

MPO Meeting Minutes

Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

January 9, 2020 Meeting

10:00 AM–11:43 AM State Transportation Building, Transportation Board Room, 2nd Floor, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Steve Woelfel, Chair, representing Stephanie Pollack, Secretary, and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreed to the following:

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of December 5, 2019
- Approve Calendar Year 2020 Roadway Safety Targets

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on pages 10 and 11.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Chair's Report—*Steve Woelfel, MassDOT*

There was none.

4. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

5. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Len Diggins, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

L. Diggins reported that the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council) met on January 8, 2020, to discuss the ongoing process of revising the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project evaluation criteria. MPO staff has also provided Advisory Council members with a survey regarding TIP criteria revisions. L. Diggins discussed the general lack of response to this survey and those sent to other groups (municipal officials, for example) regarding TIP criteria, and encouraged the MPO and MPO staff to explore ways to boost responses.

6. Executive Director's Report—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

T. Teich reminded MPO board members to complete the survey regarding TIP criteria survey revisions. T. Teich encouraged board members to publicize the open Manager of MPO Activities position at MPO staff. T. Teich announced that the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), as the fiduciary agent for Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), will soon release a request for proposals from outside consultants for a four- to six-month strategic planning process for the agency. The goal of the process is to create a strategic vision and prioritize a five-year plan for CTPS. The strategic plan process will end prior to the completion of an operations plan for the MPO board. The operations plan was a recommendation of the federal certification review report issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) and Federal Transit Administration in 2019. The strategic planning process will include engagement with staff, MPO members, and other stakeholders.

7. Approval of [December 5, 2019, MPO Meeting Minutes](#)—*Róisín Foley, MPO Staff*

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 5, 2019, was made by MAPC (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent). The motion carried.

8. Proposed Calendar Year (CY) 2020 Roadway Safety Targets—*Michelle Scott, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Technical Memorandum Re: Federally Required Calendar Year 2020 Roadway Safety Targets](#)
2. [Presentation: Roadway Safety Performance Update and Calendar Year 2020 Targets](#)

M. Scott presented a set of proposed CY 2020 targets for federally required roadway safety performance measures (PM). The MPO has set targets for nearly all measures covered in federal rules. The first round of the target-setting process established a baseline that the MPO can track over time. These targets and supporting trend data are documented in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and TIP. The TIP also describes how the projects that the MPO funds will advance progress toward meeting the targets. Different timelines apply for when these sets of targets are updated. When the United States Department of Transportation establishes a PM, states set a statewide target. MPOs then have 180 days to decide whether to support the targets set by the state or set separate targets for the MPO region. For roadway safety, the MPO

must set new annual targets by February 27, 2020. MPO staff recommends that the Boston Region MPO support the Commonwealth’s CY 2020 targets for these roadway safety measures. These were set by MassDOT in consultation with the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. Factors that were included in the Commonwealth’s target-setting process include historic safety data, including data available from MassDOT’s new IMPACT tool; current and planned strategies in engineering, data collection, enforcement, education, and emergency response; and proposed policies and legislation as documented in MassDOT’s 2018 Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).

These PMs are outcome-based measures that reflect fatalities and injuries from motor vehicle collisions and are expressed in five-year rolling averages. They apply to all public roads and the goal is to minimize values for all measures. While the Commonwealth has set CY 2020 targets for these PMs to meet federal guidelines, the Commonwealth’s long-term goal for each PM is to bring these values to zero. Examples of the performance measures and targets are listed in the table below.

PM	Desired Direction	CY 2020 Target (Expected 2016–20 Rolling Average)
Number of fatalities	Trending downward	347.00
Rate of fatalities per 100 million vehicle VMT	Trending downward	0.56
Number of serious injuries	Trending downward	2,689.00
Rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT	Trending downward	4.30
Number of nonmotorized fatalities and nonmotorized serious injuries	Trending downward	505.40

PM = performance measures. VMT = vehicle miles traveled.

The FHWA reports findings to states indicating whether the state has met or made significant progress towards meeting targets. MPO targets are not considered in significant progress determinations, and no significant progress determination is made

at the MPO level. However, FHWA will review MPO progress as part of periodic certification reviews.

MPO staff will incorporate adopted targets into the Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2021–25 TIP and describe how the targets relate to selected projects. Later this calendar year, staff will review FHWA’s assessment of progress against 2018 targets and explore other MPO monitoring and target setting opportunities.

Discussion

Daniel Amstutz asked whether there is a date associated with the long-term goal of bringing these values to zero, whether that date is in the SHSP, and how the Commonwealth would reach that specific year. M. Scott replied that she did not know the specific date but could find out. The Commonwealth has set some interim two- and four-year targets in addition to those set annually. Ben Muller (MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning) noted that MassDOT Tracker includes 2020 and 2022 targets in addition to MassDOT’s long-term target. M. Scott said that future MPO discussions can explore the changes that would be needed to bring fatality and serious injury levels toward zero.

L. Diggins asked whether the MPO could approve targets individually or if it had to approve them as a group. S. Woelfel said that the MPO can approve the targets individually, although most other MPOs have approved the targets in a group. L. Diggins noted that the historical trend data show a spike in these Massachusetts values in 2018 and 2019 averages. M. Scott replied that there was a nationwide spike in fatalities in 2016, although 2017 and 2018 fatality levels are trending downward to levels similar to 2015. This spike has affected the rolling five-year averages for all five-year periods that include 2016. L. Diggins asked about transit asset management (TAM) targets and what information the MPO will receive about them. M. Scott replied that the MPO would discuss annual TAM targets at an upcoming meeting.

Vote

A motion to approve the Commonwealth’s CY 2020 Roadway Safety Targets was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

9. FFY 2019 Addressing Priority Corridors from the Long-Range Transportation Plan Needs Assessment—Seth Asante, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Route 16 Priority Corridor Study: Chelsea and Everett, Massachusetts](#)
2. [Presentation: Route 16 Priority Corridor Study Chelsea-Everett, Massachusetts](#)

This recurring study focuses on a corridor identified in the regional needs assessment conducted as part of the MPO's LRTP. As part of the study, MPO staff convened an advisory task force from representatives from MassDOT and the cities of Chelsea and Everett. Staff also conducted a community survey to solicit input from Chelsea and Everett residents. Route 16/Revere Beach Parkway is a six-lane, two-way state principal arterial, part of the National Highway System, and a designated state truck route. It is a major east-west arterial that crosses several major north-south roadways. The segment of focus in this study is 1.7 miles long and passes through several transportation equity zones.

Pedestrian level of service is poor in the corridor. Many curb ramps are not up to MassDOT standards. People who walk face long waits at intersections. Peak-period bicycle volumes are very low because Route 16 is not a bicycle-friendly roadway. The majority of people who ride bicycles ride on the sidewalks for safety. Of the 11 intersections selected for study, seven are Highway Safety Improvement Program crash clusters. Five are in the top 200 high-crash locations statewide. There were 26 pedestrian crashes and six bicycle crashes between 2012 and 2016. Because of the high volume of traffic and closely spaced signals, signalized intersections experience high levels of congestion. Based on the existing conditions analysis, community survey, and feedback from the advisory task force, MPO staff proposed the following short- and medium-term improvements:

- Add pedestrian countdown timers to improve safety at crosswalks
- Make wheelchair ramps compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Provide advance intersection lane control signs
- Install advance street name signs to improve wayfinding
- Retime and coordinate signals to reduce congestion
- Modify clearance intervals to MassDOT standards
- Perform routine maintenance and trash pickup
- Increase police patrol and enforcement
- Upgrade sidewalks to MassDOT standards
- Upgrade signal equipment (compliant with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices)
- Improve drainage systems to reduce flooding
- Resurface roadways and provide high-visibility markings

MPO staff also recommend the following long-term improvements:

- Build a multiuse path along existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Upgrade traffic signal equipment to overhead mast-arm mounted signal heads

- Implement Adaptive Traffic Signal Control Technology to optimize signal timings and coordination
- Install exclusive left-turn lanes on
 - Second Street northbound;
 - Everett Avenue, northbound and southbound;
 - Washington Avenue, northbound and southbound; and
 - Garfield/Webster Avenue, northbound and southbound.
- Lengthen the Route 16 westbound left-turn bay
- Reconstruct Route 16 and Webster Avenue intersection to remove left-turn conflicts,
- Install a signal on Route 16 to provide access from Route 1 southbound to Route 16 eastbound
- Add a new ramp to connect Route 16 westbound to Route 1 northbound

The proposed improvements would increase the efficiency of the transportation system, make it safer for all users, accommodate people who walk and people who bicycle, and support economic activities. The study provides stakeholders with improvement concepts to advance to design. The next steps would be to advance the short- and medium-term improvements to increase safety and reduce congestion.

Discussion

Jay Monty (At-Large City) (City of Everett) thanked MPO staff for producing the report and MassDOT for taking the lead on advancing improvements to design. J. Monty stressed the importance of the roadway to the Inner Core and the region, highlighting the expected development of 1,000 residential units in the area. In this context and in view of the possibility of additional expansion of the Silver Line, J. Monty stated that it would be necessary to address similar concerns at Sweetser Circle. Proposing improvements for Sweetser Circle was not part of this scope of work, but J. Monty stated that any comprehensive improvements to Route 16 should include them and Everett is committed to advancing this goal.

L. Diggins asked how much leverage the MPO has to promote better enforcement, since this was a recommendation of the study. T. Teich replied that a role of good design is to decrease the need for heavy enforcement.

Brandon Wilcox (FHWA) asked whether the study suggested any access management strategies regarding businesses along the corridor. S. Asante replied that the study recommended the consolidation of driveways along the corridor and Everett is working to promote this in any new developments.

10. Break

11. Community Connections Applications and Scoring Process—*Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Draft Evaluation Criteria for FFY 2020 Community Connections Program Scoring](#)
2. [Presentation: Community Connections Program Update](#)

Community Connections (CC) is one of the investment programs funded by *Destination 2040*, the Boston Region MPO's new LRTP. It is a first- and last-mile solutions funding program currently programmed at \$2 million per year in the FFYs 2021–24 TIP. In FFY 2018, MPO staff conducted a study to develop a high-level program and evaluation framework for the program, which were presented to the MPO in December 2019. Applications for the pilot round of funding were solicited from a list of proponents identified during the initial program framework study. Applications were received between October 24, 2019, and December 20, 2019. MPO staff received 11 applications for funding. Proponents submitted applications for five capital projects, five operating projects, and one marketing project. The total request for funding in FFY 2021 amounts to approximately \$2.26 million. A detailed list of proposed projects and their evaluation scores will be presented with the general list of evaluated TIP projects in February.

MPO staff developed a separate set of detailed project evaluation criteria for scoring CC projects, as the traditional TIP criteria for scoring roadway projects do not apply directly to CC projects. MPO staff used the creation of CC criteria as an opportunity to explore new approaches to project-specific criteria that may also be incorporated as part of the MPO's larger process of revising TIP criteria. This includes incorporating resiliency measures, a new approach to equity, measuring a proponent's management capacity, and an increased emphasis on consistency with local and regional plans. The "Draft Evaluation Criteria for FFY 2020 Community Connections Program Scoring" handout outlines the three stages of scoring—initial eligibility criteria, general criteria for all projects, and type-specific criteria for capital or operating projects. The MPO and staff can review the process and make any adjustments to criteria following the inclusion of the pilot round of funding in the FFYs 2021–25 TIP, which will be endorsed in the spring.

Discussion

David Koses (At-Large City) (City of Newton) asked whether project proponents are expected to attend the February meeting to advocate for their projects. S. Johnston replied that MPO staff have been following up with proponents regarding gaps in

information needed for scoring. The expectation is that some proponents may attend that meeting, but that there is likely to be less public comment advocacy than with traditional roadway projects.

E. Bourassa clarified that the initial eligibility criteria test whether a project will create an air quality benefit, which is a requirement for these kinds of projects to receive federal funding. S. Johnston agreed, adding that there are a few types of projects (for instance, the marketing project) that cannot be accurately modeled and therefore the air quality benefits are presumed. E. Bourassa asked whether staff estimate ridership or rely on proponent estimates. S. Johnston replied that proponents submit ridership estimates and staff assess whether those are realistic.

L. Diggins commended MPO staff on this work and invited S. Johnston to speak to the Advisory Council.

D. Koses clarified that initial scores will be presented in February, and asked whether this will include a staff recommendation for projects to fund. S. Johnston replied that once the scores are presented, project selection will become part of the larger TIP programming discussion. D. Koses noted that there is \$2 million in funding available and \$2.26 million in proposed projects, so most projects have a good chance of being funded. S. Woelfel replied that while this may be true, the goal of the funding program is not simply to rubber stamp projects, but to pick the correct projects that meet the MPO's goals.

12. Update on Transportation Priorities in the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) Subregion—Adam Duchesneau, Sudbury Planning and Community Development and MAGIC Chairman

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Presentation: MAGIC](#)

The MAGIC subregion consists of 13 towns roughly bounded to the west by Interstate 495 and crossed by Route 2 and Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Commuter Rail service. MAGIC's main goals are to encourage community exchange, promote MAPC's mission and goals, and advance the strategic priorities of smart growth, regional collaboration, equity, and climate change adaptation and mitigation. MAGIC's current objectives are

1. garner greater participation from a wider group of people within our communities by offering additional and different programs targeted to relevant audiences;

2. plan for dynamic workshops and training opportunities of interest to Subregional members;
3. develop goals for growth within Priority Development Areas while increasing land protection, creating working farms, and clustering development to preserve traditional landscapes;
4. provide a forum to discuss potential development projects in the subregion, and the incorporation of smart growth and low impact development principles; and
5. improve and develop effective procedures and mechanisms for written decision-making in response to Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, TIP, developments of regional impact, legislative, and other filings and comment letters.

MAGIC's FY 2020 focuses include a regional age-friendly planning initiative focusing on housing and transportation, the implementation of a microtransit pilot, and coordination and implementation of a MAGIC Climate Resilience Plan. A. Duchesneau added that while MAGIC is pursuing these initiatives locally, implementation of more aggressive changes is needed to truly address the region's transportation issues, including commuter surge pricing, a gas tax increase, more economical commuter rail fares, bus lanes, supplemental funding to improve mass transit, and dense housing near mass transit.

13. Members Items

S. Woelfel reported that this year's MassDOT Innovation Conference will be April 6–8, 2020, in Worcester.

E. Bourassa announced that MPO staff and MAPC are hosting an Inner Core Committee transportation-focused meeting on January 15, 2020.

T. Teich added that MPO staff are hosting two "MPO 101" sessions geared towards new board members and extended an invitation to any interested members.

14. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Daniel Amstutz
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Brandon Wilcox
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Steve Woelfel
MassDOT Highway Division	John Bechard
	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	
Massachusetts Port Authority	
MBTA Advisory Board	
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Thatcher Kezer III
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	Austin Cyganiewicz
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Aaron Clausen
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Len Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Rockland)	Jennifer Constable
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Adam Duchesneau	Town of Sudbury
Ben Cares	City of Chelsea
Scott Zadakis	CrossTown Connect TMA/Advisory Council
Joseph Cataliotti	MassDOT
Ben Muller	MassDOT OTP
Kien Ho	BETA Group, Inc.
Todd Baldwin	Town of Saugus
Franny Osman	Town of Acton
Patricia Mendez	City of Boston
Katie Walsh	Massachusetts House of Representatives
Lizzie Grobel	MAPC
Steve Olanoff	TRIC Alternate

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Annette Demchur
Róisín Foley
Hiral Gandhi
Sandy Johnston
Anne McGahan
Ariel Patterson
Scott Peterson
Michelle Scott
Kate White

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A complaint form and additional information can be obtained by contacting the MPO or at http://www.bostonmpo.org/mpo_non_discrimination. To request this information in a different language or in an accessible format, please contact

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