

# Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Ad Hoc Committee to Update the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Meeting Summary

## August 24, 2023 Meeting

10:00 AM–12:00 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Tom Bent, representing the Inner Core Committee, City of Somerville, and Mayor Katjana Ballentyne.

## Materials

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. Annotated 2011 Boston Region MPO MOU ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
2. 2019 and 2022 Certification Review Summary ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
3. Operations Plan ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
4. December 2022 Certification Review ([pdf](#))
5. 2019 Certification Review ([pdf](#))

## Meeting Agenda and Summary of Discussion

### 1. Introductions

See attendance on page 5.

### 2. Public Comments

Jim Nee, MetroWest Regional Transit Authority, stated that regional transit authorities (RTA) are instructed to seek out representation on their MPO boards to ensure that the needs of the authorities and their riders are being properly represented. J. Nee requested that the MPO board consider direct representation of the RTAs during the review of the MOU.

### 3. Purpose of Committee—*Tom Bent, Chair, and Tegin Teich, Executive Director*

T. Teich stated that modest revisions were made to the MOU in July to address corrective actions in the 2022 Certification Review Final Report, but additional recommendations were included in the final report along with recommendations that have come from other committees of the board. The ad hoc committee has been charged with recommending topics and processes to update the MOU.

#### **4. Discussion: Review and Discussion of Advance Materials—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director***

T. Teich introduced the 2022 Federal Certification Review Summary and Annotated MOU for discussion.

T. Teich stated that recommendations from the 2022 federal certification review include

- establishing and carrying out a realistic review cycle;
- ensuring an appropriate level of detail in the MOU and Operations Plan;
- establishing how the MPO will represent the interests of RTAs;
- updating text on municipalities, investment programs, and meeting forums;
- adding information on information sharing for financial planning; and
- updating description and understanding of the role of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council.

T. Teich stated that recommendations from the 2019 certification review include

- exploring updating the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies formula;
- developing Operations Plan;
- reviewing voting procedures to effectively engage all communities; and
- broadening information and training opportunities for board members.

T. Teich reviewed narratives that were compiled by the Volpe Center for the 2019 review.

#### ***Discussion***

Jen Rowe, City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department [BTD]), asked for clarification on federal guidance for RTA representation on the MPO board. T. Teich stated that previous attempts to integrate the voices of RTAs and transit providers resulted in the creation of the Transit Working Group, which was later clarified that the working group does not meet the intent of direct representation.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham), discussed the need to revisit the RTA representation topic.

D. Giombetti asked about opportunities to discuss governance, such as chairmanship. T. Teich stated that the Operations Plan clarified the process for designees for all seats on the board, in addition to qualifications for the vice-chair seat.

Lenard Diggins, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, asked who the audience is for the MOU. T. Teich stated that the MOU is a governance document that outlines an agreement between the board members and the 97 cities and towns that they make decisions for. Kenneth Miller, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), reviewed the 23 CRF 450.310 guidelines, which outlines requirements for the MOU. Derek Krevat, Massachusetts Department of Transportation, stated that all MPOs in the state have similar MOUs and they will be consulted for questions on process.

K. Miller reviewed the recommendation from the 2022 federal certification review on RTA representation.

T. Teich discussed the contents of the annotated MOU.

L. Diggins stated that a key part of the updates is to ensure that processes are in place to implement outlined policies.

## **5. Discussion: Topics and Themes of Updates—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director***

T. Teich introduced a list of topics to update for the MOU, seen below:

- Review objectives of 3-C Process
- RTAs
- Regional Transportation Advisory Council
- Update voting rules
- Update paragraph on geographic and demographic equity
- Committee governance, including bylaws, chairship, etc.
- Fiduciary agent agreement
- Appropriate level of detail in MOU and Operations Plan
- Elaboration on what it means to establish “fiscal constraint and development of Transportation Improvement Program projects”
- Long-range plan coordination
- New MOU review cycle and process

### ***Discussion***

J. Rowe asked if the 3-C paragraph will need to be updated. T. Teich stated that staff will have to reference current legislation to make sure it is up to date.

D. Giombetti asked if there are best practices for the contents of the MPO’s MOU. K. Miller shared a FHWA document reviewing the MPO staffing and governance structures.

L. Diggins encouraged outreach with as many municipalities as possible in the Boston region, leveraging subregional representatives.

J. Rowe discussed opportunities to simplify the language of the MOU.

D. Krevat suggested adding clarifying language to distinguish the Central Transportation Planning Staff to the Boston Region MPO and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.

T. Teich discussed topics to be led by a staff-driven process, compared to a more discussion-driven conversation by the board, such as the RTA topics. T. Bent requested that staff propose topics to be led by each process for the next meeting to begin discussion.

John Romano, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), suggested using a small committee as a forum to deliberate RTA representation.

T. Bent discussed opportunities to connect with the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

#### **6. Discussion: Confirm Next Steps—*Tom Bent, Chair***

T. Teich stated that staff will prepare a list of topics and processes for discussion at the next meeting.

#### **7. Members Items**

There were none.

#### **8. Next Meeting**

September 2023.

#### **9. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by MassDOT (J. Romano) and seconded by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried.

## Attendance

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<b>Members</b>	<b>Representatives and Alternates</b>
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jen Rowe
	Derek Krevat
MassDOT	John Romano
City of Framingham (Metrowest Regional Collaborative)	Dennis Giombetti
MBTA Advisory Board	

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<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Joy Glynn	MWRTA
Michael McCall	
Kenneth Miller	FHWA
Jim Nee	MWRTA
Tyler Terrasi	MWRTA

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### **MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Tegin Teich, Executive Director  
Annette Demchur  
Ethan Lapointe  
Erin Maguire

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