

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

June 11, 2020 Meeting

10:00 AM–12:45 PM, Zoom Conference Call

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:

- Approved Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)'s State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2021 Operating Budget
- Approved the work scope for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) SFY 2021 National Transit Database (NTD)
- Approved the work scope for Innovations in Estimating Trip Generation Rates
- Voted to release for a 21-day public comment period Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2020–24 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Five

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on pages 13–14.

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

There was none.

3. Executive Director's Report—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, CTPS*

T. Teich asked board members to sign a card for Paul Regan, who is retiring at the MBTA Advisory Board. She announced that there is a FFY 2021 United Planning Work Program (UPWP) open house on June 23, 2020.

T. Teich stated that the strategic planning process is underway and assembling a steering committee comprised of MPO staff, Lenard Diggins (Regional Transportation Advisory Council), and others. She invited other interested board members to get involved.

T. Teich provided an overview of the meeting agenda and the action items. She requested input and engagement from board members on how to incorporate equity into the MPO's work and its project selection criteria. She announced that the next meetings will be held on June 25, 2020, and July 16, 2020.

4. Public Comments

Jarred Johnson, Chief Operating Officer and Development Director at TransitMatters, discussed the history of racism and inequality in transportation planning in the country and in the Boston region. He referenced a recent Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) report about the disproportionate impacts of highway pollution for people of color, and several studies that show disparities for minorities across the Boston region. J. Johnson asked for greater representation on the MPO board, beginning with inclusive community engagement to reach communities historically underrepresented. He appreciated T. Teich's letter regarding the organization's commitment to addressing such equity issues. He hopes that there is an opportunity for real inclusive community engagement and outreach around the MPO's plans and projects in plain language that can be translated. He also hopes that there is an opportunity for everyone to sit with the discomfort, and to think about how we can design inclusive processes proactively.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

6. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Lenard Diggins, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

L. Diggins stated that the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council) hosted Sandy Johnston, MPO staff UPWP Manager, to discuss the status of the UPWP on June 10, 2020. L. Diggins congratulated his fellow newly-elected Select Board members in the Town of Arlington, and thanked Annette Demchur, MPO staff Director of Policy and Planning, for her support. He appreciates the way the MPO board has handled equity in its work, including its Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden (DI/DB) policy. L. Diggins shared his experience with the Rider Oversight Committee (ROC) and the ongoing difficulty in its representation of minorities and women in its membership. He stated that the ROC, the MBTA, and the MPO take equity matters very seriously.

7. Action Item: CTPS's SFY 2021 Operating Budget—*Tina Cassidy, Interim Chair, MPO's Administration and Finance Committee* ***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

1. [Memorandum, CTPS's SFY 2021 Operating Budget](#)

T. Cassidy stated that expected revenues are stable and multifaceted; Seventy-five percent of the revenue is from federal sources. The revenue total is \$6,448,000, which equals the SFY 2021 operating budget. She said that the current SFY 2020 spending is expected to end at approximately 12 percent less than budgeted. The CTPS budget will again include the “Improvements and Investment in Computer and Data-Related Equipment” line item, and a detailed five-year plan. The Administration and Finance Committee unanimously recommends its approval of the proposed budget to the MPO.

Discussion

There was none.

Vote

A motion to approve CTPS's SFY 2021 Operating Budget was made by the MAPC (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Town of Arlington (Daniel Amstutz). The motion carried.

Note: John Bechard (MassDOT Highway Division) left the meeting after he voted yes, and did not return to the meeting.

8. Action Item: Work Scope, MBTA SFY 2021 NTD—Bradley Putnam, Transit Planner, MPO staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Work Scope, MBTA SFY 2021 NTD](#)

B. Putnam stated that CTPS has been assisting the MBTA with its submissions to the NTD for many years, and this work is a continuation of that work. He said that the MBTA will pay for this project, which is scheduled to take 18 months and cost approximately \$123,000.

B. Putnam stated that the object of the project is to collect and analyze ridership data to estimate passenger trips and passenger-miles traveled on the MBTA's various modes. These modes include heavy rail, light rail, bus, rapid bus, trackless trolley, and purchased service bus routes. He said that one new aspect of the project this year is to estimate ridership on buses that substitute for regularly scheduled rail service when a portion of a rail line is out of service due to construction or other reasons. Another new aspect is that CTPS will work with the MBTA to modify sampling plans as needed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussion

Brian Kane (MBTA Advisory Board) stated the importance of this project and asked board members to vote yes.

Vote

A motion to approve the work scope for the MBTA SFY 2021 NTD was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: Work Scope, Innovations in Estimating Trip Generation Rates— *Bradley Putnam, Transit Planner, MPO staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Work Scope, Innovations in Estimating Trip Generation Rates](#)

B. Putnam stated that the work scope proposes to use \$30,000 of the available FFY 2020 Transit Mitigation UPWP study funds to research innovative approaches to trip generation rates. He stated that, when forecasting the impact a new development will have on its neighborhood and the transportation network, it is important to estimate how many new trips will be generated by that new development. B. Putnam explained that trip generation rates have traditionally come from a manual produced by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). However, these data that underlie ITE rates were collected in the 1960s at suburban single-use sites. These data tend to overestimate the number of vehicle trips and exclude trips made by transit, bicycling, and walking.

B. Putnam stated that in this scope, MPO staff propose to research innovative approaches to estimating trip generation rates by all modes that take into account local conditions, such as demographics and proximity to transit. The research will inform ongoing and upcoming efforts in the region to improve the trip generation rates used to project travel by all modes.

Discussion

Sheila Page (Town of Lexington) asked if the study accounts for people who carry bicycles onto public transit. B. Putnam said it depends on the level of detail in the study.

L. Diggins commented that bicycles are only allowed on trains at certain times.

A. Demchur said this work scope is mainly a literature review that will share best practices. MPO staff is not developing its own methodology for the proposed work program.

Vote

A motion to approve the work scope for Innovations in Estimating Trip Generation Rates was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Town of Arlington (D. Amstutz). The motion carried.

10. Action Item: FFYs 2020-24 TIP Amendment Five—*Matt Genova, TIP Manager, MPO staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [FFY 2020–24 TIP Amendment Five—Full](#)
2. [FFY 2020–24 TIP Amendment Five—Simplified](#)

M. Genova stated that FFYs 2020–24 TIP Amendment Five includes one new project (“MBTA Ferry Improvements”). The approximately \$1.1 million project is being paid for using Federal Highway Administration Ferry Boat program funds.

Discussion

There was none.

Vote

A motion to release for a 21-day public comment period FFYs 2020–24 TIP Amendment Five was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn) (T. Cassidy). The motion carried.

11. Discussion: TIP Project Selection Criteria—*Initial Proposed Safety Criteria Revisions, Matt Genova, TIP Manager, MPO staff, and Betsy Harvey, Transportation Equity Program Manager, MPO staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Initial Proposed Safety Criteria Revisions](#)

M. Genova stated the main goal of today’s meeting is to obtain the board’s feedback on the proposed safety criteria and its associated equity criteria. He shared the guiding principles of the new TIP criteria that were first presented to the board in fall 2019. He noted that point values will be refined as the feedback process continues. M. Genova stated that the safety goal area has 30 possible points out of a total of 134 points. He showed the current scoring system for the six safety criteria items that can be found in the handout posted to the [MPO meeting calendar](#). He summarized feedback from fall and winter 2019 outreach efforts (including surveys, focus groups, and input received from the Advisory Council, LivableStreets Alliance, Conservation Law Foundation and Transportation for America), saying there is a need for clearer definitions, refinement of safety measures, and an increased focus on safety across all modes.

M. Genova described the current scoring methodology of Criterion 1: Crash Severity Value: Equivalent Property Damage Only (EPDO). He said that to calculate EPDO, individual crashes are awarded points based on the severity, with crashes that result in property damage only (for example, fender benders) scoring the lowest and crashes

that result in injuries or fatalities scoring much higher. M Genova proposed the following two changes:

1) Update the EPDO calculation to match MassDOT's new approach, which awards one EPDO point for property damage only crashes and 21 points each for any crashes that result in injuries or fatalities. The new scale, which MassDOT implemented last year, shifts the focus to the most severe crashes, as injury crashes and fatal crashes received just five points and 10 points respectively on the older scale. This change also aligns with federal safety performance measures, which place significant emphasis on crashes that lead to injuries and fatalities.

2) Separate out bicycle and pedestrian projects, as the EPDO values for these projects tend to be much lower. This means that Complete Streets, Intersection Improvements, and Major Infrastructure projects will be on one scoring scale, and bicycle and pedestrian projects will be on another.

M. Genova said that staff will analyze EPDO values for programmed TIP projects to develop new scales in the coming weeks.

Discussion

Tom Kadzis (City of Boston) asked about point differences in property damage versus injuries. M. Genova said that under both the old and the new scale, property damage only crashes are worth one point. He said that the big changes are in how injury and fatality crashes are tallied. Under the new scale, both injury and fatality crashes are worth 21 points.

T. Kadzis asked about point allocations for a hypothetical scenario he presented of an intersection that has multiple property crashes and one personal injury crash. He said that there may be scoring implications for outliers, like an unsafe driver, that skew the crash data. M. Genova said he is following MassDOT's scoring methodology but the MPO does not have to approve the proposed change.

S. Page agrees with T. Kadzis's comment regarding any outliers that may impact scoring. She asked if crash rates include bicycle and pedestrian crashes, and whether Complete Streets projects may be at a disadvantage by high numbers of bicycle and pedestrian crashes. M. Genova clarified that crashes must be reported to emergency services to be included in the crash data.

S. Page asked if bicycle or other non-automobile crashes are included in the crash data. M. Genova confirmed that such crashes are included in the data if they are reported, but he does not know the exact rate of reporting for those types of crashes.

L. Diggins asked if the database is annotated so he and others can look at outliers that T. Kadzis spoke of. M. Genova said he receives tallies of crashes by its classification and location, so there is not annotated information on each crash.

L. Diggins asked about EPDO values and how points will be allocated to each investment area. M. Genova said the question will be revisited as MPO staff continue to revise the scale.

L. Diggins expressed some concern over the proposed linear scale on scoring projects.

Ben Muller (MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning) said that the 21 point scale for injury crashes comes from American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials highway safety manual.

Note: S. Woelfel left the meeting and E. Bourassa took over as Chair.

D. Amstutz suggested a sliding scale of injury severity for scoring. He asked if the crash rate criteria capture any outliers. M. Genova said that EPDO does not take into account vehicle volume, but crash rate does. He said that it will be important to be thoughtful in new scales presented to consider outliers.

Jay Monty (City of Everett) said that any crash involving bicyclists and pedestrians are likely to cause injury. He said that heavily weighting fatalities and injuries may be a disadvantage for Complete Streets projects. M. Genova said that, as we move towards multimodal facilities, the new scale and scoring will help the Complete Streets projects.

Laura Gilmore (Massachusetts Port Authority) suggested adding truck routes and critical urban freight corridors as part of the safety scoring. She said that these designated routes are important to users of all modes and are quantifiable.

Jim Fitzgerald (City of Boston) described the City of Boston's data collection efforts on crashes, which includes emergency medical services (EMS) data for Vision Zero projects. He asked what sources are used in the crash data. M. Genova said he is unsure about EMS data inclusion and will follow up with him.

Pat Brown (Sudbury Board of Selectmen) asked if EPDO values are assigned to off-road intersection crashes like rail trails. She suggested that they consider proximity to crashes and right-of-way factors. M. Genova thanked her, and will consider the issue for the final criteria.

Frank Tramontozzi (Quincy Mayor's Office) expressed frustration at being unable to comment during the Action Item #10 discussion period. He said he had difficulty using

the phone, email, and chat functions in the Zoom application. He said that it was the first time he saw that the Quincy Sea Street project moved from FFY 2022 to FFY 2023 in the posted TIP handout. He is frustrated that he was never contacted, as he could have taken action to advocate more for this project.

E. Bourassa recognized technical issues regarding the chat functionality, and said MPO staff will consider the issue.

M. Genova apologized to F. Tramontozzi for his experience and said that the Quincy Sea Street project was programmed in FFY 2023 last year and it remains in FFY 2023, but he will look into it further.

M. Genova continued with the presentation of Criterion 2: Crash Rate. He discussed the current scoring scale for calculating crash rates and proposed two changes:

- 1) Remove property damage only crashes from the overall rate to focus the criterion on the most severe crashes, which aligns well with the federal performance measures and with the gathered feedback.
- 2) No longer score bicycle and pedestrian projects for this criterion, and reallocate these points to other safety scoring areas largely because crash rates focus on automobile volumes, which is tangential to the safety improvements that bicycle and pedestrian projects can typically make.

M. Genova noted that crash rate takes traffic volume of a facility into account while EPDO does not. He said that the new scales for this criterion are under development, and will be based on historical values for TIP projects and other available data on crashes in the region.

Discussion

There was none.

M. Genova continued with the presentation of Criterion 3: Truck Safety. M. Genova discussed the current scoring scale for truck-related safety issues. He proposed the following changes:

- 1) Clarify the methodology to better communicate how this criterion is scored.
- 2) Remove the bonus points for improving truck safety at a crash cluster and then reallocate those points to another criterion.
- 3) Remove the criterion from bicycle and pedestrian scoring.

Discussion

J. Monty asked for examples of truck safety countermeasures. M. Genova gave examples of countermeasures in submitted projects, including fixing roadway geometry for better truck turning movements.

J. Monty commented that amending roadway geometry for truck safety can affect safety for other users, including pedestrians. He wants everyone to consider it in upcoming project evaluations. M. Genova said his point is well taken and will be incorporated into the new methodology.

Ken Miller (Federal Highway Administration) said he thinks negative scoring may be appropriate for the safety category (and perhaps other categories) for projects that will have detrimental effects on safety on all users.

L. Gilmore stated that freight projects can improve safety for other modes, and it is important to consider the established truck facilities within a project area.

L. Diggins asked for the distribution of truck accidents and severity to help the board decide on scoring scales. M. Genova said he will conduct research on “hot spots” of truck crashes and will follow up with him.

M. Genova continued with the presentation of Criterion 4: Bicycle Safety and Criterion 5: Pedestrian Safety. M. Genova discussed the current scoring scale for both bicycle and pedestrian safety issues. He said that the approach for these criteria will remain largely the same with some clarification added for what improvements count for which point values. He proposed two changes:

- 1) Alter the bonus point structure to award an extra bonus point for projects that improve bicycle and pedestrian safety at multiple all-mode crash clusters.
- 2) Separate out bicycle and pedestrian projects from Complete Streets, Major Infrastructure, and Intersection Improvement projects.

M. Genova stated that the proposed changes would result in a higher point scale for bicycle and pedestrian-specific projects for both criteria.

Discussion

L. Diggins expressed happiness about the proposed non-linear scoring for both criteria.

M. Genova continued with the presentation of Criterion 6: Improves Safety or Removes an At-Grade Railroad Crossing. He proposed renaming the criterion to “Improves Safety for all Users,” as the current title applies to so few projects. He proposed that the new

criterion will include improvements to railroad crossings and award points for making improvements to traffic signals (formerly included in the system preservation category), improving safety through changes to roadway geometry, and adding traffic-calming features. The new criterion will apply to Complete Streets, Intersection Improvements, and Major Infrastructure projects. Furthermore, there will be additional bonus points to allocate due to the reallocation of the truck-specific bonus points, and points for addressing safety at MassDOT-determined Top 200 crash locations.

Discussion

D. Amstutz asked whether the proposed criterion scoring would exclude projects in the bicycle and pedestrian project categories, like trail projects, that cross railroad tracks. M. Genova clarified the bicycle and pedestrian project scoring under the proposed criteria changes, and said the revision conversation will evolve as more feedback is received on the draft criteria.

D. Amstutz commented on the potential implications of projects that are not scored under certain criteria.

M. Genova continued with the presentation of a proposed new criterion in the safety goal area for Transit Modernization projects. He said that the proposed approach is a general one that puts the onus on project proponents to outline the project's safety issues. Points will be awarded based on the severity of the safety issue and the extent to which this issue is documented through safety reports or audits. He stated that the scoring system should be discussed further since it is an entirely new investment area.

M. Genova described approaches that were not pursued due to time and staffing constraints, including expected crash calculations and crash modification factors. He showed a timeline of next steps in the criteria revision process including test scoring and public outreach beginning in late July.

B. Harvey's presentation begins, as a continuation of the safety discussion.

B. Harvey shared the proposed equity evaluation framework as a two-fold process. One process is to evaluate the criteria in each goal area that we choose to be equity criteria, resulting in a base score. In the other parallel process, we identify the equity populations in the project area that would be affected by the project resulting in an equity multiplier, which would be multiplied by the base score to get the final score for that criteria. She proposed evaluating the following safety criteria:

- Crash severity value, as measured by EPDO
- Improves bicyclist safety

- Improves pedestrian safety

She shared findings that crashes overall tended to be more severe in equity communities.

B. Harvey shared the detailed methodology of evaluating projects starting with creating an equity index. She said that the index is based on the idea that each equity population has different distribution characteristics across the region. She showed maps of the distribution of all six equity populations (minority, low-income, limited English proficiency, elderly, youth, and people with disabilities). She said that once the index is determined, the project can be scored. The project's equity multiplier would be identified based on the equity index (as shown in the presented image).

Discussion

L. Diggins asked about scaling the multiplier to correct some inequities that were brought up at the DI/DB policy workshop. He also asked about the application of the equity multiplier across project types and criteria, noting that total point value of equity is lower than safety and system preservation components. B. Harvey agreed that she wants to increase points for equity overall and restated the multiplier impacts.

E. Bourassa clarified that they are proposing getting rid of the standalone equity section, and distributing it across all criteria. B. Harvey confirmed yes.

S. Page suggested heavier weights for certain things, such as pedestrian safety projects in low-income areas, to ensure projects are in places they need to be. B. Harvey explained the weighting methodology, noting that if we adjust weighting for each criterion, it would be tricky since there are many permutations.

D. Amstutz asked if the same multiplier should be used in scoring across all project types or if different multipliers should be used for different project types. He said it would be good to know how much the score comes from the equity piece versus the base score. B. Harvey said staff will incorporate his comments into the upcoming reevaluation of past projects that encompasses all new criterion. She said there is potential to use different multipliers for the six goal areas.

E. Bourassa asked (in regard to the presented equity index chart) about the thought process behind why low-income population is weighted one-time and the minority population is two-time. B. Harvey stated that federal regulations like the Civil Rights and environmental justice laws protect certain populations, and staff wanted to recognize them by assigning certain weights.

E. Bourassa stated his assumption that there is overlap between low-income and minority populations. B. Harvey confirmed yes but clarified that this is not always the case. E. Bourassa stated that there are some higher-income communities with high minority populations. He stated that everyone should think about communities where people have been historically disadvantaged and consider projects that provide a ladder of opportunity. B. Harvey said she will consider how different demographic groups overlap, and the weighting considerations.

L. Diggins stated he is okay with minority populations being weighted more heavily than low-income. He asked for numerical correlation amongst all groupings of equity populations, which may address the surprising gaps in the maps. B. Harvey said she will do that work.

E. Bourassa stated that the Economic Vitality criteria discussion (“Action Item #12 Discussion: TIP Project Selection Criteria—Initial Proposed Economic Vitality Criteria Revisions”) will be pushed to the next MPO board meeting on June 25, 2020.

T. Teich reminded folks there is a deadline with the TIP criteria revisions, but she does not want to shortchange the robust discussion around them.

12. Members Items

There were none.

13. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) 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)	Sheila Page
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Steve Woelfel
MassDOT Highway Division	John Bechard
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Samantha Silverberg
Massachusetts Port Authority	Laura Gilmore
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard 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
Ben Muller	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Constance Raphael	MassDOT Highway District Four
C. Senior	MassDOT Highway District Five
Jeanette Rebecchi	Town of Bedford
Michelle Ho	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Frank Tramontozzi	Quincy Mayor's Office
Pat Brown	Sudbury Board of Selectmen, Vice Chair
Owen MacDonald	
Peter Falk	MBTA
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT Highway District 3
Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council Alternate
Jarred Johnson	TransitMatters
Barbara Rutman	

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Matt Archer
Jonathan Church
Annette Demchur
Róisín Foley
Hiral Gandhi
Matt Genova
Sandy Johnston
Anne McGahan
Ariel Patterson
Scott Peterson
Bradley Putnam
Michelle Scott
Kate White

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