

# Candidate Statements for the October 2020 Regional Transportation Advisory Council Election

## Candidate Statement: Lenard Diggins, Rider Oversight Committee, running for Chair of the Advisory Council

### Introduction

I have thoroughly enjoyed being Chair of RTAC over the last year. I have learned much more than I expected, and I feel that I have been able to make positive contributions to RTAC as well as to the MPO on behalf of RTAC. Despite this being a very challenging year for all of us, I think that members of RTAC adapted very well. WRT my leadership, I can't blame any shortcomings on the pandemic, though. The goals that I set out last year were ambitious, but I always like to push myself.

So, let's review the goals from last year:

### Goals

- 1. Work with the MPO to transform the RTAC's comments on the current Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) into action items. This includes: (A) the development of performance metrics that are more relevant to the MPOs goals; (B) scenario planning exercises in order to better appreciate the benefits of sufficient funding for the transportation network and the consequences of continued underfunding; and (C) working with cities and towns to identify or create local entities that can propose needed projects to the MPO and that can also function as resources for input and feedback to RTAC. This will involve a thorough review of the Needs Assessment document associated with most recent LRTP.*

(A) We have just wrapped up that process. It took much longer than originally planned, but it was worth the extended effort.

(B) Scenario planning for the next LRTP is in the works, and that may begin as early as this coming year.

(C) This is going to require a lot advice from and a lot more collaboration with Kate White. Nonetheless, we should still do a thorough review of the Needs Assessment, and I will make that a priority.

- 2. Work with the MPO to make the MBTA's Capital Investment Planning process more transparent. This includes revealing how projects are scored and the rationale for project selection.*

We have made some decent progress on this goal, and the MBTA (through Samantha Silverberg) has demonstrated a willingness to meet with members of RTAC as a group or as individuals in order to make their project selection process as transparent as possible.

- 3. Participate in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) working group.*

Of course, I attended every meeting!

- 4. Interact more closely with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and keep abreast of the development of MetroCommon 2050. Though it is not in our scope to comment on MetroCommon 2050, we can take measures to make sure that we are well-informed and in a better position to comment on the 2050 plan as individuals and/or through the groups that we represent.*

Though I made no progress on this goal, I am strongly committed to it, and I will make it a higher priority in this coming year.

- 5. Review the Future of Transportation Report and determine how to use the information provided in the near-term and long-term in order to foster better regional planning and cooperation.*

There was no progress of this goal, and I want to combine it with our review of the Needs Assessment. Needless to say, we will do a lot of reading next year.

- 6. Devote some time at each meeting (and possibly extending the meetings by 15 minutes) to hearing from one or two members of RTAC on issues that concern them personally and/or the organizations that they represent.*

Since time is such a premium at our monthly meetings (even after extending the duration by 15 minutes), it was harder to do this than I expected. We did, however, devote our August meeting to members telling each other about themselves and their organizations as well as the issues/topics they would like for RTAC to discuss.

- 7. Engage non-executive RTAC members to a greater extent in creating the monthly meeting agenda.*

I could stand to do this more, and I encourage anyone to reach out to Scott and/or me anytime that you have an idea for a topic to discuss.

- 8. Reach out to other established groups that deal with transportation or transportation-related issues for ideas and comments regarding the RTAC, the Boston MPO, and salient issues of the day.*

I certainly need to work on this a lot more. With the long list of groups and organizations that I received from Kate White, it will be easier to do the outreach. The point of this

goal, however, is not so much to increase membership as it is to get ideas and feedback.

### **Conclusion**

The Boston Region MPO is complex, but I feel that I am kicking into a higher gear as we begin the next cycle of the TIP and the UPWP as well as the second year of development of the next LRTP. I look forward to playing a more knowledgeable role both as a member of the MPO Board but also as a Chair who makes members of RTAC more empowered and capable of providing more informed feedback to the MPO as well as the constituents that we represent.

### **Candidate Statement: Scott Zadakis, CrossTown Connection, running for Vice Chair of the Advisory Council**

Over the five years that I have been attending RTAC meetings I have become well-acquainted with the functions of the Boston MPO and I have enjoyed learning more over time about the important planning role the MPO plays in sustaining, expanding, and evolving our regional transportation systems. During this time, I have observed that the varied disciplines, sectors, and voices that are represented within RTAC – whether members, presenters, staff, or attendees – create great value in our meetings and ultimately bring a diversity of insight to our group that we channel in our input to the MPO. I look forward to the opportunity as Vice Chair to continue my role in facilitating informative meetings with dynamic presentations that make RTAC both interesting and effective as an advisory body. As Vice Chair I will continue to assist the Chair in any way I can to communicate the vision of our members to the MPO. I will also strive to keep meetings efficient and keep the Council on-task to improve transportation assets in our region. Lastly, I look forward to continuing to work closely with CTPS and MPO staff to help them carry out their mandate, as well as with RTAC committees, guest speakers, and all of you.