Draft Memorandum for the Record
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
Transit Working Group Quarterly Meeting Summary

September 20, 2022, Meeting

3:00 PM–4:30 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform. Recording available at
https://youtu.be/nmipU7YaI0w

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Tegin Teich, the Executive Director of the Central Transportation Planning Staff, invited attendees to introduce themselves using the Zoom chat function and provided an overview of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), including its primary functions, board members' affiliations, and goals. T. Teich explained the purpose of these Transit Working Group meetings is to build connections between transit providers and MPO members.

Sandy Johnston (Central Transportation Planning Staff) welcomed attendees and reviewed guidelines for participating in the meeting virtually.

2. MPO Activities Update

Jonathan Church (Central Transportation Planning Staff) provided an update on the upcoming federal MPO certification review and discussed opportunities for public input on this process, including at the next MPO board meeting on October 6, 2022. J. Church invited attendees who may have comments on the certification review to contact Cassie Ostrander with the Federal Highway Administration at cassandra.ostrander@dot.gov or Leah Sirmin with the Federal Transit Administration at leah.sirmin@dot.gov.

S. Johnston provided an update on the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Destination 2050, which is currently being updated. The LRTP provides the MPO's vision and goals for the Boston Region's transportation system and prioritizes projects aimed at achieving these goals. MPO staff will be working on Destination 2050 through next year and expect to adopt a final version in Summer 2023. S. Johnston shared the project's webpage and encouraged participants to provide input and stay tuned for updates.

S. Johnston provided an update on the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) statewide long-range transportation plan, Beyond Mobility. S. Johnston

shared a link to this project's webpage and encouraged attendees to participate in a survey MassDOT created to gather public input on Beyond Mobility.

Srilekha Murthy (Central Transportation Planning Staff) provided an update on the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 UPWP will allocate approximately $8 million to support the MPO's certification requirements, technical analyses, corridor studies, and discrete studies, and was endorsed by the MPO on August 18, 2022. Outreach and guidance on submission of study ideas will begin in fall 2022 to inform development of the FFY 2024 UPWP. S. Murthy invited attendees who have comments or questions on the UPWP to contact her at smurthy@ctps.org.

3. Transit Provider Items

S. Johnston invited transit providers to share any updates on items not on the agenda with the group. No updates were announced.

4. Improving Rider Experience Through Open-Source Software

Siobhan Cunningham (TransitOPS) presented on the TransitOPS non-profit organization and its work to provide open-source transit technology to improve rider experience and modernize transit agencies. This open-source technology can be downloaded and used freely by any transit agency looking to provide a more modern transit-data platform focusing on improvements to scheduling, trip planning, dispatching, vehicle monitoring, fare integration, and more. These services are provided in the form of open-source applications developed by TransitOPS, many of which are currently in production with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA).

S. Cunningham invited attendees to ask questions and provide feedback on potential future partnerships as well as obstacles and opportunities for expanding TransitOPS open-source technology in the Boston region.

Judy Shanley (Easterseals) asked how TransitOPS ensures usability and accessibility in its applications. S. Cunningham replied that there has been front-end work done to ensure accessibility for those with color-blindness and for those who use screen readers. There has also been work done to ensure readability for applications that are in the field. Ryan Mahoney (TransitOPS) added that usability testing has been applied to user-facing applications.

Christopher Silvia asked if there was a tool to alert riders that a scheduled bus is a "ghost" bus, meaning it shows up as a regularly scheduled bus on transit applications and schedules, but it does not actually exist. R. Mahoney replied that TransitOPS's

Skate application contains mechanisms to internally communicate with the MBTA and riders when a ghost bus is detected. Paul Swartz (TransitOPS) added that TransitOPS's Alerts Concierge application can be used to create alerts to notify riders who utilize the affected route that a specific bus is not actually running. R. Mahoney mentioned the prospect of using real-time data to automatically generate and close alerts as issues arise, though at the moment alerts are manually created.

Dan Jaffe asked if there is a way to show detours where routes have changed. P. Swartz replied that there is ongoing work to provide this service for short-term service disruptions, but at the moment detours are only shown for long-term disruptions. R. Mahoney added that there is an application currently under development called Fates that will be used for scheduling by smaller agencies, and this could be a promising platform to provide information on detours for short-term disruptions.

5. Learning from Regional Fare Integration in Montreal
Dr. Marco Chitti (University of Montreal) presented on fare integration in the transit system in Montreal, Canada. M. Chitti provided an overview of transit providers and usage in Montreal and explained that fare integration was deemed necessary in the context of Montreal's many bus, metro, and commuter line options. A zone-based, mode- and operator-neutral fare system was adopted in Montreal in July 2022, which allows for unlimited transfers between any mode and operator within a given zone for a given period of time. This replaced a more complicated system where individual service providers set their own fares and there was no integration across agencies and modes of transportation. M. Chitti also provided an overview of the governance structure and processes that support transit service planning, operation, and fare reform.

A shortcoming of Montreal's zone-based integrated fare system is that zones are large and fares increase sharply between zones, leading to high cost increases for some riders. Montreal's transit system has also experienced decreased ridership and fare revenues as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to uncertainties in financing future service improvements. M. Chitti concluded that fare integration has improved Montreal's transit system but required a restructuring of transit governance and consideration of zone design, which other transit agencies should bear in mind if pursuing fare integration in their regions.

6. Public Comments
S. Johnston welcomed attendees to provide any additional comments on the content of today's meeting or any other topics at this time. No comments were made.

7. Conclusion and Next Steps

S. Johnston thanked everyone for their participation and mentioned upcoming Transit Working Group events, including a coffee chat on Launching and Marketing the Berkshire Flyer on November 1, 2022, and a coffee chat on the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan and Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan on November 16, 2022.

S. Johnston welcomed attendees with questions or ideas for future coffee chats to reach out to him at sjohnston@ctps.org.

Attendees

Attendee	Affiliation
Marco Chitti	University of Montreal
Paul Swartz	TransitOPS
Emily Van Dewoestine	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)
Tyler Terassi	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)
John Strauss	Town of Burlington
Siobhan Cunningham	TransitOPS
Ryan Mahoney	TransitOPS
Peter Lowitt	Devens Enterprise Commission
Dan Jaffe	N/A
Lauren O'Connell	Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP)
Lisa Weber	Executive Office of Health and Human Services – Human Service Transportation (EOHHS-HST)
Colette Aufranc	Wellesley Select Board
Alexandra Kleyman	City of Somerville
Jeff Bennett	128 Business Council
Sheri Warrington	Keolis Commuter Services
Angela Constantino	Greater Attleboro and Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA)
Judy Shanley	Easterseals National Center for Mobility Management
Steven Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC)
Travis Pollack	Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
Lauren Craik	City of Somerville
Josie Dutil	Bellingham Council on Aging
Perry Grossman	Safe Routes to School – Brookline
Christopher Silvia	N/A
Jon Seward	Regional Transportation Advisory Council/MoveMass
Maria Foster	Brookline Council on Aging
Jay Flynn	TransitMatters
Franny Osman	Town of Acton
Robert Hale	N/A
Marc Ebuña	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA)
Wes Edwards	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Jonathan Belcher
Logan Casey
Jonathan Church
Annette Demchur
Sandy Johnston
Stella Jordan
Srilekha Murthy
Tegin Teich

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Title VI Specialist
Boston Region MPO
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116
civilrights@ctps.org

By Telephone:
857.702.3700 (voice)

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- **Relay Using Voice Carry-over:** 866.887.6619
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