



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

September 18, 2019, Meeting Minutes

3:00 PM–4:30 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Room 1,
10 Park Plaza, Boston

AnaCristina Fragoso, Vice Chair, representing the Boston Society of Civil Engineers

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

AnaCristina Fragoso called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 7.)

2. Chair's Report—*AnaCristina Fragoso, Vice Chair*

A. Fragoso reported that Secretary of Transportation Stephanie Pollack attended the September 5, 2019 Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting. Secretary Pollack discussed MassDOT's goals of sustainability, equity, resiliency, and accessibility.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the May 8, 2019 meeting minutes was made and seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project Evaluation Criteria Revisions—*Matt Genova, TIP Manager, MPO Staff*

M. Genova provided the rationale behind revising the TIP project evaluation criteria. The new Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Destination 2040*, incorporates revisions to the MPO's goals, objectives, and investment programs. Aligning the TIP scoring process with the revisions to the LRTP is the primary purpose of revising the criteria. In addition, the revisions will reflect prevailing needs in the Boston region, as well as maintain alignment with data and methodologies used by the MPO's state and federal partners. To the extent possible, the revisions will continue to incorporate MPO staff's performance-based planning work and aid MPO staff in achieving best practices. The revisions will incorporate feedback from MPO and public comments.

M. Genova provided an overview of feedback received from key stakeholders on the current criteria. MPO members expressed interest in cost effectiveness metrics and expressed concern that the current criteria favor certain project types. M. Genova noted that although projects are only compared to other projects in the same investment program, there is a significant disparity in the scores across project types. The Advisory Council requested that the scoring criteria emphasize quantitative criteria over qualitative criteria where possible and requested that MPO staff reconsider of the use of negative scores for certain criteria. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requested that MPO staff link scoring criteria to resiliency. LivableStreets Alliance requested the inclusion of cost effectiveness metrics, linking health metrics to project evaluations, and reducing the emphasis on auto-centric projects. Transportation for America (T4A) requested that MPO staff reduce the number of criteria or consolidate the criteria in order to emphasize the goals of the MPO.

M. Genova stated that MPO staff outlined three possible frameworks for revising the scoring criteria, ranging from robust to marginal revisions. A robust approach was adopted, which will result in distinct criteria for each LRTIP investment program. He noted that the Transit Modernization investment program included in the LRTIP will introduce new project types to the TIP which are not accounted for in the current criteria. He added that curating criteria for each project type will better highlight the benefits of projects, as different project types achieve different goals of the MPO.

M. Genova discussed the guiding principals for the new criteria. The criteria will be manageable to implement; make use of the best available data and methods; create balance across investment programs; and clearly demonstrate their purpose to proponents and stakeholders.

Discussion

A. Fragoso asked if programmed projects that receive negative points can be re-evaluated as the project advances in design. M. Genova stated that while there is no current process for re-scoring programmed projects, the MPO has expressed an interest in doing so, particularly regarding cost effectiveness metrics and significant changes in design.

Franny Osmond requested additional information on the most recent revisions to the TIP scoring criteria. M. Genova stated that the criteria were last revised in 2015 following the release of the previous LRTIP. He added that the upcoming revisions will be more extensive than the previous revisions, in response to changes included in the LRTIP.

John McQueen asked about assumptions in determining cost effectiveness. M. Genova stated that initial cost effectiveness determination will be based on a project's cost during TIP programming. If this cost changes without significant changes to design, cost effectiveness can be reconsidered in the context of other decisions made during project programming. He

added that T4A is providing technical assistance to develop the cost effectiveness methodology.

Lenard Diggins expressed that contextualizing the data described in the documentation of the current criteria would allow members of the public to provide more meaningful input. M. Genova stated that one of the goals of the revision process is to provide transparency and context regarding how MPO staff uses data in their scoring determinations.

T. Teich asked if projects under consideration for TIP funding will be scored using both the current and revised TIP criteria. M. Genova stated that MPO staff intend to re-score currently programmed projects during development of the new TIP evaluation criteria. The option of scoring unprogrammed projects with both sets of criteria will be explored following the revision process.

F. Osmond suggested rescoring previously evaluated projects which were not programmed in the TIP with the revised criteria.

David Montgomery asked if the revised criteria could discourage project characteristics that receive favorable scores using the current criteria. M. Genova stated that he considered this while developing the potential frameworks for the revisions and will continue to do so during the revision process.

A. Fragoso asked how MPO staff will develop the criteria for the Transit Modernization program. M. Genova stated that the criteria will be developed in conjunction with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and the regional transit authorities in the Boston region.

A. Fragoso asked about weighting certain types of transit projects, such as dedicated bus lanes, higher than other project types. M. Genova stated that this will be clarified during discussions with the MBTA.

A. Fragoso asked if there is a minimum score that projects must exceed in order to be eligible for TIP funding. M. Genova stated that there is no minimum score, adding that low scoring projects can reapply for funding in future years.

A. Fragoso asked if project proponents generally understand the TIP scoring process. M. Genova stated that he discusses TIP scoring with project proponents before and during TIP development. He added that proponents receive initial project scores before they are presented to the MPO, allowing for additional input before the scores are presented to the MPO.

5. Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden (DI/DB) Analysis of Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Projects—*Betsy Harvey, Transportation Equity Program Manager, MPO Staff*

B. Harvey referred to the [Transportation Equity Performance Report chapter](#) of *Destination 2040* throughout her presentation.

B. Harvey stated that a disparate impact is defined as a seemingly neutral practice which disproportionately affects minority populations, while a disproportionate burden refers to a practice which disproportionately affects low-income populations. Following the DI/DB analysis for the LRTP, FHWA requested an additional analysis incorporating MassDOT funded projects in addition to projects programmed using MPO discretionary funds. As such, two DI/DB analyses were conducted for LRTP projects: one for MPO target funded projects, and an additional analysis for both MPO target projects and MassDOT's regionally significant projects. She noted that the projects included in the analyses were only those which change capacity in the transportation system.

B. Harvey stated that the metrics used in the DI/DB analyses fall under three categories: accessibility, mobility, and environmental. Accessibility refers to access to transit opportunities. MPO staff analyzed access to jobs and retail amenities within a sixty-minute trip, as well as healthcare facilities and higher education within a forty-minute trip. Mobility incorporates several travel time metrics for both roadway and transit trips. Environmental analyzes vehicle miles travelled and carbon monoxide emissions.

The analyses compared the projected impacts in 2040 on minority and low-income populations to their respective non-minority and non-low-income populations. Current conditions are not considered in the analyses.

The draft DI/DB policy states that there is a disparate impact or disproportionate burden if minority populations or low-income populations would be more adversely affected than non-minority and non-low-income populations. The draft policy states that MPO staff must be confident that this result is not due to model forecasting error.

The results of the analyses show no disparate impact or disproportionate burden for both MPO and MassDOT projects. Additional analysis indicated that access to healthcare facilities within a 40-minute transit trip for and jobs within a 60-minute transit trip for minority exceed forecasting error, indicating that the projects will likely benefit minority and low-income populations to a greater degree than non-minority and non-low-income populations

Discussion

F. Osmond asked for clarification on whether the MPO is measuring the impacts of the projects' construction or their outcome. B. Harvey stated the MPO measures both.

F. Osmond asked if projects were analyzed individually or if the projects are analyzed collectively. B. Harvey stated that LRTP projects were analyzed collectively, noting that TIP evaluations study projects individually. The DI/DB analyses show the aggregate impact of projects included in the LRTP.

A. Fragoso asked if gentrification-related metrics, such as affordability, are included in the analyses. B. Harvey said gentrification and affordability are not explicitly accounted for in the analyses. The assumption used by MPO staff is that the share minority and low-income populations in a community will remain the same in 2040. She noted that MPOs rarely account for gentrification, due to the challenge of providing accurate predictions.

L. Diggins requested clarification regarding the inputs used to generate predictions for 2040. He stated that it is difficult to determine the accuracy of the predictions without knowing the assumptions used in the analyses. B. Harvey stated communicating this information in documents is challenging, due to the amount of data used. She invited Advisory Council members to review and discuss the data in-person.

L. Diggins asked if DI/DB analyses could be conducted in five-year intervals. This would allow MPO staff to analyze the accuracy of the analyses every five years. B. Harvey stated that this could be considered.

6. Election Committee Update—David Montgomery, Town of Needham

D. Montgomery stated that the Election Committee met via conference call to discuss the potential nominees for the Chair and Vice Chair positions on the Advisory Council. L. Diggins and Schuyler Larrabee are the nominees for Chair, and Scott Zadakis is the nominee for Vice Chair. L. Diggins, S. Larrabee, and S. Zadakis will provide candidate statements prior to the election. D. Montgomery announced that Chair T. Teich will be the Executive Director of CTPS.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked about election process and prospect of campaigning. D. Montgomery stated that campaigning is not standard during Advisory Council elections, adding that the Election Committee will discuss the issue.

D. Montgomery commended T. Teich and A. Fragoso for their service on the Advisory Council.

T. Teich expressed her gratitude for Advisory Council.

7. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

Barry Steinberg shared an article in *The Boston Herald* about the MBTA's leadership and financial issues.

A. Fragoso announced a workshop on private-public partnerships in November 2019.

8. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by J. McQueen and seconded by L. Diggins. The motion carried.

DRAFT

Attendees

Member Municipalities

Acton
Cambridge
Needham
Weymouth

Representatives and Alternates

Franny Osmond
Tegin Teich
David Montgomery; Rhain Hoyland
Owen MacDonald

Citizen Advocacy Groups

American Council of Engineering Companies
Association for Public Transportation
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)
MoveMassachusetts
WalkBoston

Attendees

Fred Moseley
Barry Steinberg
AnaCristina Fragoso
Lenard Diggins
Jon Seward
John McQueen

Agencies (Non-Voting)

MassDOT Highway Division

Attendees

Lori Steans, District 6

Other Attendees

Ed Lowney

Affiliation

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Matt Archer
Betsy Harvey
Matt Genova
Anne McGahan