

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

May 18, 2023, Meeting

10:00 AM–11:25 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 April 13, 2023, MPO meeting
- Endorse the Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2023–27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Four
- Release the FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Six for its 21-day public review period
- Waive the 21-day public review period and endorse the FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Seven

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 11.

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 Sarah Philbrick will join CTPS as the manager of Policy and Planning. T. Teich shared four additional job opportunities.

4. Public Comments

Tom Devine, City of Salem Department of Planning and Community Development, stated that the city has a ferry retrofit project included in the FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Six and offered to answer any questions that may arise.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

Brian Kane, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Advisory Board, stated that the Administration and Finance Committee met prior to this meeting to begin finalizing the Operations Plan, which will be shared with the board in June.

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

L. Diggins stated that the May 10, 2023, meeting of the Advisory Council included a discussion of the MPO's Resilience Program.

7. Action Item: Approval of April 13, 2023, MPO Meeting Minutes

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [April 13, 2023, Meeting Minutes \(pdf\)](#)
2. [April 13, 2023, Meeting Minutes \(html\)](#)

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of April 13, 2023, was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane). The motion carried through roll call vote.

8. Action Item: FFYs 2023-27 TIP Amendment Four—*Ethan Lapointe*

E. Lapointe stated that the FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Four proposes

- Programming of a Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation Grant Award for the MetroWest Regional Transportation Authority;
- two cost increases for Highway projects;
- MBTA Capital Investment Plan updates; and
- MBTA Grant Awards

The amendment was released for a 21-day public comment period from April 14 to May 5, 2023. No comments were received at this time.

Vote

A motion to endorse the FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Four was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried through roll call vote.

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

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Six \(pdf\)](#)

2. [FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Six \(html\)](#)

E. Lapointe stated that the FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Six proposes the changes found in Tables 1 through 3.

Table 1
FFY 2023 Transit Program

| Project Name | Change Type | Description | New Value |
|---|-------------|--|-------------|
| MBTA011496: Salem – Retrofit of an Existing Ferry | New Project | This project programs a USDOT Passenger Ferry Grant program grant to retrofit an existing ferry for the City of Salem. | \$4,000,000 |

FFY = Federal Fiscal Year. USDOT = United States Department of Transportation.

Table 2
FFY 2023 Regional Target Highway Program

| Project Name | Change Type | Description | Budget |
|--|------------------------------|--|--------------|
| S12705: Lynn Station Improvements Phase II | Funding Source Adjustment | The funding source for this project has been adjusted based on state guidance. The overall budget for this project remains the same. | \$13,600,000 |
| S12706: Forest Hills Improvement Project | Funding Source Adjustment | The funding source for this project has been adjusted based on state guidance. The overall budget for this project remains the same. | \$6,400,000 |

FFY = Federal Fiscal Year.

Table 3
FFY 2023 Statewide Highway Program

| Project Name | Change Type | Description | Former Value | New Value | Delta |
|--|--------------------|--|---------------------|------------------|--------------|
| | | Explanation | | | |
| 610919: Lynn– Nahant– Northern Strand Extension | Cost Increase | forthcoming from MassDOT | \$9,363,750 | \$10,939,360 | \$1,575,610 |
| S12640: Framingham – High Risk At- Grade Railroad Crossing Countermeasures on Route 126 | New Start Year | This project is being accelerated from FFY 2024 into FFY 2023 | \$3,500,000 | \$3,500,000 | \$0 |

FFY = Federal Fiscal Year. MassDOT = Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

Vote

A motion to release the FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Six for a 21-day public review period was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative, City of Framingham (Dennis Giombetti). The motion carried through roll call vote.

10.Action Item FFYs 2023-27 TIP Amendment Seven—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

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

E. Lapointe stated that the FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Seven proposes Ferry Boat Capital allocations for an MBTA Catamaran Overhaul for the FFY 2023 Program. This project uses funding from the FFY 2020 Ferry Boat Program funding, which is being carried forward to FFY 2023 to support the overhaul. The changes must be executed before the MBTA can apply for additional discretionary funding, and before this formula funding expires in FFY 2023. As a result, staff are requesting for the board to vote to waive the 21-day public review period and vote to endorse the amendment.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked for additional information about the funding from FFY 2020. D. Mohler stated that the funding was made available in FFY 2020 and went unprogrammed. If the funding is not programmed now, it will expire without being used.

B. Kane encouraged board members to support this amendment and spoke about the MBTA's public review process.

Vote

A motion to waive the 21-day public review period and endorse the FFYs 2023–27 TIP Amendment Seven was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried through roll call vote.

11. Summary of Needs Assessment Findings—*Betsy Harvey, MPO Staff*

B. Harvey stated that the Needs Assessment documents the transportation needs of the Boston region, including how people travel, conditions of transportation facilities, interaction of the transportation system with the built and natural environment, and how these could change in the future. The Needs Assessment provides context to support decision-making in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The Needs Assessment to support the *Destination 2050* LRTP is organized by goal area and contains existing needs and travel projections, using 2019 as the base year. It will be released as a series of StoryMaps, which will allow for the inclusion of interactive maps and charts, regular updates, and more accessible access for the public.

In the previous Needs Assessment, Transportation Equity was analyzed as a stand-alone chapter. In the current Needs Assessment, equity is analyzed through the perspective of the different goal areas and most maps and charts contain an equity component.

The Needs Assessment findings can be found in Table 4.

Table 4
Summary of Needs Assessment Findings

| Goal Area | Emphasis Area | Need |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| | | Invest in safety interventions in areas with the most vulnerable road users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity populations • Bicyclists and pedestrians |
| Safety | Facilities and Serious Injuries | Invest in preventative countermeasures on roadways that have been identified as high risk before severe crashes happen |
| Safety | Crash Clusters | Invest in interventions in locations with the worst crash clusters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crashes are most frequent • Crashes are most severe |
| | | Improve mobility of buses on high-delay corridors |
| | | Increase mode shift from SOVs to public transit and active transportation |
| | | Improve bicycle mobility by expanding the bicycle network and Bluebikes |
| Mobility and Reliability | Mobility | Address congested corridors through strategies such as mode shift, parking demand management, and TOD |
| | | Upgrade and modernize public transit facilities and rolling stock |
| Mobility and Reliability | Infrastructure Condition | Improve state of good repair for transit facilities, especially tracks |
| | | Continue expanding access to non-SOV transportation, especially for equity populations |
| Access and Connectivity | Access to Transportation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-frequency transit • Bicycle network and bikeshare |
| Access and Connectivity | Access to Destinations | Address disparities in access to destinations for minority and low-income communities |

| Goal Area | Emphasis Area | Need |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| | | Better data on quality and presence of pedestrian facilities |
| | | Close gaps in bicycle network, focusing on roads with a high propensity for bicycling |
| Access and Connectivity | Connectivity | Improve coordination between transit services |
| Resiliency | Flooding | Adapt infrastructure to minimize flooding impacts, prioritizing equity areas |
| | | Adapt infrastructure to withstand extreme heat |
| | | Use nature-based solutions to reduce flooding and impacts of heat, focusing in areas with populations sensitive to heat |
| Resiliency | Extreme Heat | |
| | Regional | Increase engagement between the MPO and municipalities on climate resilience |
| Resiliency | Coordination | Reduce SOV travel, such as through mode shift, travel demand management, and roadway pricing |
| | | Electrify the transportation network, such as by expanding EV charging stations and electrifying the public transit and freight networks |
| Clean Air and Healthy Communities | Single-Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) Emissions | |
| | | Prioritize air quality improvements in equity communities and in areas that bear a disproportionate burden of air quality impacts |
| Clean Air and Healthy Communities | Health Impacts | |

EV = electric vehicle. SOV = single-occupancy vehicle. TOD = transit-oriented development.

B. Harvey stated that the StoryMaps will be released online all at the same time. They will be completed shortly after the LRTP is released for its public review period.

Discussion

L. Diggins stated that an additional emphasis area for the resiliency goal should be on extreme cold.

L. Diggins asked if different scenarios were explored in development. B. Harvey stated that scenarios relating to the projects in the LRTP were not explored and mentioned that there is interest in exploring scenarios in greater detail in the future.

B. Kane stated that the Needs Assessment should include the following context: the region's high congestion and the legal requirements that agencies must operate under.

12. Sumner Tunnel Project—*John Romano and Michael Drew, MassDOT Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Sumner Tunnel Virtual Public Meeting Information \(pdf\)](#)
2. [Sumner Tunnel Newsletter Information \(pdf\)](#)
3. [Sumner Tunnel Newsletter Information \(html\)](#)

J. Romano stated that the Boston Region MPO contributed \$22 million to the Sumner Tunnel Restoration Project in FFYs 2022 and 2023. M. Drew stated that the project is a full restoration of the tunnel. JF White in Framingham is the contractor, the projected cost is \$135 million plus ancillary expenses, major construction is projected to end on September 1, 2024, and the contract is projected to be completed in December 2024.

M. Drew discussed the project scope and explained how the tunnel's structure necessitates a full closure to traffic. Weekend closures began in spring 2022. Full closures will occur from July 5, 2023, through August 31, 2023, which will be followed by periodic weekend closures until another full closure in July and August 2024, and weekend closures through October 2024.

M. Drew shared travel options during the shutdown for the ferry, Blue Line, Silver Line, buses, commuter rail, and car travelers. The tunnel construction has been coordinated with adjacent projects to mitigate the total impact of the closure. M. Drew discussed the Mitigation Working Group structure, designed to address any potential impacts of the work.

Efforts to reduce impacts include the following measures:

- Ambulatory Service with Boston Emergency Medical Services
 - Two additional ambulances during day shift
 - Two additional ambulances during evening shift
 - One additional ambulance during overnight shift
- MBTA Service
 - East Boston/North End

- Discounted tolls for the Tobin Bridge and Ted Williams Tunnel (must be in the Resident Discount Program)
- Free MBTA Ferry service from East Boston to Downtown
- Free monthly passes for July and August for residents enrolled in the Resident Discount Program
- Additional parking near Wood Island Station
- Signal phasing and timing changes
- Field Monitoring Units
- North Shore
 - Zone 1A fares for Salem and Swampscott inbound and outbound
 - Salem, Swampscott, Beverly Depot and Rowley Commuter Rail parking lots reduced to \$2/day
 - Discounted parking at all Blue Line lots (\$2/day)
 - Real Time information
 - Travel Time Dashboard
 - Transit passes
- Logan Airport
 - Logan Express—25 percent discount and kids younger than 12 years of age are free
 - Real-time data for shuttles from Airport Station to Logan
 - “Skip the Line” Logan for all water transportation users
 - Real-time information on Silver Line shuttles
 - Use of the I-90 Eastbound Emergency Ramp
- Contract Protections
 - Isolated intersection improvements—Signal phasing and timing changes, turn restrictions, lane utilization/lane changes
 - Disposal of runoff and materials offside
 - Field Monitoring Units—dust, water, noise, pest control, etc.
 - Real-Time Traffic Information
 - Incentives/Disincentives for Design-Build team to ensure compliance with contract timelines

Gary McNaughton, McMahon Associates, discussed MassDOT’s traffic monitoring capabilities and shared the 13 intersections being monitored for traffic impacts. Travel times will be shown on Mass511’s Project Specific Information page. M. Drew summarized public outreach efforts.

Additional information about the closure can be found at <https://Mass.Gov/Sumner-Tunnel>.

Discussion

B. Kane spoke of the signage and ornamentation outside of the Sumner Tunnel and encouraged project work to include restoration efforts. M. Drew confirmed that a restoration specialist is working to protect and refurbish the portals of Sumner Tunnel.

L. Diggins spoke of the opportunity to encourage mode shift from increased ridership of the Blue Line while the tunnel is closed.

Sarah Lee, Massachusetts Port Authority, spoke of the impact of the project and encouraged anyone traveling to Logan Airport to avoid personal drop-offs whenever possible.

13. Members' Items

There were none.

14. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane). The motion carried.

Attendance

| Members | Representatives and Alternates |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| At-Large City (City of Everett) | |
| At-Large City (City of Newton) | David Koses |
| At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) | John Alessi |
| At-Large Town (Town of Brookline) | |
| City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency) | Jim Fitzgerald |
| City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department) | Matthew Moran |
| Federal Highway Administration | Kenneth Miller |
| Federal Transit Administration | |
| Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) | Tom Bent |
| Massachusetts Department of Transportation | David Mohler |
| | John Bechard |
| 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) | |
| North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington) | |
| Regional Transportation Advisory Council | Lenard Diggins |
| South Shore Coalition (Town of Hull) | Chris Dilorio |
| South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) | |
| Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce) | Tom O'Rourke Steve Olanoff |

| Other Attendees | Affiliation |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Rich Benevento | |
| Sarah Bradbury | MassDOT District 3 |
| Miranda Briseño | MassDOT |
| Jean Charles | HSH |
| Tom Devine | City of Salem |
| Michael Drew | MassDOT |
| Dan Fielding | MassDOT |
| Amy Getchell | MassDOT |
| Joy Glynn | MetroWest Regional Transit Authority |
| Michelle Ho | MassDOT |
| Sandy Johnston | MBTA |
| Gary McNaughton | McMahon Associates |
| Ben Muller | MassDOT |
| Chris Kivior | |
| Chris Klem | MassDOT |
| Josh Klingenstein | MBTA |
| Raissah Kouame | MassDOT |
| Derek Krevat | MassDOT |
| Erin Reed | Howard Stein Hudson |
| Michelle Scott | MassDOT |
| Derek Shooster | MassDOT |
| Juan Taveras | |
| Tyler Terrasi | MWRTA |
| Andrew Wang | MassDOT |
| Andrew Wiley | |

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Silva Ayvazyan

Logan Casey

Annette Demchur

Hiral Gandhi

Betsy Harvey

Ryan Hicks

Heyne Kim

Ethan Lapointe

Erin Maguire

Marty Milkovits

Rebecca Morgan

Srilekha Murthy

Gina Perille

Bradley Putnam

Judy Taylor

Sam Taylor

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Title VI Specialist

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By Telephone:

857.702.3700 (voice)

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