



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

July 10, 2024, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–4:05 PM, Zoom

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

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

L. Diggins called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page four.)

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 10, 2024, meeting was made by WalkMassachusetts (John McQueen) and seconded by an Acton resident (Franny Osman). The minutes were approved.

3. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Before-and-After Study— *Sarah Philbrick, Manager of MPO Planning and Policy, MPO Staff*

S. Philbrick presented findings from the [TIP Before-and-After study](#), which sought to better understand the outcomes of TIP projects based on their intended goals. The study used analysis and measurements related to the Congestion Management Program (CMP) per the recommendation of the 2019 Federal Certification Review, the quadrennial process by which the MPO's work is reviewed and certified by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

S. Philbrick discussed the four projects reviewed in the study, which include

- Lebanon Street Reconstruction in Melrose,
- Hancock and East/West Squantum Streets in Quincy,
- Broadway Reconstruction in East Somerville, and
- Community Path Extension in Somerville.

S. Philbrick discussed the need for more frequent and quick analyses of TIP-funded projects to make data-driven funding decisions, and stated that given the timing of TIP project

programming, performance metrics and data needs should be identified in advance of project construction. S. Philbrick noted the need to systematically review project outcomes to their scoring criteria to better understand progress towards the region's goals.

Discussion

S. Philbrick discussed some questions that Advisory Council members shared in advance, and stated that this study was initiated from the 2019 certification review, but the MPO had not conducted other before-and-after studies for TIP projects in the past 20 years. S. Philbrick noted that the MPO does not have access to information on the total cost of projects and cost changes after the TIP process has been completed. S. Philbrick discussed that once TIP projects are funded there is some rigidity to design changes, but staff have worked with municipalities and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to use data on permitted developments to better anticipate how land use and demographic patterns are impacted by proposed projects.

J. McQueen, Ethan Lapointe (MPO Staff), and S. Philbrick discussed the ability of municipalities to postpone or change project design. E. Lapointe stated that it depends on the project proponent to decide on readiness changes made to a project since it may impact the project's design funding and construction date. J. McQueen and E. Lapointe discussed considerations for an agency to intervene and postpone project development.

Logan Casey (Town of Marblehead) and S. Philbrick discussed the metrics used for the study, which were determined by the CMP based on the 2019 federal certification review's recommendation. S. Philbrick stated that while these metrics are useful to analyze, other projects may benefit from understanding different metrics based on the MPO's goals. L. Casey suggested that environmental impact and greenhouse gas emissions would be interesting metrics to study, as they align with the MPO's work and goals. S. Philbrick stated that staff are also considering metrics such as the impact of various transportation projects on air quality.

L. Casey, F. Osman and S. Philbrick discussed next steps and how outcomes of before-and-after studies can help support municipalities ensure that projects meet MPO goals for funding. S. Philbrick stated that the MPO is considering how metrics should be decided before projects are initiated to better understand the impact of completed projects.

J. McQueen and S. Philbrick discussed the accuracy of data collected for the Hancock and East/West Squantum Streets project in Quincy. J. McQueen stated that a study from the LivableStreets Alliance found that data collection can vary from town to town. S. Philbrick noted that the MPO's Vision Zero Action Plan seeks to address the crash data in the region and create a standard base for what safety looks like and how to track it. Fred Moseley (American Council of Engineering Companies) stated that states have made strides to improve crash data in the last few years by collecting location information, and noted that

data in recent years is more reliable and detailed. J. McQueen suggested that studies should note when data collected prior to more detailed collection methods is used.

L. Casey asked how future work related to the TIP Before-and-After study will be conducted at the MPO, either through the UPWP or regular reporting through the TIP process. S. Philbrick discussed that the MPO is still determining next steps, but mentioned intentions to develop a regular process for collecting data for all projects, and added that in-depth analyses of specific projects could also be done through discrete projects or studies.

L. Diggins asked if municipalities are aware of the recommendations and to what extent were recommendations developed in collaboration with municipal planners. S. Philbrick stated that the recommendations were not made in collaboration but were discussed with some municipalities. L. Diggins stated that follow through could be a critical step of the study.

4. Public Engagement Plan Update—*Stella Jordan, Public Engagement Program Manager, MPO Staff*

S. Jordan presented an overview of the Public Engagement Program and planned updates to the Public Engagement Plan (PEP). S. Jordan stated that the PEP guides the program, which supports efforts to offer continuous and meaningful engagement opportunities in MPO work. The PEP outlines the MPO's public engagement vision, guidelines, and principles.

S. Jordan discussed planned broad updates and changes, including updating the PEP's design and layout to be more visually engaging. In addition, content updates such as tying in the Long-Range Transportation Plan goals, new engagement practices, and evaluation methods will be made.

S. Jordan discussed plans to create two separate products, the PEP document and a public engagement guidebook. S. Jordan stated the PEP will serve as an internal product to guide staff on best practices, processes, and federal requirements. The guidebook will be a public-facing product with key information for members of the public about ways to get involved with MPO work.

S. Jordan facilitated a discussion about key information to include about participation and involvement with MPO work.

Discussion

AnaCristina Fragoso (Boston Society of Civil Engineers) and S. Jordan discussed the goal of broadening public participation in the transportation planning process. S. Jordan stated that the Public Engagement Program seeks to broaden representation and participation especially with communities who have been historically left out of the process.

L. Diggins and S. Jordan discussed MAPC's engagement strategies and future collaborations. S. Jordan stated that MAPC's engagement work is more project focused while the MPO is focused on engaging the public at large. S. Jordan stated that the MPO's Public Engagement Program collaborates with MAPC engagement staff to coordinate efforts and share best practices.

5. August Meeting/Field Trip

L. Diggins facilitated a discussion of potential field trip ideas or a meeting in August. S. Jordan shared results from an Advisory Council survey of preferences and ideas for a field trip.

Discussion

F. Osman, AC Fragoso, and L. Diggins discussed possible ideas such as the MBTA Control Center, Conley Terminal, and paratransit dispatch sites throughout the region. L. Diggins and S. Jordan will coordinate to identify a field trip by the end of the month.

6. Advisory Council Elections

L. Diggins discussed convening a Nomination Committee for the upcoming Advisory Council elections.

Discussion

AC Fragoso and F. Osman expressed interest in participating in the Nomination Committee.

7. Chair's Report—*Lenard Diggins, Chair*

L. Diggins shared responses to the discussion questions presented during the Community Planning Lab discussion at the June Advisory Council meeting. L. Diggins highlighted the [Destination 2050 Needs Assessment](#) and the TIP Criteria as essential documents to review during the pilot program.

8. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

F. Osman noted the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority created a fixed route that goes through Boxborough to the South Acton station, addressing barriers to accessibility.

9. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Boston Society of Civil Engineers (AnaCristina Fragoso) and seconded by an Acton resident (Franny Osman). The motion carried.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
Weymouth	Owen MacDonald

Citizen Advocacy Groups	Attendees
American Council of Engineering Companies	Fred Moseley
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	AnaCristina Fragoso
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
WalkMassachusetts	John McQueen
Acton resident	Franny Osman

Agencies (Non-Voting)	Attendees
MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)	Jim Nee

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Regina Aris	Baltimore MPO
Ndemazea Fonkem	Baltimore MPO
Logan Casey	Town of Marblehead
Hannah Switekowski	MBTA Advisory Board
Isabella MacKinnon	MBTA Advisory Board

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Gina Perille
Abby Cutrumbes
Jia Huang
Adriana Jacobs
Stella Jordan
Ali Kleyman
Ethan Lapointe
Lauren Magee
Erin Maguire
Srilekha Murthy
Sarah Philbrick
Sean Rourke
Sam Taylor

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