

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

August 18, 2022, Meeting

10:00 AM–11:30 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

David Mohler, Chair, representing Jamey Tesler, Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

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

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of July 7, 2022
- Approve the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Approve the FFY 2022 UPWP Amendment Two
- Approve the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Application

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 10.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT*

D. Mohler announced recent grant awards to various organizations. MassDOT was the recipient of a Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant and received \$20.2 million for the design and construction of a bidirectional busway on the Lynnway in Lynn. The City of Boston was the recipient of a RAISE grant and received \$20 million for the Roxbury resilient transportation corridors project. The MBTA was the recipient of a Low- and No-Emission Vehicle grant and received \$116 million from the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) for the purchase of battery electric buses.

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

T. Teich announced the upcoming Transit Working Group Virtual Coffee Chat on August 23, 2022, at 4:00 PM. The guest speaker will be Chris Van Eyken from TransitCenter presenting on the crisis in the bus driver workforce. Additionally, the Transit Working Group will hold its quarterly meeting on September 20, 2022, at 3:00 PM. There will be presentations from guest speakers from TransitOps, as well as Marco Chitti, a transit scholar in Montreal, Canada, who will present on the Montreal metro area's recent fare integration work.

MPO staff is nearing completion of an FFY 2022 UPWP study on peer MPO practices regarding travel demand management and whether the Boston Region MPO should engage in travel demand management work. Stakeholders and board members are invited to an open house on August 31, 2022, at 3:00 PM to learn about and react to the researching findings of the travel demand management report. Additionally, MPO staff will present the travel demand management study during the September 15, 2022, MPO board meeting.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

Derek Krevat, MassDOT, stated that the UPWP Committee had met before the MPO board meeting to formally endorse the FFY 2023 UPWP and the FFY 2022 UPWP Amendment Two for approval by the MPO board. The next UPWP Committee meeting is to be announced based upon the need for future UPWP amendments.

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

L. Diggins stated that the Advisory Council last met to approve the 3C Committee letter for the draft FFY 2023 UPWP. The Advisory Council also discussed the SS4A grant application with Rebecca Morgan.

7. Action Item: Approval of July 7, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [July 7, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes \(pdf\)](#)
2. [July 7, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes \(html\)](#)

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of July 7, 2022, was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane). The motion carried.

**8. Action Item: FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)—
*Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff***

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [FFY 2023 UPWP \(pdf\)](#)
2. [FFY 2023 UPWP \(html\)](#)

S. Johnston presented the FFY 2023 UPWP for approval. S. Johnston stated that during the July 21, 2022, MPO board meeting, the MPO board voted to release the draft FFY 2023 UPWP for a 45-day public comment period. The UPWP Committee met the morning of August 18, 2022, to endorse the FFY 2023 UPWP for approval by the MPO board. There were four comments received during the public comment period, which are found in Appendix B of the FFY 2023 UPWP. During the public comment period, MPO staff amended several small grammatical fixes for final approval in the FFY 2023 UPWP.

Discussion

L. Diggins stated the Advisory Council's appreciation for the process by which the UPWP was developed, especially the number of meetings the MPO staff had with the Advisory Council. L. Diggins reiterated the Advisory Council's concern regarding the transparency of the process in which the universe of proposed studies was developed into the list of proposed discrete studies.

Vote

A motion to approve the FFY 2023 UPWP was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Lenard Diggins). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: FFY 2022 UPWP Amendment Two—*Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [FFY 2022 UPWP Amendment Two \(pdf\)](#)
2. [FFY 2022 UPWP Amendment Two \(html\)](#)

S. Johnston stated that during the July 21, 2022, MPO board meeting, the MPO board voted to release the FFY 2022 UPWP Amendment Two for a 45-day public comment period. There are two primary reasons for the adjustments to funding in the fourth quarter. The first reason is staff attrition and the needed time to recruit and train new staff members. The second reason is the evolution of project and line item needs as the UPWP is developed. Initial budget estimates for each project are developed in the spring, approximately six months before work commences. Once work is in progress,

needs and expectations may shift, and MPO staff can adjust to those changes. There were no public comments during the 45-day public comment period.

Vote

A motion to approve the FFY 2023 UPWP, was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Council (Brian Kane). The motion carried.

10. Presentation: Upcoming Federal Certification Review—Cassandra Ostrander, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Leah Sirmin, Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Federal Certification Review Handout \(pdf\)](#)

L. Sirmin stated that the federal certification review is a requirement in federal statute that tasks FHWA and FTA with conducting a joint review and certification of the transportation planning process for all urbanized areas with a population over 200,000, which includes the Boston Region MPO. A recertification is required at least every four years. The last time the MPO was recertified was in 2018. The certification review is about the transportation planning process and how it is conducted by all the core planning partners, including the state department of transportation, the MPO, as well as providers of public transportation. The joint review analyzes the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) process. There is a compliance review, which is an opportunity for open dialogue to identify best practices that can be shared with other regions. Next, federal partners will begin the review phase, which includes a desk review and an on-site review to collect information and related documentation. Federal partners will engage with questions to MPO staff and other planning partners as an opportunity to hear directly about the work of the MPO. In the later part of the review, federal partners will release a report documenting observations and findings, as well as a final certification determination. In total, the process takes six to nine months with additional time to work with all partners to implement recommendations and any corrective actions from the report, if needed.

C. Ostrander stated that the federal partners are currently in the desk review phase and are gathering information. MPO staff have put together an advance materials webpage that has been reviewed by the federal partners. The federal partners have provided advance questions to MPO staff. This information will be used to develop the certification review agenda. The on-site certification review will be September 28-29, 2022. MPO members are invited to attend. The federal partners also plan to hear public input at the October 6, 2022, MPO meeting, as well as the September 14, 2022,

Advisory Council meeting. The federal partners are also putting together a survey for feedback from MPO board members, which will be sent out in mid-September. Public comments will be accepted through October 14, 2022, with a final report expected in February 2023.

Discussion

There was no discussion.

11. Action Item: Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Application—Rebecca Morgan, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Safe Streets and Roads for All Memo \(pdf\)](#)
2. [Safe Streets and Roads for All Memo \(html\)](#)

Rebecca Morgan, MPO staff, presented on the SS4A Grant Application and the benefits it can bring for the region. The SS4A grant was created through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to support the National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS) and the goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on the nation's roadways. The US Department of Transportation (US DOT) describes this program as a roadway safety program with a strong equity component. This program is consistent with the MPO's mission and with the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) *Destination 2040's* goals and objectives. *Destination 2040's* safety goal includes reducing the number and severity of crashes and safety incidents for all modes, as well as reducing serious injuries and fatalities from transportation.

The transportation equity goal includes prioritizing MPO investments that benefit equity populations and promoting investments that are accessible to all people regardless of their abilities. Further, the grant supports work that the MPO is already engaged in, including performance-based planning and programing. The MPO has adopted roadway safety targets related to fatalities and serious injuries to meet federal performance requirements annually since 2018. The MPO's most recent safety targets were set in February 2022. As part of this program, staff engage in similar activities, such as developing targets on reduction of fatalities and serious injuries, gathering data to analyze trends, and monitoring and reporting performance outcomes.

The SS4A grant supports funding local initiatives to prevent death and serious injury on roads and streets, commonly referred to as "Vision Zero" or "Toward Zero Deaths" initiatives. A total of \$5 billion has been appropriated for funding for FFYs 2022–26, with up to \$1 billion for allocation in FFY 2022. MPOs, political subdivisions of the state,

tribal governments, and multijurisdictional groups are eligible to apply for funding. Notably, state departments of transportation are not eligible to apply for funding.

There are two grant types being offered: the Action Plan grant and the Implementation grant. Action Plan grants are to develop or complete a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (Vision Zero Plan) and to conduct supplemental action planning activities in support of an existing Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. Implementation grants are used to implement projects and strategies, to conduct planning and design, and to conduct supplemental action planning activities in support of an existing Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. Since the MPO does not currently have an action plan, the MPO would apply for an Action Plan grant. If awarded, these funds would be used to develop a Regional Comprehensive Safety Action plan. The Regional Safety Action Plan will allow access to implementation funds in future years.

MPO staff and MAPC staff plan to apply jointly on behalf of the MPO. There is a 20 percent minimum local match required, which can include in-kind contributions. The MPO staff is committed to collaborating on this initiative and has been working with partner agencies, as well as other groups and committees, to get the word out about the joint application. The MPO staff has been coordinating with MassDOT and has been reaching out to cities and towns through meetings, emails, and other forums to coordinate on this application.

A core element to the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan process is leadership commitment, which in this case would be a resolution from the MPO board with a publicly stated commitment towards zero fatalities and serious injuries, or a significant reduction in fatalities and serious injuries by a target date. The MPO would establish a task force charged with oversight of Action Plan development, implementation, and monitoring to ensure that the stated goals of the plan are being met. The task force would be composed of municipalities representing the various geographical areas of the region, including developed and developing suburban communities, regional urban centers, and inner core communities, as well as representation from community groups that support underserved communities, public health, and vulnerable roadway users.

The planning process includes goal setting and a safety analysis with equity considerations. The process will also include a robust engagement process with emphasis on underserved populations. Based on the data and analysis, a comprehensive set of projects and strategies that will address the identified safety problems will be developed. The desired outcomes include the adoption of the plan with safety goals and timelines, including strategies, programs, policies, and programs to

reach those goals. This process will allow the MPO to become eligible for implementation funds, which will lead to safer, more equitable streets and roads.

Application requirements include safety impact and equity data, such as the number of roadway fatalities, the five-year roadway fatality rate per 100,000 and the percentage of the population in underserved communities. Also required is a map of the Boston Region MPO, a 300-word narrative to describe the MPO's planned approach and estimated budget of the Safety Action Plan, which is currently estimated to be \$2 million. A majority of the efforts would be completed by a consultant team. The application also includes several required forms.

The selection criteria for the SS4A Grant include the safety impact, equity, and additional safety considerations of the application. Further, low-cost/high-impact strategies, community engagement, innovative technology, and strategies, including evidence-based projects and strategies would also be factors considered as part of the selection process. If the application is approved, MPO staff and MAPC will jointly work to procure consultants and provide oversight, as well as coordination and support to create the Safety Action Plan.

The Safe Streets and Roads for All grant is an opportunity to bring additional funds to the region. Developing a Regional Safety Action Plan will strengthen municipalities' ability to apply for implementation funds in future years, help attain regional safety goals, and provide opportunities for additional outreach and engagement with communities.

MPO staff requests that the MPO board vote to approve MPO and MAPC staff's plan to apply on behalf of the MPO for the Safe Streets and Roads for All Safety Action Plan Grant.

Discussion

Brian Kane, MBTA Advisory Board, asked what the estimated cost of the application would be, and if it would be appropriate for the MPO to request that Chapter 90 funding be increased to meet future funding needs. R. Morgan responded that the estimated cost is \$2 million and that MPOs are eligible for up to \$5 million in funding. If the proposed application is approved, funding questions will be further explored within the planning phase of the project.

Marie Rose, MassDOT, asked who was applying for the SS4A grant and, if approved, how the grant would be spent. R. Morgan answered that the Boston Region MPO and MAPC are filing a joint application under the Safety Action Plan grant. The funding would be spent to create a Safety Action Plan.

M. Rose asked if projects funded through the SS4A grant would be advertised in the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), or if the funding would be directly granted to municipalities. Ken Miller, FHWA, responded that the state cannot apply for or receive funding from the SS4A grant program, but can be a partner in the application.

D. Mohler asked whether MassDOT would be put in a position to oversee the design and construction of implementation grants awarded to municipalities in the future. K. Miller responded that MassDOT would not be expected to oversee construction or design responsibilities, and that MassDOT cannot be a direct recipient of those funds. It was noted that questions related to construction were beyond the scope of the current application, which is for a planning grant, but that these questions may come up in the future.

Jason Mammone, Town of Dedham, stated that the Town of Dedham is also submitting a Safety Action Plan grant application. J. Mammone asked how many applications would be approved. K. Miller stated that there are no application approval quotas by state and that approval will be based on the merit of the application.

J. Mammone asked if individual municipalities' applications would be dismissed in favor of the MPO's SS4A application due to its duplicative nature. K. Miller stated that he and his office do not make application decisions and that everyone is encouraged to apply.

J. Mammone asked what funding source would be used to contribute to the 20 percent funding match. R. Morgan answered that funding sources have not been decided, but MPO staff is confident that funding will be available. Eric Bourassa, MAPC, added that he had hope that MassDOT would provide a portion of the funding match.

K. Miller stated that the application deadline is September 15, 2022, and that no late applications would be accepted.

D. Mohler asked if duplicative applications from municipalities and regional organizations would be accepted. K. Miller responded that FHWA is encouraging joint applications, and that there are no absolutes regarding the acceptance of an application. Chris Timmel, FHWA, added that if multiple applications are received from municipalities and regional organizations, USDOT may request a consolidation of the applications.

Vote

A motion to approve the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant application was made by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Lenard Diggins) and seconded by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa). The motion carried.

12. Presentation: Boston Region MPO Staff Structure Update—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

T. Teich gave updates on the structure of the Boston Region MPO staff. The five-year Strategic Plan included goals for organizational structure and staffing, with the goal to “...attract, reward, and retain a highly engaged, visible, and well-regarded workforce.” Additionally, objective 5A of the Strategic Plan sought to review and revise the organizational chart, office configuration, and reporting relationship between staff and managers to improve organization effectiveness by reducing silos and encouraging cross-group collaborations. Another factor of the MPO staff structure update was the turnover in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022, with 13 departures from the agency and 9 new hires. Thirty-seven percent of the MPO staff has been hired during a time when staff is operating in a predominantly virtual working environment. Sixty full-time staff is the target by the end of SFY 2023. Currently, there are 52 staff members, with seven more recruitments planned in early SFY 2023 and four more anticipated in the future.

T. Teich presented the [MPO Staff Structure as of August 2022](#) and described the new leadership structure, which has expanded the number of directors from two to four to better facilitate management of the various groups. The strategies for improving MPO staff structure included reducing leadership bottlenecks by increasing the number of directors, restructuring groups and managers by refocusing on skillsets instead of assignments, and restructuring managers to oversee more staff. Additionally, the MPO staff restructuring has included refining and clarifying roles of MPO staff and leadership, increasing transparency and engagement by increasing director and manager coordination, and engaging managers and staff in decision-making processes about organization structure and operations.

Discussion

B. Kane stated his appreciation for the presentation and for MPO staff's work to reorganize an established organization.

Daniel Amstutz, Town of Arlington, stated his appreciation for the presentation and thanked MPO staff for the large amount of work that went into the reorganization.

13. Members' Items

There were none.

14. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane) and seconded by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa). 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 Brookline)	Heather Hamilton
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Joe Blankenship
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jen Rowe
Federal Highway Administration	Cassandra Ostrander
Federal Transit Administration	Ken Miller
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Leah Sirmin
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Tom Bent
MassDOT Highway Division	David Mohler
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	John Romano
Massachusetts Port Authority	Marie Rose
MBTA Advisory Board	Laura Gilmore
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Sarah Lee
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Brian Kane
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	Eric Bourassa
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Rockland)	Jennifer Constable
SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Peter Pelletier
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Raissah Kouame	MassDOT
C Senior	MassDOT District 5
Anne McKinnon	
Frank Tramontozzi	
Paul Cobuzzi	
Evan Sears	
Owen MacDonald	Town of Weymouth
Jim Nee	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT District 3
Jason Mammone	Town of Dedham
Derek Krevat	MassDOT
Victoria Healey	
Moiz Abdul Majid	
Timothy Paris	MassDOT District 4
Ari Ofsevit	
Tina Hein	
Benjamin Muller	MassDOT District 6
Babatunde Tugbobo	FTA
Linda Hager	
Jeanette Rebecchi	Bedford Department of Public Works
Chris Timmel	FHWA
Eddy Meng	
Joy Glynn	
Casey Auch	
Amira Patterson	
Travis Pollack	
Jon Seward	
Erin Schaeffer	City of Reading
Andrew Levin	City of Peabody
Bill Scully	
Josh Klingenstein	MBTA
Colette Aufranc	
Jeremy Marsette	
Alexis Vidaurreta	Toole Design

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Steven Andrews

Silva Ayvazyan

Logan Casey

Jonathan Church

Annette Demchur

Hiral Gandhi

Betsy Harvey

Sandy Johnston

Stella Jordan

Heyne Kim

Marty Milkovits

Rebecca Morgan

Meghan O'Connor

Gina Perille

Sean Rourke

Michelle Scott

Judy Taylor

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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

Title VI Specialist

Boston Region MPO
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116
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By Telephone:

857.702.3700 (voice)

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