

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

November 30, 2023, Annual Meeting

10:00 AM–12:30 PM, State Transportation Boardroom and Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Steve Woelfel (before Break) and David Mohler (after Break), 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:

- Elect the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) as Vice-Chair of the MPO for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2024
- Charge a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Update Committee with deliberating updates to the MOU
- Appoint standing committee slates for FFY 2024

Meeting Documents

- MPO Brochure ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Flyer ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
- Vision Zero Fact Sheet ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
- Ad Hoc Committee to Recommend a Process to Update the MOU Memo ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 9.

2. Chair's Report—*Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary of Transportation*

Secretary Tibbits-Nutt introduced herself and spoke of current connection concerns throughout communities in the Commonwealth. Sec. Tibbits-Nutt stated that transportation is a lifeline and spoke of housing and transportation concerns. Sec. Tibbits-Nutt stated that a Competitiveness Cabinet will be formed that will include

herself, Secretary Hao (Economic Development), and Secretary Augustus (Housing and Livable Communities).

Sec. Tibbits-Nutt discussed unreliability in travel times and the adverse effects that people face due to this unreliability. Sec. Tibbits-Nutt discussed the risks that pedestrians and bicyclists face on roadways, putting lives in danger.

Sec. Tibbits-Nutt discussed the risks of climate change, including sea level rise and changes to air quality. Sec. Tibbits-Nutt encouraged bold action and urged municipalities to help expand housing options.

3. Members' Items

Mayor Michelle Wu, City of Boston, discussed the urgency of decisive action from leadership on the MPO and throughout communities to improve transportation. Mayor Wu thanked the MPO for its aid in funding projects such as Phase II of Tremont Street and Columbus Avenue, Boylston Street in Fenway, and Rutherford Avenue in Charlestown. Mayor Wu discussed advances with the BlueBikes regional bikeshare system.

Mayor Carlo DeMaria, City of Everett, thanked the MPO for its aid in funding Ferry and Elm Street and Beachum Street improvements and spoke of future projects. Mayor DeMaria spoke of upcoming housing developments and plans for the Everett waterfront. Mayor DeMaria discussed the rail infrastructure in Everett and noted that there are not any commuter rail or light rail stations in the city.

Mayor Katjana Ballentyne, City of Somerville, discussed the need for regionalism and opportunities for partnership with the city. Mayor Ballentyne stated her commitment to public transit, dedicated bus lanes, protected bicycle lanes, and safe transportation for all.

Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, City of Newton, discussed housing conversations in the city and the connection to transportation. Mayor Fuller thanked the MPO and the MAPC for their continued support and discussed projects in the city such as the Needham Street project, BlueBikes, Newton in Motion, Newton Corner, and the I-90 exit. Mayor Fuller discussed the ongoing conversations on the commuter rail stations in Newton.

Administrator Joi Singh, Federal Highway Administration, discussed changes in the administration because of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), including that federal aid recipients have been expanded beyond the state to include counties, cities, and municipalities. Administrator Singh stated that there are 32 unique grant recipients in Massachusetts, among the highest in the nation.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Welcome by the Executive Director, Introduction to the Role of the Boston Region MPO, and Overview of the MPO Investment Process—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff, and Ethan Lapointe, TIP Manager, MPO Staff*

T. Teich stated that the Annual Meeting offers an opportunity to reaffirm the work the MPO does and the policy work supporting it.

T. Teich stated that the Boston Region MPO is made up of 97 cities and towns with a total of 3.4 million residents. Of these residents, approximately one in three are people of color and one in five are low income.

The MPO Board consists of the following seats:

- Municipalities
 - City of Boston (two seats)
 - City or town at-large (four seats, elected)
 - Subregional representatives (eight seats, elected)
- MassDOT (three seats, Secretary as chair)
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) (one seat)
- Massachusetts Port Authority (one seat)
- MAPC (one seat, current vice chair)
- MBTA Advisory Board (one seat)
- Regional Transportation Advisory Council (one seat)

The MPO board collaboratively approves the allocation of more than \$6 billion in federal dollars over a five-year period. Of this, \$4 billion is prioritized by transit agencies, \$1.6 billion is prioritized by MassDOT, and \$700 million is prioritized by the MPO. Local matches are typically funded from state sources in Massachusetts.

T. Teich discussed the history of MPOs, including the highway construction moratorium in the 1970s and the creation of MPOs in 1973. MPOs are designated by an agreement between the governor and local governments to

- facilitate collaboration of governments, interested parties, and residents in the planning area, and
- perform significant planning and programming as a prerequisite to getting federal funding.

T. Teich shared the Boston Region MPO's vision and goals statement. Recent evolutions of the MPO include expanding the Climate Resilience program, establishing the Communications and Engagement team and linking it to expanding the Equity Program, restructuring planning work into a multimodal infrastructure program, and redeveloping the travel demand model.

E. Lapointe stated that the MPO is looking to advance projects addressing climate change, transportation equity, and connections to affordable housing.

E. Lapointe stated that the TIP is a five-year rolling document that contains all projects in the Boston region funded using federal transportation dollars. The State TIP is a compilation of all 13 MPOs in Massachusetts, and the Capital Investment Plan contains all projects in Massachusetts funded using both federal and state funds. The TIP directs \$3.98 billion to the MBTA, \$1.59 billion to MassDOT Highway, \$697.5 million to Boston Region MPO priorities, and \$65 million to Cape Ann Transportation Authority and MetroWest Regional Transit Authority.

The BIL has improved the MPO's ability to advance regional transportation projects. Funding has increased from \$105 million to \$160 million in three TIP cycles. Recent priorities have included major infrastructure investments in regionally significant projects, the advancement of Complete Streets principles and climate resilience, and modified scoring criteria that prioritizes mode shift and supports vulnerable user safety.

Changes in Federal Fiscal Year 2025 include expanded transit investments, dedicated bikeshare support, and funding for municipal project design. E. Lapointe reviewed key points of coordination throughout the year in the development of the TIP.

Discussion

Mayor DeMaria asked about the project design status of Rutherford Avenue. Jim Fitzgerald, Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA), stated that the city is working on 25 percent design and will be expanding the conversation to partners soon. Jen Rowe, Boston Transportation Department (BTD), stated that Rutherford Avenue updates will be shared at the December 7 MPO meeting.

Break

6. Action Item: Election of Vice-Chair for Federal Fiscal Year 2024— *David Mohler, Chair*

D. Mohler stated that the MAPC was nominated for the vice-chair seat at the November 2, 2023, meeting and that no other nominations were received.

Vote

A motion to elect the MAPC as Vice-Chair of the MPO for FFY 2024 was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane) and seconded by the BPDA (J. Fitzgerald). The motion carried.

Discussion

Marc Draisen, MAPC, thanked members of the MPO for continued collaboration and recognized Eric Bourassa for his role.

7. Federal Policy and Funding Context—*Bill Keyrouze, Executive Director, Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO)*

B. Keyrouze stated that MPOs operate at the nexus of federal, state, and local governments. B. Keyrouze stated that there are more than 400 MPOs nationwide.

B. Keyrouze stated that the Congressional intent of the creation of MPOs was to strengthen the local voice in transportation planning and discussed the legislative history of MPOs.

B. Keyrouze stated that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, or BIL, represents \$567 billion in investments in surface transportation, \$100 billion in grant programs, heavy investment in electrification and rail, and new formula programs to address carbon emissions.

B. Keyrouze stated that the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) is the executor of federal funds and is responsible for managing and distributing funds. MPOs are the trustees, responsible for the planning and coordination of the funds. The public is the beneficiary who receives the benefits of the funds.

B. Keyrouze reviewed the federal planning funding flow and stated that planning funds flow from the HTF to state departments of transportation to MPOs.

B. Keyrouze stated that the core role of MPOs is to implement a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process. All MPOs coordinate and plan transportation incentives while engaging stakeholders and complying with federal regulations with diversity in governance and administrative structures, size, and responsibility. Challenges that AMPO have heard from member MPOs include matching funds, supply chain and inflation, new programs and funding, and workforce.

B. Keyrouze discussed AMPO's upcoming MPO Institute.

Discussion

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham), asked if there are examples of MPOs with expertise on economic development and housing. B. Keyrouze stated that these perspectives are most often brought into conversation with MPOs in the setting of engaging an advisory committee that has these capabilities.

Brad Rawson, City of Somerville, asked how municipalities or transportation management agencies would be able to participate in the MPO Institute. B. Keyrouze stated that in-person and virtual training will be offered in a fee-for-service model.

8. Vision Zero Action Plan Development Update—*Rebecca Morgan, Director of Projects and Partnerships, MPO Staff*

R. Morgan stated that trends of deaths and serious injuries on roadways are increasing. R. Morgan stated that the goal of zero deaths or serious injuries on roadways is an ambitious, but achievable goal, which is why the board elected to apply for the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant. The MPO was awarded \$2.7 million to develop a regional Vision Zero plan.

R. Morgan stated that the Vision Zero plan will include two main sections. First, work will be done to understand current problems through a safety analysis, thorough engagement, and policy reviews. Second, solutions will be proposed through policy and process change recommendations, project implementation, funding, proposing a timeline, and identifying responsible entities.

R. Morgan stated that a Vision Zero task force will be formed with 15 to 20 stakeholders meeting over the next year and a half.

Discussion

B. Rawson asked how the MPO's Vision Zero Action Plan will work in concert with similar efforts from MassDOT and other agencies.

Kenneth Miller, Federal Highway Administration, asked if there are plans to coordinate with other MPOs in the state on common challenges. R. Morgan stated that collaboration will happen with other MPOs.

9. Action Item: Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations on Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Update Process—*Jen Rowe, City of Boston, BTD*

J. Rowe stated that the MOU was last fully revised in 2011, with minor updates approved by the board in July 2023, to comply with corrective actions from the 2022

Federal Certification Review Final Report. Additional recommendations were in the final report and have arisen in other committee settings.

An ad hoc committee to recommend a process to revise the MOU was created. The committee recommends that it continues its work as the MOU Update Committee to carry out the recommended processes.

Topics to address in the committee's work include clarifying previous ambiguity, addressing the role of regional transit authorities, updating the role of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council, updating the fiduciary agent agreement, elaborating on agency collaboration, and establishing expectations for board member development. Updates are expected to take six to nine months. The committee will work with staff to develop an outreach strategy to the 97 cities and towns in the Boston region.

Discussion

Erin Chute, Town of Brookline, asked if additional members are eligible to join the MOU Update Committee. D. Mohler stated that yes, additional members can be added on request.

Vote

A motion to approve the Ad Hoc MOU Committee's recommended process to update the MOU and establish the MOU Update Committee was made by the BTDA (J. Rowe) and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

10. Action Item: Appointment of Committee Slates—*David Mohler, Chair*

D. Mohler stated that committee slates will be appointed annually. If new members or representatives are interested in serving on a committee, they should contact the chair.

Membership of each committee is below:

- Administration and Finance Committee
 - Chair: MBTA Advisory Board, Brian Kane
 - City of Boston, MAPC, MassDOT, City of Framingham, Regional Transportation Advisory Council
- Congestion Management Process Committee
 - Chair: City of Everett, Jay Monty
 - City of Boston, MassDOT, Massachusetts Port Authority, MBTA Advisory Board, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood), Town of Arlington, and Regional Transportation Advisory Council

- Unified Planning Work Program Committee
 - Chair: MassDOT, Derek Krevat
 - City of Boston, City of Framingham, City of Newton, City of Somerville, MAPC, MBTA Advisory Board, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, and Town of Norwood
- TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee
 - Chair: City of Boston, Jen Rowe
 - City of Framingham, City of Somerville, MassDOT (two seats), MAPC, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton), Regional Transportation Advisory Council, Town of Arlington, and Town of Brookline

Discussion

K. Miller asked how the chair of each committee is determined. D. Mohler stated that the chair and vice-chair of the MPO deliberate on committee chairs.

Vote

A motion to approve the standing committee slates as presented for FFY 2024 was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the City of Framingham (D. Giombetti). The motion carried.

11. 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) | Mayor Carlo DeMaria Jay Monty |
| At-Large City (City of Newton) | Mayor Ruthanne Fuller David Koses |
| At-Large Town (Town of Arlington) | John Alessi |
| At-Large Town (Town of Brookline) | Erin Chute |
| City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency and Boston Transportation Department) | Mayor Michelle Wu Jascha Franklin-Hodge Jim Fitzgerald Jen Rowe |
| Federal Highway Administration | Joi Singh Kenneth Miller |
| Federal Transit Administration | Michelle Muhlanger (remote) |
| Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) | Tom Bent (remote) |
| Massachusetts Department of Transportation | Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt David Mohler Steve Woelfel John Bechard |
| MassDOT Highway Division | John Romano |
| Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) | Jillian Linnell Ali Kleyman (remote) |
| Massachusetts Port Authority | Sarah Lee |
| MBTA Advisory Board | Brian Kane Amira Patterson (remote) |
| Metropolitan Area Planning Council | Marc Draisen Eric Bourassa |
| MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham) | Dennis Giombetti |
| Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton) | Jim Snyder-Grant Kristen Guichard |
| North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly) | Erin Schaeffer |

| Members | Representatives and Alternates |
|--|---|
| North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington) | Melisa Tintocalis (remote) |
| Regional Transportation Advisory Council | Lenard Diggins (remote) |
| South Shore Coalition (Town of Hull) | Franny Osman |
| South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Wrentham) | Chris Dilorio |
| | Rachel Benson (remote) |
| Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce) | Tom O'Rourke Steve Olanoff |

| Other Attendees | Affiliation |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Joshua Barber (remote) | FHWA |
| Joe Blankenship | BPDA |
| Ross Bloom (remote) | Revvit, Inc. |
| Sarah Bradbury (remote) | MassDOT District Three |
| Miranda Briseño | MassDOT |
| Brandon Burns (remote) | FTA |
| Patricia Cahill (remote) | MassDOT |
| Jessica Camhi (remote) | |
| Charles Carey | Town of Brookline |
| Jonathan Church (remote) | MassDOT |
| Jess Conger-Henry (remote) | MBTA |
| Dawn DeRossette (remote) | |
| Paula Doucette (remote) | |
| Heidi Doyle (remote) | Town of Sherborn |
| Larry Durkin | Town of Saugus |
| Wes Edwards (remote) | |
| Daniela Espinosa | BPDA |
| Sophia Galimore (remote) | |
| Glenn Geiler (remote) | MBTA |
| Joy Glynn (remote) | MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) |
| Morgan Griffiths (remote) | Town of Natick |
| Emily Hennessy (remote) | FHWA |
| Patrick Hoey (remote) | BTD |
| Alexis Hosea-Abbot (remote) | MassBike |
| Amy Ingles | Town of Brookline |
| Lisa Jacobson (remote) | Barr Foundation |
| Kristina Johnson (remote) | |
| Sandy Johnston | MBTA |
| Bill Keyrouze | AMPO |
| Heyne Kim | BTD |
| Rob King | Town of Brookline |
| Chris Klem (remote) | MassDOT |
| Raissah Kouame (remote) | MassDOT |
| Derek Krevat | MassDOT |
| Jun Lee (remote) | Emerald Necklace Conservancy |
| Jay Maddox (remote) | |

| Other Attendees | Affiliation |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Owen MacDonald (remote) | Town of Weymouth |
| Jeremy Marsette (remote) | Town of Sherborn |
| Andrew McFarland (remote) | MBTA |
| Jack Moran (remote) | MassDOT |
| Benjamin Muller (remote) | MassDOT District Six |
| Jim Nee | MWRTA |
| David Nolan (remote) | Cape Cod Commission (CCC) |
| Anand Olstad | MassDOT |
| Cassandra Ostrander (remote) | FHWA |
| Michelle Scott (remote) | MassDOT |
| Cheryll-Ann Senior (remote) | MassDOT District Five |
| Derek Shooster (remote) | MassDOT |
| Neha Singh | City of Somerville |
| Lisa Stiglich (remote) | |
| Chris Tupper (remote) | CCC |
| Phoebe Tseng (remote) | MBTA |
| Rick Parker (remote) | Burlington Area Chamber |
| Steven Povich (remote) | MBTA |
| Agnes Recato (remote) | Bike to the Sea |
| Alexis Vidaurpeta | Toole Design |
| Julia Wallerce | MAPC |
| Andrew Wang | MassDOT |
| Doug Waybright (remote) | 128 Business Council |
| Caleb Zimmerman (remote) | Town of Burlington |

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Silva Ayvazyan

Logan Casey

Annette Demchur

Hiral Gandhi

Betsy Harvey

Ryan Hicks

David Hong

Stella Jordan

Ben Krepp

Ethan Lapointe

Erin Maguire

Rose McCarron

Sean Rourke

Bradley Putnam

Gina Perille

Judy Taylor

Sam Taylor

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Title VI Specialist

Boston Region MPO
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116
civilrights@ctps.org

By Telephone:

857.702.3700 (voice)

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- **Relay Using Text to Speech:** 866.645.9870

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