



Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

November 4, 2020, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–4:15 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 2:30 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page three.)

2. Project Cost Determinations—*Michael Bolduc, Project Delivery Specialist, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)*

Michael Bolduc, MassDOT, explained that all project initiation through MassDOT now uses the Massachusetts Project Intake Tool (MaPIT); he said the tool is part of a [formal three-step process](#) that enables proponents to initiate and scope projects and facilitates internal MassDOT project scoring. M. Bolduc explained that most of the methods for scoring various aspects of projects have been modified and improved; however, the average daily travel (ADT) method used to measure cost effectiveness has not changed since the Project Selection Advisory Council was established in 2015. M. Bolduc said that MassDOT has now changed how the cost effectiveness score is weighted in the final score.

Carrie Lavalley, MassDOT Highway Division, advised project proponents and their consultants to understand weighted average bid prices and how to derive an estimated project cost. She said if municipalities need help with this, they should reach out to the [Highway District 6 Office](#).

Discussion

John McQueen, WalkBoston, asked about the accuracy of ADT data in light of the changes in travel patterns over time and due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He also asked about the use of civilian flaggers versus uniformed police to reduce costs.

Daniel Amstutz, Town of Arlington, and M. Bolduc discussed whether the new method of weighting cost-effectiveness scores had resulted in any projects getting approved because the overall score had changed.

David Montgomery, Town of Needham, asked how a municipality decides whether to apply for project funding directly to MassDOT or through the MPO process. C. Lavallee said that typically municipalities would first go through the MassDOT scoring process and get approval by the Project Review Committee; then the municipality would work with the MPO through the design phase to get the design funded during a particular fiscal year.

Franny Osman, Acton Transportation Advisory Committee, L. Diggins, M. Bolduc, and C. Lavallee discussed how effectively MassDOT scoring takes into account types of benefits provided by a project for which ADT is not an adequate measure. C. Lavallee and M. Bolduc said that though the ADT-derived cost-effectiveness score is not a perfect method, MassDOT does need a cost-effectiveness score early in the process as a way to detect and rein in scope expansion and cost increases during design.

L. Diggins and C. Lavallee discussed how some projects end up costing more than originally scored and what MPOs can do to avoid unanticipated cost overruns.

L. Diggins and M. Bolduc discussed whether the cost–benefit analysis used in other states, such as Virginia, would be a useful measure of cost effectiveness in Massachusetts.

3. Chair’s Report—*Lenard Diggins, Chair*

Lenard Diggins said that, at a recent MPO board meeting, MBTA staff explained that they are planning service changes to deal with the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The changes might be permanent, but the agency is unsure what the service needs will be during the recovery.

L. Diggins also discussed guest presenters that are scheduled for the next two Regional Transportation Advisory Council meetings:

- December: Sandy Johnston, Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Manager, MPO Staff, will present on the UPWP study ideas process.
- January: Kate Fichter, Assistant Secretary for Policy Coordination, MassDOT, will present on MassDOT’s Shared Winter Streets and Spaces Grant Program.

4. Adjourn

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

Attendees

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

Member Citizen Advocacy Groups	Representatives and Alternates
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee	Lenard Diggins
CrossTown Connect	Scott Zadakis
American Council of Engineering Companies	Fred Moseley
Acton Transportation Advisory Committee	Franny Osman
MassBike	Chris Porter
MoveMassachusetts	Jon Seward
WalkBoston	John McQueen

Agencies (Non-Voting)	Attendees
MassDOT	Michael Bolduc
MassDOT	Elizabeth Torres
MassDOT Highway Division	Carrie Lavallee

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Daniel Amstutz	Town of Arlington
Stefanie Beaver	Vanesse Hangen Brustlin
Todd Kirrane	Town of Brookline

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Matt Archer
Matt Genova

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