

# **MPO Meeting Minutes**

## **Draft Memorandum for the Record**

### **Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting**

#### **August 1, 2024, Meeting**

10:00 AM–11:04 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Steve Woelfel, Chair, representing Monica Tibbits-Nutt, 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 June 6, 2024
- Endorse Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2024–28 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment 12

#### **Meeting Agenda**

##### **1. Introductions**

See attendance beginning page 10.

##### **2. Chair’s Report—*Steve Woelfel, MassDOT***

There was none.

##### **3. Executive Director’s Report—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff***

Tegin Teich, Executive Director, announced two new staff members that recently joined MPO staff.

Sarah Philbrick, MPO Staff, introduced Priyanka Chapekar, the Congestion Management Process Program Manager on the MPO Planning and Policy team.

Dave Hong, MPO Staff, introduced Adriana Jacobsen, Assistant Transportation Planner for Capital Programing on the MPO Activities team.

T. Teich spoke about updates to MPO work in the transportation finance sector, including the new “Trending Topics” page on the MPO website, which has a focus on transportation finance. T. Teich highlighted two bodies of work on the new page, including the following:

- *Lessons from Roadway-Pricing Experiences* (December 2023)
- *MBTA Sources of Community Value* (June 2024)

In addition, MPO staff participated on a panel for the Boston City Council hearing on congestion pricing on July 8, 2024.

T. Teich spoke about her experience at the two-day Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) board retreat. Their membership includes approximately two-thirds of more than 400 MPOs in the country, allowing for access to an extensive network of peer agencies. In addition, AMPO launched its AMPO Institute, which is an educational initiative to help both MPO staff and board members and staff of state and federal agencies learn more about MPOs. Finally, AMPO is assessing MPOs' needs for the next transportation reauthorization.

T. Teich stated that she reapplied to be an AMPO board member for the next three years.

T. Teich spoke about a press release issued on the award of the Mobility, Access, and Transportation Insecurity (MATI) grant. T. Teich also stated that MPO staff are still waiting on applications for other grants, but that board members would be kept updated.

T. Teich also announced the date for the MPO's Annual Meeting, which will be held on November 14, 2024, at 10:00 AM.

T. Teich shared the meeting agenda, which included one action item and two presentations.

### ***Discussion***

Brian Kane, MBTA Advisory Board, expressed support for presenting reports at the Boston City Council hearing because of how valuable the information is, particularly for decision-making processes.

B. Kane also gave a brief update and stated that there should be a focus on understanding the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) funding strategy.

## **4. Public Comments**

There were none.

## **5. Committee Chairs' Reports**

Derek Krevat, MassDOT, stated that the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee would be meeting on August 8, 2024, at 1:00 PM. The main agenda item will be the FFY 2024 UPWP Amendment Three to reallocate funds between tasks as the end of the FFY approaches.

Jen Rowe, City of Boston, thanked board members for a productive conversation regarding the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee at the MPO board meeting on July 18, 2024. Board members discussed advancing ideas that would improve the TIP development process. J. Rowe stated that they are looking forward to strategizing further on informed decision-making at the next meeting, which is scheduled for August 22, 2024, at 1:00 PM.

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

Lenard Diggins, Advisory Council, stated that there will not be a regular Advisory Council meeting in August, but that the Advisory Council is hosting a field trip to the Conley Terminal on August 9, 2024, at 9:30 AM.

## **7. Action Item: Approval of June 6, 2024, MPO Meeting Minutes Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar**

1. Meeting Minutes of June 6, 2024 ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

J. Rowe requested a minor revision to clarify that in the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee report they intended to state that committee members discussed additional ways for the MPO to support the development of TIP projects rather than changing the amount of funding.

### ***Vote***

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 6, 2024, was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by the City of Boston (J. Rowe). The motion carried.

## **8. Action Item: FFYs 2024-28 TIP Amendment Twelve—*Dave Hong, MPO Staff***

### ***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

1. FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment 12 ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

D. Hong presented FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment 12, which programs a federal earmark for the planning of the Wonderland Multimodal Connector in the City of Revere.

Given the funding will be administered by the MBTA, the funding must be obligated before the Federal Highway Administration's (FTA) closure of FFY 2024 in mid-August.

In addition, FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment 12 includes a rebalancing of funding sources for the procurement of six Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles for the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA). The change increases the proportion of matching funding on the project.

Project S13010: Revere–Wonderland Multimodal Connector Planning Study includes \$4 million of federal Community Project Funding with \$1 million in matching funds to improve connectivity between the Wonderland Station on the MBTA Blue Line and to plan for a potential commuter rail facility.

Project RTD001114: MWRTA–5307 Formula Funds–Vehicle Replacement increases the amount of matching regional transit authority (RTA) Capital funding for this project from \$482,500 to \$700,000. The federal share has decreased from \$626,444 to \$405,214.

MPO staff requested that the MPO board votes to waive the public comment period for this amendment and endorse Amendment 12 as presented. D. Hong stated that Amendment 12 would normally require a public comment period, but one could not be held before the end of the FTA's FFY on August 15, 2024. The Public Engagement Plan, Section 4.3.1: Amendments Procedure notes that the MPO board may vote to waive the comment period.

Tom Skwierawski, City of Revere, presented an overview of Project S13010: Revere–Wonderland Multimodal Connector Planning Study. T. Skwierawski spoke about how the project will improve transit justice. The Newburyport commuter rail line runs through Revere, causing residents to experience negative externalities, such as noise pollution and diesel emissions, but residents cannot use the line due to the lack of a stop in Revere.

In addition, T. Skwierawski stated that connecting the Blue Line to the Newburyport line by adding a commuter rail stop in Revere would be important for connectivity.

T. Skwierawski also stated that the project would promote local economics through tourism in Revere by increasing accessibility.

The study also aligns with other public projects in the study area, including the addition of a high school and the redevelopment of the existing high school into a middle school. T. Skwierawski stated that these projects offer opportunities to investigate multimodal

connections from east to west points in Revere and from other regional greenways throughout the Boston Region.

In addition, the study would provide solutions to reconnect neighborhoods, including neighborhoods east of the Wonderland Station, which are isolated from the rest of Revere.

T. Skwierawski stated that the City has been working with Bike to the Sea, a local organization with a mission to connect communities to the Northern Strand Trail, to connect the trail to Revere Beach. T. Skwierawski stated that they recently received a grant to study an on-road connection from the Northern Strand Trail to Revere Beach. However, Project S13010: Revere–Wonderland Multimodal Connector Planning Study would provide an opportunity to design a safer off-road connection that would increase accessibility, particularly for those concerned with safety.

### ***Discussion***

Sandy Johnston, MBTA, provided context for the Revere–Wonderland Multimodal Connector Planning Study and stated that the earmark was previously allocated to Revere and MassDOT, but that MassDOT agreed that the project would be better handled by the MBTA. TIP Amendment 12 would facilitate the study being incorporated into MBTA's Blue Line Master Plan.

Kenneth Miller, Federal Highway Administration, asked to clarify the type of earmark.

D. Krevat stated that it was originally in the 2022 Federal Appropriations Act, and it was one of two transit infrastructure earmarks in 2022.

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), asked if the MBTA is considering the Newburyport/Rockport Line comprehensively because the City of Salem also received a grant to add a commuter rail line, and the City of Everett would also like to add a commuter rail stop near the Encore Casino. E. Bourassa asked how the addition of commuter rail stops impacts commuters traveling into Boston from the North, and if there was any corridor planning to consider the collective impact of the added stops.

S. Johnston stated that the MBTA's rail modernization and railroad operations teams are aware of all these projects and considering how it will affect the ability to implement early action items in the Regional Rail Vision that will allow for the improvement of service in the short and long term.

J. Rowe expressed appreciation for T. Skwierawski's presentation and support for the Revere–Wonderland Multimodal Connector Planning Study. J. Rowe also reiterated the need for an east-west connection in Revere.

***Vote***

A motion to endorse FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment 12 was made by the City of Boston (J. Rowe) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Tom Bent). The motion carried.

**9. MPO Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Progress Update—*Erin Maguire and Dave Hong, MPO Staff***

***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

1. Draft MOU Summary Memorandum ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
2. Draft MOU Review ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

D. Hong overviewed the following key dates related to background information for the MOU work:

- December 2022: Federal Certification Review
- Fall 2023: Ad hoc MOU Committee makes recommendations
- September 2023: MPO board approves of a partial set of MOU updates
- November 2023: MOU Update Committee established to execute broader revisions
- January 2024: MOU Update Committee begins work on six work modules

The six work modules are now reflected in the current iteration of the draft MOU document. These include the following six modules:

1. Initial Staff-led MOU Content Updates
2. Revised Description of the Advisory Council's Role
3. Updated Reference to the MAPC/Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) Fiduciary Agreement
4. Roles of the RTAs in Decision-making
5. Refined Description of Agency Collaboration
6. Expectations for Board Education and Development

D. Hong stated that the MOU Update Committee will bring a request to vote to release the revised MOU draft for a 21-day public comment period at the August 15, 2024, MPO board meeting while incorporating comments from board members. MPO staff will review public comments in September and October of 2024. MPO staff will collect

member signatures on the revised MOU prior to the Annual Meeting on November 14, 2024.

Erin Maguire, MPO Staff, provided a summary of changes that have occurred between the September 2023 MOU draft and the current MOU draft.

The deliberations that led to the draft were held in the MOU Update Committee fell into seven key categories, including the following:

- Staff- and committee-led clarifications
- Advisory Council description
- Reference to MAPC/CTPS Fiduciary Agreement
- Regional Transit Authorities in decision-making
- Agency collaboration description
- Board member education and development
- Editorial revisions

E. Maguire stated that the staff- and committee-led clarifications addressed points of ambiguity or other areas that needed updates, such as the following points:

- List of signatories
- References to current and previous MOUs
- Voting rules
- Two-thirds majority versus simple majority rules
- Language on geographic distribution of projects
- Long-Range Transportation Plan description and reference to peer agencies' long-range planning efforts
- Committee appointment information

E. Maguire stated that revisions to the Advisory Council description can be found in Section 2.D, which was developed in collaboration with the Advisory Council. The description emphasizes the Advisory Council's mission, which focuses on equity, accountability, and engagement.

E. Maguire stated that the 2022 Federal Certification Review recommends that the MPO and the RTAs that operate public transportation in the region reach an agreement on how RTAs would be represented in the regional transportation planning and decision-making process. On April 18, 2024, the MPO board voted for a new seat to be approved for the RTAs, which include the MWRTA and the Cape Ann Transportation Authority. Each RTA would serve a two-year term on a rotating basis.

Updates to the MOU document related to the MAPC/CTPS fiduciary agent agreement are in Section 3.D. This section explains CTPS's administrative relationship with the MAPC.

E. Maguire stated that there are several instances of editorial revisions to the MOU draft, including the following:

- The Introduction has been reordered
  - Transportation planning and 3-C process description
- Functions and Roles of the Boston Region MPO and its Committees have been updated
  - Updated reference to 3-C process
  - Rearranged certain paragraphs

E. Maguire also listed the topics that were relocated from the MOU to the Operations Plan, including the following:

- Agency collaboration and information sharing
- Committee appointment process
- Development of financial targets
- TIP development process

D. Hong stated that MPO staff will take comments and suggestions from board members until August 6, 2024.

Staff will request a motion to release the draft MOU for a 21-day public comment period at the August 15, 2024, MPO board meeting.

## **10. Municipal Election Update—*Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council***

E. Bourassa presented updates to the 2024 MPO municipal election process.

Each year, the MPO board has an election for four of the 12 municipally elected seats. The MAPC and the Advisory Board oversee the election process.

The following seats are up for election in the fall of 2024:

- One municipality from the Three Rivers Interlocal Council subregion
- One municipality from the North Suburban Planning Council subregion
- One town from any part of the Boston MPO region for the At-Large Town seat
- One city from any part of the Boston MPO region for the At-Large City seat



Nominations for the subregion seats may be placed by a chief executive officer from municipalities in the subregion with the open seat. Nominations for the at-large city or town seats may be placed by a chief executive officer from any municipality in the Boston MPO region.

The election will be held through the submission of ballots electronically to MAPC; nominations are due on October 7, 2024.

E. Bourassa stated that electronic ballots will be released on October 9, 2024, and will close on October 23, 2024.

E. Bourassa stated that this year's election process is a little different than what is written in the Operations Plan; the Operations Plan states that the results are to be announced at the fall MAPC meeting, which typically takes place at the end of October. For scheduling reasons, the fall MAPC meeting will take place on October 10, 2024. In coordination with MPO staff, the MAPC did not want to expedite the election process.

E. Bourassa stated that he is happy to meet with any interested municipalities and walk through the election process.

## **11. Members' Items**

Chris Dilorio, South Shore Coalition (Town of Hull), stated that the TIP funded project to reconstruct Atlantic Avenue and Hull is nearing completion, and it has been beneficial for the neighborhood, particularly with the new bike lanes and sidewalks. C. Dilorio expressed appreciation for the support of the project and invited members to see the new area.

L. Diggins reiterated that members are invited to the Advisory Council field trip to Conley Terminal on August 9, 2024. L. Diggins asked members to let him know by the end of the day on Monday, August 5, 2024, if they are interested in attending.

## **12. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

## Attendance

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### Members

### Representatives and Alternates

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At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	John Alessi
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)	Erin Chute
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jennifer Rowe
	Matthew Moran
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Brad Rawson
	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Josh Ostroff
	Sandy Johnston
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)	Derek Krevat
MassDOT Highway Division	John Bechard
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
	Frank Tramontozzi
	Hanna Switekowski
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
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Hull)	Chris Dilorio
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood)	Steve Olanoff
	Tom O'Rourke

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<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Jackie LaFlam	Cape Ann Transportation Authority
Felicia Webb	Cape Ann Transportation Authority
Eddie Marques	Cape Ann Transportation Authority
Ned Codd	City of Newton
Tom Skwierawski	City of Revere
Raissah Kouame	MassDOT
Benjamin Muller	MassDOT
Cheryll-Ann Senior	MassDOT
Andrew Wang	MassDOT
Molly Belanger	MassDOT
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT
Scott Hamwey	MBTA
Tyler Terrasi	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Evan White	Town of Ashland
TJ Torres	Town of Canton
Christian Krahforst	Town of Hull
Paul Cobuzzi	

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**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Gina Perille

Annette Demchur

Priyanka Chapekar

Abby Cutrumbes

Judy Day

Betsy Harvey

Dave Hong

Jia Huang

Adriana Jacobsen

Stella Jordan

Lauren Magee

Erin Maguire

Marty Milkovits

Rebecca Morgan

Srilekha Murthy

Sarah Philbrick

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