



## Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

December 14, 2022, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–4:00 PM, Zoom

Lenard Diggins, Chair, representing the MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)

### Meeting Agenda

#### 1. Introductions

Lenard Diggins called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 5.)

#### 2. MPO Corridor Studies and Multimodal Mobility Infrastructure Program— Rebecca Morgan, Seth Asante, and Julie Dombroski, MPO Staff

Rebecca Morgan, MPO staff, introduced the agenda item and provided an overview of the Multimodal Infrastructure Program. Central Transportation Planning Staff has conducted 94 corridor and intersection studies over the last decade. More than 50 percent of the recommendations from these studies have been implemented or programmed. Larger projects resulting from these studies are programmed in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), while smaller projects are usually funded by the municipalities. The Multimodal Mobility Infrastructure Program is new in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 with a program budget of \$338,000 to conduct studies that will address both regional and community multimodal transportation needs related to safety, congestion, resiliency, and access to multimodal transportation facilities.

Julie Dombroski, MPO staff, presented an overview of five recent studies. The VFW Parkway/Providence Highway Corridor in Dedham contained proposed improvements such as bicycle lanes, multiuse paths, new sidewalks, sidewalk connection upgrades, and new or relocated bus stops. The intersection of Adams Street at Furnace Brook Parkway and Common Street in Quincy included four alternative intersection designs proposed with the goal of providing additional traffic cues and relieving congestion. A bottleneck improvement study was conducted on Interstate 95 northbound and southbound between North Avenue and Walnut Street, resulting in recommendations for an expanded shoulder and extending acceleration and deceleration lanes. Two *Future of the Curb* case studies focused on pedestrianizing Moody Street in Waltham and adding new loading zones on Massachusetts

Avenue in Cambridge for commercial vehicle use. Lastly, staff made recommendations for the intersection of Everett Avenue and Chestnut Street in Chelsea to decrease the amount of pedestrian and bicycle crashes by adding curb cuts, pedestrian crossings, and additional signage.

Seth Asante, MPO staff, presented strategies that the MPO uses to explore resiliency in corridor and intersection studies. S. Asante presented Route 1A in Revere as a case study. Route 1A is vulnerable to sea level rise, coastal storms, and tidal floods, which can result in the roadway being unexpectedly flooded and closed. Vulnerability assessments were conducted related to evaluated flood probabilities and determined depth of flooding. Present-day and future scenarios for 2030, 2050, and 2070 were modeled using the Massachusetts Coastal Flood Risk Model (MC-FRM). Nature-based solutions offer effective low-cost alternatives that blend in with the natural environment. Other proposed solutions include culverts, stormwater pump stations, self-regulating tidegates, stormwater controls, and raised roads in low-lying areas.

### ***Discussion***

Andy Reker, City of Cambridge, asked if there are resources to communicate the goals and strategies of resiliency to the public and municipalities. S. Asante answered that the greatest challenge with resiliency is the practical implementation phase, where stakeholders are faced with the decision of how to address their concerns. S. Asante stated that resiliency is a multi-discipline topic, so models such as the MC-FRM can aid in decision-making, as can approaching resiliency in an incremental manner.

John McQueen, WalkBoston, asked what percent of MPO municipalities responded to the survey that was distributed to get information about municipalities' approach to resiliency. S. Asante responded that approximately 20 percent of municipalities responded, which was followed by Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) staff working to increase survey responses.

Franny Osman, Town of Acton, asked how Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) compare to resiliency analyses. S. Asante answered that an EIS examines the potential impacts of a construction project on the natural environment and existing communities to ensure that no disproportionate burdens arise.

L. Diggins suggested strategies to engage communities in resiliency studies, including grassroots methods such as reaching out to Select Board committees to host a presentation on resiliency, which can lead to other opportunities to engage with municipalities.

L. Diggins suggested including housing plans and ongoing developments when determining which areas should be studied for resiliency improvements to address future challenges.

J. McQueen stated that an important component of engaging grassroots methods in the resilience conversation is the need to provide incentives for municipalities, typically through funding opportunities such as the Complete Streets program.

Ana Cristina Fragoso, Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES), asked if the tidegate in Venice was used as a reference for the proposed tidegate related to Route 1A. S. Asante responded that the tidegate in Revere would be a large project and that staff did not have the expertise to manage that project beyond the proposal.

### **3. Discussion: MPO Public Education Strategies and Methods—Stella Jordan, MPO Staff and Lenard Diggins, Chair**

L. Diggins introduced the MPO public education strategies and methods discussion and noted several examples of public education programs implemented by other MPOs, which were posted to the calendar on the MPO's website. Initial discussion questions are as follows:

- What public education and engagement strategies would work well in the Boston region?
- What is the end goal?
- Who is the target audience?
- What is the ideal role for the Advisory Council in an MPO public engagement program?
- What steps should the Advisory Council and staff take next?

#### ***Discussion***

David Montgomery, Town of Needham, asked about the funding source for the public engagement strategies and what steps would have to be taken to utilize the funding.

L. Diggins suggested beginning under the assumption that there is little-to-no funding, so strategies should be low-cost. L. Diggins added that Advisory Council strategies could be coordinated with ongoing MPO public engagement efforts.

A. Reker noted that education is a key component of public outreach to ensure that decision-makers and members of the public are comfortable engaging in the transportation planning process.

J. McQueen and F. Osman suggested looking at the MAPC's Technical Assistance Program for additional funding opportunities. Stella Jordan, MPO staff, noted that the discussion of public education strategies and an Advisory Council-led program is well aligned with the goals of the MPO's Public Engagement Program.

#### **4. Chair's Report—*Lenard Diggins, Chair***

L. Diggins stated that the November 17, 2022, MPO board meeting featured an overview of projects in the FFYs 2024-28 TIP Universe of Projects. Another topic from the November 17 meeting examined integrating transit and freight planning.

L. Diggins, F. Osman, and D. Montgomery discussed next year's Advisory Council election cycle and leadership roles, and they encouraged interested members to reach out to discuss leadership positions.

#### **5. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2022, meeting and the minutes of the September 14, 2022, meeting was made and seconded. The minutes were approved.

#### **6. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements**

There were none.

#### **7. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by the BSCES (A.C. Fragoso) and seconded by WalkBoston (J. McQueen). The motion carried.

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## Attendees

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<b>Member Municipalities</b>	<b>Representatives and Alternates</b>
Acton	Franny Osman
Cambridge	Andy Reker
Brookline	Dan Martin
Needham	David Montgomery
Weymouth	Owen MacDonald

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<b>Citizen Advocacy Groups</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
American Council of Engineering Companies	Fred Moseley
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	Ana Cristina Fragoso
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
MoveMassachusetts	Jon Seward
WalkBoston	John McQueen

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<b>Agencies (Non-Voting)</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Matt Vitello
MetroWest Regional Transit Authority	Tyler Terrasi

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<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Colette Aufranc	Wellesley
Sophia Galimore.	TransAction Associates, Inc.
John Gonzalez	DHK Architects
Gail Gilliland	
Lil Hartman	North Reading Public Services
Marc Older	

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**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Seth Asante

Logan Casey

Julie Dombroski

Stella Jordan

Rebecca Morgan

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DRAFT

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