



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

October 9, 2024, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–4:15 PM, Zoom

Lenard Diggins, Chair, representing the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC).

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 6.)

2. Approval of September 11, 2024, Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2024, meeting was made by the City of Cambridge (Andy Reker) and seconded by Acton resident (Franny Osman). The minutes were approved.

3. 2024 Elections—*Stella Jordan, Public Engagement Program Manager, MPO Staff*

Stella Jordan (MPO staff) discussed the elections process, highlighted the candidate statement from candidates for Chair (Lenard Diggins) and Vice Chair (Andy Reker) posted on the meeting calendar, and encouraged members who had not yet voted electronically via a virtual ballot shared with members in advance to do so during this agenda item. S. Jordan then announced the results of the electronic ballot: a unanimous decision from seven out of eight voting members to elect Lenard Diggins as the Chair and Andy Reker as the Vice Chair of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council.

Discussion

A. Reker stated that the Chair and Vice Chair will be committed to listening to the needs and concerns of members during the Advisory Council's restructuring. L. Diggins thanked A. Reker for taking on the role of Vice Chair and for the opportunity to serve as the Chair of the Advisory Council.

4. Community Planning Lab Pilot Program Overview—*Stella Jordan, Public Engagement Program Manager, MPO Staff*

S. Jordan presented takeaways from the Community Planning Lab pilot program held on September 20, 2024. The pilot program involved five participants representing community-based organizations and advocacy groups, which included

- 350 MA Transportation Working Group,
- Asian Community Development Corporation,
- La Comunidad,
- Mothers Out Front, and
- Riders Transportation Access Group.

The Community Planning Lab provided an interactive deep dive into the regional transportation planning and decision-making process. Activities focused on how to effectively advocate for transportation needs and priorities, which include

- Introduction to MPO presentation,
- Long-Range Transportation Plan-focused activities,
- Transportation Improvement Program decision-making role-playing activity, and
- special topics breakout sessions (active transportation, resilience).

S. Jordan provided an overview of participants' initial reflections, which highlighted a preference for a small cohort, one-day programming, and the inclusion of interactive activities. S. Jordan noted that a formal post-program survey was sent to participants to better understand the program's effectiveness and to collect additional feedback for future iterations of the program.

S. Jordan stated the experience of facilitating the program was valuable for staff in developing new relationships with stakeholders and deepening the MPO's engagement process by developing and testing new strategies and activities. S. Jordan discussed next steps for staff, which include

- formal documentation of the program, activities, and takeaways;
- recommendations for future Community Planning Labs; and
- incorporation of takeaways into other public engagement and educational efforts.

Discussion

A. Reker and S. Jordan discussed building on the pilot program to develop future programs to involve more and varied stakeholders. A. Reker inquired about staff time and the logistical feasibility for municipalities to recreate a similar educational program. S. Jordan discussed the significance of staff's commitment and stated that the results of the program are worth the investment of time and resources.

L. Diggins and S. Jordan discussed the selection of participants of the pilot program. S. Jordan stated that MPO staff contacted 12 groups to participate in the pilot program before finalizing the five participants. F. Osman discussed reaching out to stakeholders beyond community-based organizations in the future. S. Jordan noted the initial criteria for the pilot program includes a small cohort with representatives from community-based organizations that have not been previously engaged or represent community perspectives that are not well represented in the MPO's work. S. Jordan discussed expanding the types of groups and stakeholders involved in future Community Planning Lab programs.

5. Advisory Council Restructuring Next Steps—*Stella Jordan, Public Engagement Program Manager, MPO Staff*

S. Jordan presented next steps for the restructuring of the Advisory Council, which was first discussed at the September 11, 2024, meeting. The restructuring plan will introduce a new membership process, meeting plan and structure, and governance structure. Between September 2024 and March 2025, staff will work towards finalizing and implementing the restructuring plans, which include

- developing a new application and membership structure;
- developing a meetings workplan;
- exploring a plan for providing incentives; and
- incorporating learnings from Community Planning Lab.

S. Jordan discussed the role of the current advisory council membership during the restructuring transition period, which will include

- discussing and helping staff finalize the Public Engagement Guidebook;
- participating in one-on-one or small group debriefs to discuss experiences on the Advisory Council and perceptions of public engagement; and
- receiving continued updates from staff on the approaching transition.

S. Jordan also discussed the role of Advisory Council leadership during the restructuring transition period, including continuing to represent the Advisory Council at MPO board and committee meetings, helping staff generate ideas, and being a sounding board for restructuring challenges and opportunities until the end of the transition period.

Tegin Teich (Executive Director, MPO staff) applauded the dedication of members to the Advisory Council and the support they have provided to the MPO over the years. T. Teich stated that the November meeting will be a celebration of the time, effort, and accomplishment of the Advisory Council, and there will be a hybrid in-person component at the MPO office. T. Teich solicited input for celebrations during the November hybrid meeting.

Discussion

F. Osman expressed support for holding an in-person meeting and suggested providing food for attendees. L. Diggins suggested that staff reach out to members electronically for their availability to maximize attendance.

F. Osman, T. Teich, and S. Jordan reflected on the role of the Advisory Council over time and discussed considerations for formal and informal ways for interested stakeholders to engage in the MPO's planning process. Steve Olanoff (Town of Westwood, Three Rivers Interlocal Council Subregion Representative), T. Teich, and S. Jordan discussed the historical Advisory Council membership recruitment process. L. Diggins stated staff should provide more clarity into the relationship between the Advisory Council and the MPO Board and its goals and encourage staff to engage the board and provide updates on Advisory Council restructuring to increase effectiveness.

6. Parking in Bike Lanes Presentation—*Kyle Casiglio, Transportation Planner, MPO Staff*

Kyle Casiglio (MPO staff) presented results of the [Parking in Bike Lanes: Strategies for Safety and Prevention](#) study. The study comprised a literature review and case studies of interventions from across the country and is not specific to the Boston region.

K. Casiglio stated that safety risks posed by obstructions in bike lanes are a concern given the increase in daily bike trips taken in recent years. K. Casiglio discussed various sources of bike lane obstructions and impacts such as safety, route diversions that lead to longer trips, and suppressed ridership. K. Casiglio presented findings from outreach to bicyclist and driver groups, which were gathered using a public survey that collected more than 1,100 responses, holding in-person engagement events, and facilitating discussions in Reddit communities.

K. Casiglio discussed three types of interventions that include design, enforcement, and policy interventions and provided short- and long-term recommendations to address safety concerns posed by obstructions in bike lanes.

Discussion

John McQueen (WalkMassachusetts), A. Reker, and K. Casiglio discussed the risks and impact to safety when obstructions such as motor vehicles and pedestrians obstruct bike lanes.

A. Reker stated that using online forums such as Reddit communities broadcasts a greater reach, especially to members of the public who may not typically engage in the MPO's planning process.

A. Reker and K. Casiglio discussed future studies using similar methodology such as the potential of electric cargo bikes for freight and small deliveries in urban areas and

international enforcement practices and policies. J. McQueen suggested expanding the study by collaborating with the efforts of [The Future of the Curb](#) study.

L. Diggins and K. Casiglio discussed how the short- and long-term recommendations will be implemented, which include both a local and regional focus.

Fatemeh Tabatabaei (Northeastern University student) and K. Casiglio discussed the differences in safety impact of various protected bike lane infrastructure. K. Casiglio stated there is no difference in the level of obstruction based on the type of physical buffer. J. McQueen encouraged physical extensions of buffers to improve biking safety over enforcement due to capacity challenges.

7. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the City of Cambridge (Andy Reker) and seconded by the American Council of Engineering Companies (Fred Moseley). The motion carried.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
Cambridge	Andy Reker

Citizen Advocacy Groups	Attendees
American Council of Engineering Companies	Fred Moseley
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
WalkMassachusetts	John McQueen
Acton resident	Franny Osman

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Steve Olanoff	Town of Westwood, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC) Subregion Representative
Tyler Terrasi	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)
Jim Nee	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)
Benjamin Coulombe	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)
Hanna Switekowski	MBTA Advisory Board
Monica Benkhedda	Baltimore Metropolitan Council
Fatemeh Tabatabaei	Northeastern University Transportation Planning student

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich
Kyle Casiglio
Abby Cutrumbes
Jia Huang
Stella Jordan
Ethan Lapointe
Lauren Magee
Sean Rourke

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