

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

May 4, 2023, Meeting

10:00 AM–11:15 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

David Mohler, Chair, representing Gina Fiandaca, 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 March 30, 2023
- Approve the work scope for Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Sources of Community Value
- Release the Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2023–27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Five for a 21-day public review period
- Amend Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) allocations from the April 20, 2023, MPO Board meeting by decreasing Complete Streets to 30 percent, decreasing Intersection Improvements by two percent, and increasing the Major Infrastructure program by 17 percent

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 10.

2. Chair's Report—David Mohler, MassDOT

There was none.

3. Executive Director's Report—Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)

T. Teich stated that there are five open positions with CTPS: Data Scientist, Manager of MPO Activities, Manager of Planning and Policy, Manager of Multimodal Planning and Design, and Program Manager of the LRTP.

T. Teich stated that staff continue to develop the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. Activities include a workshop on human services transportation

coordination in the Boston region and a survey to gather information about needs and priorities for human services transportation.

T. Teich stated that staff will be hosting two TIP open houses, one on May 8, 2023, at 6:00 PM and the other on May 11, 2023, at 2:00 PM.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

Derek Krevat, MassDOT, stated that the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee met on April 27, 2023, to approve a funding scenario for the FFY 2024 UPWP.

Brian Kane, MBTA Advisory Board, stated that the Administration and Finance Committee met before this meeting to continue the development of the Operations Plan and receive updates on CTPS' State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023 operating budget and projected overhead.

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

L. Diggins stated that the upcoming meeting on May 10, 2023, will have a focus on resilience.

7. Action Item: Approval of March 30, 2023, MPO Meeting Minutes Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [March 30, 2023, MPO Meeting Minutes \(pdf\)](#)
2. [March 30, 2023, MPO Meeting Minutes \(html\)](#)

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 30, 2023, was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric Bourassa). The motion carried through a roll call vote.

8. Action Item: Work Scope for MBTA Sources of Community Value—*Paul Christner, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Work Scope for MBTA Sources of Community Value \(pdf\)](#)
2. [Work Scope for MBTA Sources of Community Value \(html\)](#)

P. Christner, MPO Staff, stated that the work scope for MBTA Sources of Community Value is scheduled for seven months with a budget of \$125,000, paid for by MassDOT-Directed PL funds. Since March 2020, the MBTA has relied on emergency funds from the COVID-19 pandemic, while farebox revenue has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. The objective of this work scope is to document and evaluate options to accrue incremental sources of value and revenue for the MBTA beyond existing frameworks.

In Task One, staff will review existing work and studies, including a review of funding practices in peer agencies and the scope of work for MassDOT's State Planning and Research Program. In Task Two, staff will evaluate the feasibility of modifying existing revenue streams for the MBTA. Each revenue source will be evaluated by estimating the annual revenue from the source, predicting other benefits to the MBTA, and documenting lessons learned from other agencies. In Task Three, staff will produce a technical memorandum to document the findings and assess new funding streams. The documentation will include political feasibility, technical and operational complexity, annual size of the revenue stream, and impacts to livability, equity, and competitiveness.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked if this work scope is related to transit-oriented development. D. Mohler answered that the work scope will identify potential revenue sources and mechanisms for the MBTA.

B. Kane stated that this work scope is an important study because the one-time relief funds from the COVID-19 pandemic, which have been supporting the MBTA's operating budget, are expected to end at the conclusion of the fiscal year.

Jim Fitzgerald, City of Boston, Boston Planning and Development Agency, asked if this work scope will indicate the beginning of a larger effort by the MBTA to examine budgetary challenges. Elizabeth Winters Ronaldson, MBTA Staff, stated that this study is an initial step for the MBTA to identify new sources of revenue to support transit.

J. Fitzgerald asked about opportunities for municipalities to be involved as the work progresses.

Brad Rawson, Inner Core Committee (ICC), City of Somerville, spoke of the statewide and regional benefits of the MBTA.

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC), asked if the MAPC's existing study on raising state and local taxes to support road and transit investments will be consulted. P. Christner stated that staff can discuss the study with the MAPC and

MBTA. E. Bourassa stated that the MAPC has done research on value-capture and can help to connect to national stakeholders. Kenneth Miller, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), shared existing resources such as the Value-Capture Initiative, the Office of Innovative Finance, and the 2023 value-capture webinar series.

Vote

A motion to approve the work scope for MBTA Sources of Community Value was made by the ICC, City of Somerville (Brad Rawson) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane). The motion carried through a roll call vote.

9. Action Item: FFYs 2023-27 TIP Amendment Five—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Five \(pdf\)](#)
2. [FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Five \(html\)](#)

E. Lapointe stated that the FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Five proposes a cost increase to one project, new design ear marks for two projects, and funding adjustments for four MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) projects. Proposed changes can be found in Table 1 through Table 3.

**Table 1
 Amendment Five FFY 2023 Statewide Highway Program Changes**

| Project Name | Former Value | New Value | Change |
|---|---------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Wilmington – Bridge Replacement, W-38-003, Butters Row over MBTA | \$10,225,199 | \$16,433,155 | \$6,207,956 |

MBTA = Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.

Table 2
Amendment Five FFY 2023 Statewide Highway Program Changes:
Design Earmarks

| Project Name | Change Type | Funding Source | Budget |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| S12756: Peabody – Border to Boston Trail Design | New Project | Earmark | \$375,000 |
| S12757: Salem – Border to Boston Trail Design | New Project | Earmark | \$375,000 |
| S12837: Wakefield – Broadway Commuter Rail Crossing (Design Funding) | New Project | Earmark | \$250,000 |

Table 3
Amendment Five FFY 2023 MWRTA Project Changes

| Project Name | Change Type | Former Value | New Value | Change |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------|
| RTD0011100: MWRTA – Acquisition of Bus Support Equipment/Facilities | Cost Increase | \$150,000 | \$215,000 | \$75,000 |
| RTD0011128: MWRTA – Electronic Sign Board | Cost Decrease | \$200,000 | \$50,000 | -\$150,000 |
| RTD0011122: MWRTA – 2023 EV Migration | Cost Increase | \$100,000 | \$250,000 | \$150,000 |
| RTD0011099: MWRTA – Operating Assistance Non-Fixed Route ADA Paratransit Service | Cost Decrease | \$2,646,494 | \$1,727,836 | -\$918,658 |

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act. EV = Electric Vehicle. MWRTA = MetroWest Regional Transit Authority.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked for clarifications on the project cost changes for the MWRTA's Operating Assistance Non-Fixed Route ADA Paratransit Service. D. Mohler stated that

the \$2.6 million figure was an estimate of the MWRTA’s apportionment of capital funds, which can be directed to operating costs, while the actual apportionment of the funds was approximately \$1.7 million.

K. Miller, FHWA, asked who will be implementing the project in Wakefield. D. Krevat stated that the town of Wakefield will implement the design.

K. Miller asked for additional information about the design earmarks and asked if additional earmarks will be amended to the TIP to reflect the total figure of a \$1.2 million design earmark for the entire Border to Boston Trail. D. Krevat stated that two design earmarks have been amended on the Merrimack Valley MPO’s TIP for the towns of Boxford and Newbury.

Vote

A motion to release the FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Five for a 21-day public review period was made by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa)

10. LRTP Investment Program Sizing—Bradley Putnam, MPO Staff

B. Putnam reviewed decisions made by the MPO board at previous meetings. A list of MPO projects to include in the Destination 2050 LRTP and their estimated cost in the FFYs 2029–33 time band are found in Table 4.

Table 4
Destination 2050 LRTP MPO Projects

| Location | Name | FFYs 2029–33 Budget |
|-----------------|---|----------------------------|
| Boston | Rutherford Avenue Route 126, Route 135, and MBTA over CSX | \$154,000,000 |
| Framingham | Railroads Routes 4 and 225, Hartwell Avenue, and I-95 | \$145,500,000 |
| Lexington | Interchange | \$57,000,000 |
| Somerville | McGrath Boulevard | \$33,800,000 |
| Total | | \$390,300,000 |

B. Putnam stated that at the previous meeting, the board approved allocations for the seven investment programs. B. Putnam stated that when factoring in the costs of the projects voted to be included in the plan, the Major Infrastructure investment program in

the FFYs 2029–33 time band is above the approved allocation by 17 percent, shown in Table 5.

B. Putnam requested for the board to determine how it should allocate funds across the investment programs to address this discrepancy.

Table 5
Investment Program Allocations FFYs 2029–33

| Program | Approved Allocations (percent) | Approved Allocations (dollars) | Accounting for project costs (percent) | Accounting for project costs (dollars) |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Complete Streets | 45% | \$374,900,000 | 45% | \$374,900,000 |
| Major Infrastructure Intersection Improvements | 30% | \$249,900,000 | 47% | \$390,300,000 |
| Bicycle Network and Pedestrian Connections | 12% | \$100,000,000 | 12% | \$100,000,000 |
| Transit Transformation | 5% | \$41,700,000 | 5% | \$41,700,000 |
| Community Connections | 2% | \$16,600,000 | 2% | \$16,600,000 |
| Bikeshare Support | 1% | \$8,300,000 | 1% | \$8,300,000 |
| Total | 100% | \$833,000,000 | 117% | \$973,400,000 |
| Difference | | | 17% | \$140,400,000 |

Discussion

B. Kane asked how federal funds flow to the MPO and for clarification on the role that organizations such as the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies play.

L. Diggins suggested two options: remove \$140 million from the four projects in the FFYs 2029–33 time band or decrease allocations to other investment programs.

E. Bourassa discussed the Lexington project and noted its similarity to the Complete Streets program. E. Bourassa suggested reducing the Complete Streets allocations to 30 percent to account for the disparity.

L. Diggins expressed concern about exceeding 30 percent of allocations for the Major Infrastructure program.

Steve Olanoff, TRIC, noted that the investment program allocations are goals for long-term MPO investments.

B. Rawson spoke in support of E. Bourassa's suggestion.

E. Bourassa suggested reducing both the Complete Streets and Intersection Improvements programs to rectify the overallocation of the Major Infrastructure Category.

Vote

A motion to reduce the Complete Streets investment program allocation to 30 percent, the Intersection Improvements program to 10 percent, and increase the Major Infrastructure allocation to 47 percent for the FFYs 2029–33 time band was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the ICC, City of Somerville (B. Rawson). The motion carried through a roll call vote.

11. Members' Items

There were none.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the ICC (B. Rawson). The motion carried.

Attendance

| Members | Representatives and Alternates |
|---|---|
| At-Large City (City of Everett) | Jay Monty |
| | Eric Molinari |
| At-Large City (City of Newton) | David Koses |
| At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) | John Alessi |
| At-Large Town (Town of Brookline) | Robert King |
| City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency) | Jim Fitzgerald |
| City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department) | Matt Moran |
| Federal Highway Administration | Kenneth Miller |
| Federal Transit Administration | |
| Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) | Brad Rawson |
| Massachusetts Department of Transportation | David Mohler |
| | Lyris Liautaud |
| MassDOT Highway Division | John Romano |
| Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) | Ali Kleyman |
| Massachusetts Port Authority | Sarah Lee |
| MBTA Advisory Board | Brian Kane |
| | Amira Patterson |
| Metropolitan Area Planning Council | Eric Bourassa |
| MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham) | Dennis Giombetti |
| Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton) | Kristen Guichard |
| 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 Hull) | |
| South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) | |
| Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce) | Steve Olanoff |

| Other Attendees | Affiliation |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Sarah Bradbury | MassDOT District 3 |
| Joy Glynn | MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) |
| Michelle Ho | MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (OTP) |
| Sandy Johnston | MBTA |
| Chris Klem | MassDOT |
| Josh Klingenstein | MBTA |
| Raissah Kouame | MassDOT |
| Derek Krevat | MassDOT OTP |
| Jackie LaFlam | Cape Ann Transportation Authority |
| Owen MacDonald | Town of Weymouth |
| Ben Muller | MassDOT District 6 |
| Sheila Page | Town of Lexington |
| Michelle Scott | MassDOT OTP |
| Jon Seward | |
| Tyler Terrasi | MWRTA |
| Andrew Wang | MassDOT OTP |
| Elizabeth Winters Ronaldson | MBTA |

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Blake Acton
Logan Casey
Paul Christner
Annette Demchur
Hiral Gandhi
Betsy Harvey
Stella Jordan
Heyne Kim
Ethan Lapointe
Erin Maguire
Rose McCarron
Rebecca Morgan
Srilekha Murthy
Bradley Putnam
Sean Rourke
Judy Taylor
Sam Taylor

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