



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

September 8, 2021, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–4:10 PM, Zoom

Lenard Diggins, Chair, representing the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Ridership Oversight Committee

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Lenard Diggins called the meeting to order at 2:33 PM. Introductions were skipped. (For attendance list, see page five.)

2. Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)— *Andy Reker, City of Cambridge*

A. Reker discussed a draft letter from the Advisory Council's 3C Documents Committee to the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The letter conveys the Committee's recommendations about the proposed FFY 2021–22 UPWP. A. Reker listed the main recommendations:

- The study "Addressing Equity and Access in the Blue Hills" is too limited in scope to receive funding
- More funding should be allocated to the study on "Post-COVID Recovery"

Discussion

L. Diggins explained that the deadline for comment had already been missed, so the letter will serve as a record of the Advisory Council's positions on the draft 2021–22 UPWP.

Laura Wiener, City of Watertown; John McQueen, WalkBoston; Franny Osman, Acton Transportation Advisory Committee; Jon Seward, MoveMassachusetts; Matthew Petersen, TransitMatters; Jen Rowe, City of Boston; L. Diggins; and A. Reker discussed concerns about over-allocation of parking spaces and trip generation for new biotech and other development projects.

A motion to approve the letter, as written, for submission to the MPO was made by the City of Watertown (L. Wiener) and seconded by the City of Cambridge (A. Reker). The motion carried.

3. *Destination 2040 Needs Assessment Discussion—Lenard Diggins, Chair*

L. Diggins discussed [Chapter 10](#) of the *Destination 2040* Needs Assessment to the Long-Range Transportation Plan of the Boston Region MPO. He also mentioned some items included in the Appendices, including the LRTP Needs Assessment Data Browser, links to which can be found in Appendix C.

Discussion

J. McQueen said that two equity items in Table 10-1 should also get X-marks indicating their impact on Safety and Economic Vitality; he also said Table 10-2 should include an item about enhanced expansion of pedestrian and bike facilities.

4. *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Ad Hoc Committee—Lenard Diggins, Chair*

L. Diggins described three key elements of the “Draft Programming Policies to Address TIP Project Cost Increases,” which was prepared by the TIP Project Cost Ad Hoc Committee:

- Require more advanced design status at project programming
- Create additional biannual touch points between project proponents, MPO staff, the MPO board, and Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) staff
- Rescore projects when costs increase beyond a specified threshold

The recommendations aim to avoid significant cost overruns for projects selected for funding in the TIP. The final document will be presented to the Boston Region MPO board at its September 23, 2021, meeting.

L. Diggins read a letter to the Advisory Council from Sheila Page, Town of Lexington. S. Page supports the Ad Hoc Committee’s policy recommendations in the draft document but feels the proposed cost-increase threshold of \$2.5 million or 25 percent of project cost should be lowered.

Discussion

L. Wiener, L. Diggins, J. Seward, and J. Rowe discussed how cost overruns are often due to changing conditions that are beyond the control of project proponents and administrators.

J.R. Frey, Town of Hingham; David Montgomery, Town of Needham; and L. Diggins discussed the impact of the Committee’s recommended policy changes on lengthy projects, such as Hingham’s Route 3A corridor project.

5. *Advisory Council Election Discussion—Matt Archer, Advisory Council Coordinator*

M. Archer and L. Diggins discussed the upcoming November election for the Chair and Vice Chair positions of the Advisory Council. L. Diggins said his decision to stand for re-election as

Chair is dependent on whether any other members decide to run for the office. M. Archer called for self-nominations of candidates for either office; no self-nominations were made.

M. Archer called for volunteers to sit on the Election Subcommittee. J. Seward; Fred Moseley, American Council of Engineering Companies; and Owen MacDonald, Town of Weymouth, agreed to sit on the Subcommittee.

6. Topics for Future Advisory Council Meetings—*L. Diggins, Chair*

L. Diggins solicited Advisory Council members' desired topics for upcoming Advisory Council meetings.

Discussion

J. McQueen suggested three topics:

- MBTA Advisory Board's recommendations to the MBTA to increase bus and subway ridership
- Glen Berkowitz, Project Manager at A Better City, to discuss various projects, including the Allston I-90 Multimodal Project, West Station, and Grand Junction in Cambridge
- Update from MassDOT on the Accelerated Bridge Program

F. Osman suggested two topics:

- Status of the North–South Rail Link, including changes in federal funding
- Update on public microtransit projects

J. Seward and F. Osman discussed that COVID-19 recovery funding represents a historic opportunity to consider the big picture about transportation investments in the region. F. Osman proposed that someone from the Regional Transit Authority Advocates Coalition be invited to present on the topic of COVID-19 spending available for transit.

D. Montgomery proposed inviting someone from the Massachusetts Legislature's Joint Committee on Transportation, which would reestablish a connection between that Committee and the Advisory Council that existed in the past.

7. Chair's Report—*Lenard Diggins, Chair*

L. Diggins discussed items from recent Boston Region MPO meetings:

- Proposed changes to how the MPO will handle Community Connections programs: The changes aim to streamline the application process and simplify administration of projects, partly by moving to a collective purchasing model.

- MPO Municipal Election Process Survey Results: L. Diggins would like to see both the MPO and the Advisory Council make more progress with the gender and race diversity of their membership.
- The MPO's Draft Public Outreach Plan (POP) was released for a 45-day comment period: L. Diggins said that Advisory Council attendees should read the draft POP and that the Advisory Council should comment on it.
- "Mapping Major Infrastructure Milestones," a new interactive mapping application presented by Ken Dumas, MPO staff, which can be found at www.ctps.org/applications: L. Diggins recommended the tool, which visually displays milestones in the multimodal transportation infrastructure system within the Boston Region MPO from 1800 to the present.

8. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

There were no items.

9. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by WalkBoston (J. McQueen) and seconded by the Town of Needham (D. Montgomery). The motion carried.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
City of Cambridge	Andy Reker
Town of Needham	David Montgomery
Town of Weymouth	Owen MacDonald
City of Watertown	Laura Wiener

Member Citizen Advocacy Groups	Representatives and Alternates
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
National Rural Transit Assistance Program	Scott Zadakis
Acton Transportation Advisory Committee	Franny Osman
American Council of Engineering Companies	Fred Moseley
Boston Society of Architects	Schuyler Larrabee
MoveMassachusetts	Jon Seward
WalkBoston	John McQueen

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Jen Rowe	City of Boston
Todd Kirrane	Town of Brookline
John Strauss	Town of Burlington
J.R. Frey	Town of Hingham
Matthew Petersen	TransitMatters
Mark Bedard	Lindsay Infrastructure
Mike G.	Resident

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Matt Archer

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Title VI Specialist

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