

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

February 1, 2024, Meeting

10:00 AM–12:30 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

David Mohler, 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 December 7, 2023
- Approve the work program for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) 2024 and 2025 Title VI Program Monitoring
- Calendar Year 2024 Roadway Safety Performance Targets
- Endorse the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment One
- Endorse the FFYs 2024–28 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Three

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 9.

2. Chair’s Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT*

There was none.

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

T. Teich stated that MPO meetings on March 21 and April 4, 2024, will be held in-person at the State Transportation Building, with an offered hybrid option.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

Derek Krevat, MassDOT, stated that due to extenuating circumstances, information was shared with UPWP committee members through email pertaining to Amendment One, to be presented later in the meeting. No objections were shared prior to the meeting.

Jen Rowe, City of Boston, stated that the next meeting of the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee meeting will be held following the February 15 MPO meeting.

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

L. Diggins stated that the next meeting will be on February 14, 2024, to discuss the roadway pricing memo.

7. Action Item: Approval of December 7, 2023, MPO Meeting Minutes Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. December 7, 2023, minutes ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 7, 2023, was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department) (J. Rowe). The motion carried.

8. Action Item: Work Scope for MBTA 2024 and 2025 Title VI Program Monitoring—*Bradley Putnam, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. Title VI Monitoring Work Scope ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

Vote

A motion to approve the work scope for the MBTA 2024 and 2025 Title VI Program Monitoring was made by the Town of Brookline (Erin Chute) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: Roadway Safety Performance Targets—*Sam Taylor, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. Roadway Safety Performance Targets Memo ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

S. Taylor stated that the two-year and four-year roadway safety performance targets in this presentation are realistic, increase in aggressiveness overtime, and are targets that

the state is expected to reach. S. Taylor stated that there are five performance measures that will be discussed: number of fatalities, rate of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT), number of serious injuries, rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT, and the number of nonmotorized fatalities and nonmotorized serious injuries. The long-term goal is to achieve zero for all measures. Proposed Commonwealth calendar year (CY) 2024 targets can be found in Table 1.

Table 1
Proposed Commonwealth CY 2024 Targets

Performance Measure	CY 2-Year Target (2020–24)	CY 4-Year Target (2022–26)	Long-Term Target
Number of fatalities	377	362	0
Rate of fatalities per 100 million VMT	0.61	0.54	0
Number of serious injuries	2,708	2,603	0
Rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT	4.36	3.91	0
Number of nonmotorized fatalities and nonmotorized serious injuries	445	435	0

CY = calendar year. VMT = vehicle-miles traveled.

S. Taylor reviewed trends from 2009–13 through 2018–22 performance targets and discussed trends as they fit with the proposed two-year and four-year performance targets. S. Taylor stated that lingering effects of pandemic-related driving behavior includes reduced VMT and higher speeds. There has been continued worsening of motorcycle-involved outcomes. There has been an increase in the percentage of fatalities that were vulnerable road users, such as people walking and rolling.

S. Taylor stated that opportunities to improve safety outcomes include the implementation of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, vulnerable road user assessment, new safety provisions in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the development of the MPO’s Vision Zero Action Plan.

Discussion

Joe Blankenship, Boston Planning and Development Agency, asked what keeps the MPO from setting a more aggressive roadway safety target for 2024. S. Taylor stated that the targets come from the Commonwealth, that the Commonwealth is required to achieve each year, or make significant progress towards achieving them. Bonnie Polin, MassDOT, stated that the targets are a rolling average over five years, so any major change will take time to be reflected in the safety targets, while reflecting the events of the previous two years.

B. Kane asked how the fatality rate in the Boston region compares to the state and other regions. S. Taylor stated that the Boston region saw a decrease in fatalities and the fatality rate in the region is lower than that of the state average. B. Polin discussed short-term statewide strategies, such as material procurement for municipalities, that can be used to improve safety.

L. Diggins asked how nonmotorized crashes are classified. B. Polin stated that nonmotorized crashes that are in national counts tracks collisions between a motorized vehicle and a vulnerable road user.

JR Frey, Town of Hingham, discussed improved safety at intersections in the town because of a MassDOT project.

J. Rowe asked what resources would be needed to generate region-specific roadway safety targets. T. Teich stated that the upcoming greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets will be a good starting point to determine what resources are needed.

Vote

A motion to approve the calendar year 2024 roadway safety performance targets was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Boston Transportation Department (J. Rowe). The motion carried.

10.Action Item: FFY 2024 UPWP Amendment One—*Srilekha Murthy, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. Amendment One Memo ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
2. FFY 2024 UPWP ([pdf](#)) ([html](#)) ([Executive Summary html](#)) ([Appendices html](#))
3. FFY 2024 UPWP Redline ([pdf](#))

S. Murthy stated that Amendment One extends \$112,000 in deobligated PL funds, combined with state match, for two UPWP line items: UPWP Direct Support and Computer Resource Management. Direct support includes a review of accessibility

practices, a plan for the model network, information technology strategic development, and migrating to a new operating system. Funds under Computer Resource Management include procuring part-time support for agency website management.

S. Murthy stated that the funds are extended FFY 2023 funds, with no negative impact on work programmed in the FFY 2024 UPWP. As a result, staff request the board to waive the public review period to allow timely access to funds.

Discussion

Vote

A motion to waive the public review period and endorse the FFY 2024 UPWP Amendment One was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins). The motion carried.

11. FFYs 2024-28 TIP Amendment Three—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff* ***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

1. FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment Three ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
2. Newton Comment Letter ([pdf](#))
3. MWRTA Comment Letter ([pdf](#))

E. Lapointe stated that Amendment Three proposes changes to Newton’s microtransit service, funded by the MPO between FFYs 2021–2025. The proposed scope change priorities trips for seniors and persons with disabilities. Two comments were received during the public review period: the City of Newton expressing support for the changes and the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority expressing support for the change and the need for flexibility in scopes for newer transit technologies.

Vote

A motion to endorse the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment Three was made by the City of Newton (David Koses) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane). The motion carried.

12. Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Database Update—*Casey Cooper, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. Bicycle Pedestrian Count Database Update ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

C. Cooper stated that the bicycle and pedestrian count database was first created in 2009 and was funded through a discrete project to update the database in January 2023. Components of the project include an update to the count data application, an

improved manual data collection process, and the development of an automatic data collection process.

C. Cooper demonstrated the functionality of the updated count data application, including metadata, in-application visualizations, and a map of the count location.

Improvements to the count data collection process include the digitization of the count spreadsheet and the development of a program to automatically update the database.

Staff acquired three eco-counter mobile multi units to collect continuous bicycle and pedestrian count data. To identify locations for the automatic counters, staff developed an equity scoring system, where a greater consideration weight was given to municipalities with larger equity populations and less auto-dependance. Other factors that were considered included sociodemographic variables, travel behavior indicators, and MassDOT's potential for everyday biking and walkable trips dataset.

Next steps include the further refinement of the count data user application, including developing features such as

- search for range of years;
- additional drop-down menus for location type and bicycle-pedestrian facility;
- show which locations have multiple years of data;
- visualize a location's volume change by mode over time;
- compare data from different count locations; and
- show all modes for a specific count session on one graph.

Discussion

Laura Gilmore, MBTA, stated that it might be useful to collaborate with MBTA staff on identifying locations that provide access to transit.

Jim Fitzgerald, City of Boston, asked if there is a process in place to request a certain location to be studied. C. Cooper stated that this is something that came up in conversations and further strategizing would be needed.

13. Update on MBTA Sources of Community Value—*Joe Delorto, MPO Staff*

J. Delorto stated that the purpose of this study is to evaluate revenue strategies of MBTA's peer agencies to identify potential strategies to generate ongoing funds in Massachusetts to support the MBTA's operating budget. The study reviewed previous work, assessed the Massachusetts context and revenue potential, and documented its findings.

Six strategies were evaluated. J. Delorto stated that the analysis was limited, where possible, to the MBTA service district.

Vehicle access fees explored the motor vehicle excise tax and the gasoline tax. The motor vehicle excise tax could generate \$33–570 million annually with a value-based excise tax or flat fee. The gasoline tax could generate \$22–42 million annually by raising the current \$0.24 per gallon tax to \$0.30 per gallon and \$0.36 per gallon.

Road usage fees explored increased highway tolling and congestion pricing. Increased tolls would include the Mass Pike, Tobin Bridge, and Boston Harbor tunnels. Assuming the MBTA receives 50 percent of new revenue and with varied toll rates, \$22–80 million could be generated annually. Using congestion pricing, \$220–450 million could be generated annually, with a subset of this amount being allocated to the MBTA.

Transit Oriented Development value capture would divert a portion of the property tax increment near all rapid transit stations, generating \$25–85 million annually after 10 years, in total. An additional 0.25 percent statewide sales tax rate or one percent meals/rooms tax in the MBTA service area could generate \$30–335 million annually, in total.

Discussion

B. Kane asked if the presented \$22 million in tolling is the total figure or the MBTA's share. J. Delorto stated that it is the MBTA's share.

J. Blankenship asked what assumptions were used in assessing the transit-oriented demand value capture. Seth Strumwasser, MPO Staff, stated that the calculation included the proportion of new developments from 2012–22 within one-half mile of a rapid transit station to new growth values for each municipality, evaluated with a weak economy and strong economy scenario.

L. Diggins asked how the generated figures would differ if they considered factors such as low-income metrics.

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council, asked when final results of this study would be available to the public. J. Delorto stated that the work scope did not include a memorandum to the MPO board and will document findings for the MBTA. L. Gilmore stated that work will continue to be refined on this project throughout the spring.

J. Rowe requested that the final findings of the study be presented to the board when work is concluded.

14. Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) Information Dissemination—*Derek Krevat, MassDOT Staff*

D. Krevat stated that MassDOT met with MARPA to review financial planning documents for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in the coming years using FFY 2025 as a starting point to explain the process. With respect to federal formula funding in the STIP, FFY 2025 has a total non-earmarked federal aid balance of \$818,478,798 statewide, with \$102,742,151 allocated to the Boston Region MPO, totaling \$128 million including state match. Regional target funds available in FFY 2026 total \$125,285,687 and \$155,132,142 in FFY 2027.

D. Krevat reviewed funding for future years of the UPWP. In FFY 2025, the total PL and 5303 funds available to all MPOs in Massachusetts is \$18,560,085. D. Krevat reviewed the process for distributing funds to each MPO, and rates dependent on the relative population size and size of the urbanized area population.

Discussion

B. Kane asked if there are discussions to reevaluate funding distributions to each MPO, given recent population changes.

J. Rowe asked how funding estimates in the “planning adjustments and pass-throughs” section of the STIP are updated annually. D. Krevat stated that some items in that section are adjusted annually using the same rate of increase as other federal formula funds and that others depend on context-specific items related to each line.

15. Members’ Items

There were none.

16. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the Boston Transportation Department (J. Rowe). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty Eric Molinari
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 Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald Joe Blankenship
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jen Rowe
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent Brad Rawson
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Laura Gilmore Sandy Johnston
Massachusetts Port Authority	
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa Julia Wallerice
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)	Erin Schaeffer
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	Melisa Tintocalis
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Hull)	Chris Dilorio
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Wrentham)	
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Stephanie Abundo	DOT
Maha Aslam	LivableStreets Alliance
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT
Miranda Briseño	MassDOT
Wes Edwards	MBTA
Daniela Espinosa	BPDA
JR Frey	Hingham
Joy Glynn	MWRTA
Morgan Griffiths	Town of Natick
Joshua Klingenstein	MBTA
Raissah Kouame	MassDOT
Derek Krevat	MassDOT
Barbara Lachance	MassDOT
Tracie Lenhardt	MassDOT
Owen MacDonald	Town of Weymouth
Vi Mai	MBTA
Daniel Milbrandt	BTD
Marcela Moreno	
Benjamin Muller	MassDOT
Jim Nee	MWRTA
Bonnie Polin	MassDOT
Austin Pszenny	BETA Group Inc.
Jeanette Rebecchi	Town of Bedford
Derek Shooster	MassDOT
Cam Sullivan	MWRTA
Tyler Terrasi/MWRTA	MWRTA
Frank Tramontozzi	Quincy
Andrew Wang	MassDOT
Elizabeth Winters Ronaldson	MBTA

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Rounaq Basu

Tanner Bonner

Logan Casey

Kyle Casiglio

Casey Cooper

Abigail Cutrumbes

Joe Delorto

Annette Demchur

Betsy Harvey

Dave Hong

Jia Huang

Stella Jordan

Ali Kleyman

Ben Krepp

Ethan Lapointe

Erin Maguire

Rose McCarron

Marty Milkovits

Rebecca Morgan

Srilekha Murthy

Gina Perille

Sarah Philbrick

Bradley Putnam

Sean Rourke

Seth Strumwasser

Judy Taylor

Samuel Taylor

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Boston Region MPO Title VI Specialist
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Boston, MA 02116
Phone: 857.702.3700
Email: civilrights@ctps.org

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