



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

January 12, 2022, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–4:10 PM, Zoom

Lenard Diggins, Chair, 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 four.)

2. Comments from the Executive Director of MPO Staff—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

Tegin Teich discussed the implementation of strategic plans to transform the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), including six focus areas: sector leadership; programs and services; governance; organizational structure and staffing; diversity, equity and inclusion; and marketing and public presentation. She gave examples of ongoing efforts toward the goals set by the strategic plan: expanded outreach and communication (new manager recently hired); restructuring of existing groups and reporting structures toward functional areas and skills; scenario planning; and innovation aided by the adoption of new collaborative tools and technologies suited to a remote hybrid work environment (e.g., Asana).

T. Teich discussed expectations about funding levels in upcoming fiscal years based on the recent federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). She explained that the BIL indicates the Boston Region MPO can expect a 17 percent increase in annual *planning* funding, though a follow-on apportionment bill is still required. She pointed out that levels of *target* funding are less clear at this time.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked about the departure of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Manager Matt Genova. T. Teich replied that a recruitment effort is underway to replace M. Genova.

John McQueen, WalkBoston, asked whether plans to improve access to target funds for smaller, lower-resourced communities would include providing MPO staff support or other consulting resources.

Andy Reker, City of Cambridge, and T. Teich discussed MPO corridor studies, targeted outreach to bring historically excluded groups into the planning process, and the agency's plans for climate resiliency work, which T. Teich noted are important priorities for the agency.

Jen Rowe, City of Boston, L. Diggins, and T. Teich discussed the flexibility of funding sources for outreach and engagement, general engagement strategies, and strategies for engaging municipalities and other project proponents more continuously and inclusively in the MPO's processes.

Abby Swaine, Environmental Protection Agency, and T. Teich discussed urban freight management, transportation management companies, and impacts on curb space, Complete Streets, and mobility. A. Swaine also asked about Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding expenditures and assessments. A. Reker discussed Advisory Council concerns and recommendations regarding the current Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) development.

L. Diggins, J. McQueen, and T. Teich discussed staffing needs and agency considerations and visions.

3. Energy Transport and Environmental Justice: Solving Big Disconnects— *Wig Zamore, Co-Chair, MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)*

Wig Zamore discussed that transportation is the largest use by category for emissions from fuel combustion. He stressed that Massachusetts has the opportunity to dramatically increase its off-shore wind power generation using current technology.

W. Zamore discussed how the communities north of the Mystic River have fewer direct clean rail transit connections and are also largely left out of the research economy that is located mostly in Boston, Cambridge, and Brookline.

W. Zamore discussed possible plans for using off-shore wind to electrify and unify MBTA transit with jobs and housing.

Discussion

AnaCristina Fragoso, Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES), discussed local resistance during the early phase of the Vineyard wind project. She noted offshore wind turbines' possible benefits for marine life.

J. McQueen asked what role electrified buses might play in the context of the West Station Area study. W. Zamore replied that electrified busses, due to weight of on-board batteries, are typically not well suited to the high-volume passenger needs of that corridor.

J. McQueen and A. Fragoso discussed how the North-South rail link fit into these issues. W. Zamore supports the North-South rail link but said it will never have the ridership volume of the core transit system.

4. Big Ideas for Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs)—*Lenard Diggins, Chair, MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)*

L. Diggins asked Franny Osman, Acton Transportation Advisory Committee, and Jon Seward, MoveMass, to take the lead toward developing big ideas for RTAs. They agreed.

Discussion

F. Osman provided information for contacting legislators about the pending RTA advancement bill.

5. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

There were no items.

6. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Acton Transportation Advisory Committee (Franny Osman) and seconded by the BSCES (AnaCristina Fragoso). The motion carried.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
City of Cambridge	Andy Reker
Town of Weymouth	Owen MacDonald

Member Citizen Advocacy Groups	Representatives and Alternates
Acton Transportation Advisory Committee	Franny Osman
American Council of Engineering Companies	Fred Moseley
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	AnaCristina Fragoso
MoveMassachusetts	Jon Seward
National Rural Transit Assistance Program	Scott Zadakis
WalkBoston	John McQueen

Agencies (Non-Voting)	Attendees
Environmental Protection Agency	Abby Swaine

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Jen Rowe	City of Boston
Steve Olanoff	Town of Westwood
Colette Aufranc	Town of Wellesley
Todd Kirrane	Town of Brookline
Barry Steinberg	Association for Public Transportation
Wig Zamore	MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)
Makayla Comas	LivableStreets Alliance
Gail Gilliland	Resident

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Matt Archer

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