bus lanes, transportation network company drop-offs, and freight drop-offs. *The Future of the Curb* study flows directly from another UPWP study: *Transportation Access Studies of Commercial Business Districts* will collect data on how people are using commercial business districts in the Boston region and *The Future of the Curb* will examine how the issue is being addressed across the country and investigate best practices.

6. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

T. Teich announced that the director of CTPS, Karl Quackenbush, is retiring in the spring or summer.

6. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion carried.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
Acton	Franny Osman
Cambridge	Tegin Teich

Citizen Advocacy Groups	Attendees
American Council of Engineering Companies	Fred Mosely
Association for Public Transportation	Barry Steinberg
Boston Society of Architects	Schuyler Larrabee
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	AnaCristina Fragoso; Paul Moyer
CrossTown Connect	Scott Zadakis
WalkBoston	John McQueen

Agencies	Attendees
MassDOT	Victoria Mier

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Dee Whittlesey	Boston Resident
Ed Lowney	Malden Resident

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Matt Genova
Sandy Johnston
Ali Kleyman
Anne McGahan
Jen Rowe
