

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

May 16, 2024, Meeting

10:00 AM–11:00 AM, 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 April 4, 2024
- Approve Amendment Six of the Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2024–28 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Release Amendment Seven of the FFYs 2024–28 TIP for a 15-day public review period
- Approve Amendment Eight of the FFYs 2024–28 TIP
- Release the Draft FFY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for a 21-day public review period

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 10.

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

There was none.

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

Tegin Teich, Executive Director, shared some staffing updates effective this summer. There were two new hires for the positions of Assistant Transportation Planner and Congestion Management Process Program Manager. T. Teich also shared some engagement updates. MPO staff visited a few events in April and May. One of these events was the Bike Month Kickoff in Somerville on April 28, held by several bike advocacy organizations. Staff were able to share information about the MPO’s work on Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning and Infrastructure. Other events were the Wake Up the

Earth Festival in Jamaica Plain on May 4 and Boston's Open Streets in Dorchester on May 5, where staff shared information about the MPO in general and gathered public feedback that could be made part of the TIP's Public Engagement Plan appendix. Staff will continue to go to similar events throughout the summer and fall to share information about the MPO's work and foster more transparency, as well as to collect input from the public on MPO projects.

T. Teich then went on to share performance target updates. These performance targets are additional to those set by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for this annual cycle. They include three Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) performance targets—for emissions reductions, peak hour of excessive delay per capita, and percent of non-single-occupancy-vehicle travel to work—and a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction target. CMAQ performance targets are set every four years instead of annually. The FHWA requires a biennial, mid-period report on progress toward the targets, which must be submitted by October 1 this year. T. Teich reported that one CMAQ target—percent of non-single-occupancy-vehicle travel to work— may need to be revisited, since the target goal for 2023 and 2024 has already been exceeded.

While the MPO is not legally obligated to establish a greenhouse gas (GHG) performance target, MPOs are not restricted from doing so. Because of the initial requirement, MPO staff have already begun the planning stages of this process; so, staff propose to come back to the board in the late summer to ask whether the board would like to adopt a GHG target.

T. Teich then presented the three action items of the meeting. The first is to vote to endorse the FFYs 2024–2028 TIP Amendment Six. The second is to vote to release the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment Seven and to shorten the public review period to 15 days. And the last is to vote to release the FFY 2025 UPWP for public review. Finally, T. Teich established that the next MPO meeting will be on June 6, 2024, at 10:00 AM, where the board will be voting on endorsing the FFYs 2025–29 TIP. T. Teich then offered to answer questions.

Chair David Mohler clarified the action items, noting there was also an Amendment Eight for the FFYs 2024–28 TIP on the agenda.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

Derek Krevat, MassDOT, mentioned that the UPWP Committee had met the Thursday before, and had been given a presentation on the FFY 2025 UPWP. The committee's recommendation was that the MPO vote to release the document for public review. The committee also approved of all the projects that were presented as part of the FFY 2025 UPWP.

Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), reported that the Memorandum of understanding (MOU) Update Committee last met on May 3, when Stella Jordan, MPO staff, did a presentation on the draft language to revise the role of the Advisory Council in the MPO's MOU. The discussion was about clarifying the role of the Advisory Council, the relationship between the Advisory Council and the MPO, and working on clearly defining goals for the Advisory Council. There was also an update on discussions between MPO staff and Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) staff on a fiduciary agreement. T. Bent stated that the next meeting would be on June 5, at 1:30 PM.

Jen Rowe, City of Boston, said that the TIP Process, Engagement and Readiness Committee would be having a meeting just after the current MPO meeting. The meeting would mostly be about small changes in the TIP and working towards a final version of the document. The team would then do a retrospective, to reflect on the TIP process, and to discuss what to do differently going forward. J. Rowe invited the meeting members to join.

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

Lenard Diggins, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, reported that the last meeting of the council included a presentation by Casey Cooper, MPO staff, about the Pedestrian and Bicycle Count Application update. There was also a discussion about the MOU update on the Advisory Council's role (previously mentioned by T. Bent). L. Diggins then briefly mentioned the dates of the next meetings.

7. Action Item: Approval of April 4, 2024, MPO Meeting Minutes—*David Mohler, Chair*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. April 4, 2024, Meeting Minutes [\(pdf\)](#) [\(html\)](#)

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of April 4, 2024, was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane) and seconded by the City of Boston (Jen Rowe). The motion carried.

8. Action Item: FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment Six– *Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

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

Ethan Lapointe, MPO staff, presented on Amendment Six to the FFYs 2024–28 TIP. MPO staff asked the MPO board to vote to endorse the amendment. The changes proposed by the amendment are to reflect a cost increase for the rehabilitation of a bridge on Route 30 over the Charles River, a cost increase for replacement of the Revere Court bridge in Canton, and an application to carry over Ferry Boat funding from FFY 2021 to the MBTA's Catamaran Overhaul Project.

The Route 30 bridge over the Charles River project had initially been presented to the board at the April 11, 2024, meeting, when the proposal was to increase the budget from \$21.8 million to \$27.7 million. This funding would be provided by the Statewide Highway Program, rather than the Regional Target Program. The project budget was refined during the public review period to \$27.3 million, rather than \$27.7 million.

The public review period for this TIP document began on April 15, 2024, and concluded on May 6, 2024. Staff received no comments on these projects. E. Lapointe then went on to request, on behalf of the MPO staff, that the board vote to endorse Amendment Six, including the cost adjustment for the project discussed above, following the completion of its 21-day public review period.

Discussion

B. Kane asked for some clarification on the third part of this amendment, which would carryover FFY 2021 Ferry Boat funding to the FFY 2024 Catamaran Overhaul Project. E. Lapointe answered that the FFY 2021 funding was unspent, so the MBTA requested that the funds be used to overhaul two of the MBTA Catamaran ferries, and purchase equipment, staff, labor, and other training. B. Kane noted that this request was also in the current draft of the MBTA Capital Investment Plan (CIP) and he assumed the programming of the funds would be reconciled later.

Vote

A motion to endorse Amendment Six to the FFYs 2024–28 TIP, as presented, was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by the MAPC (Julia Wallerice). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment Seven— *Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

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

E. Lapointe presented Amendment Seven to the FFYs 2024–28 TIP. E. Lapointe requested that the board approve a shortened public review period for this amendment of 15 days, rather than 21 days, based on Public Engagement Program guidance, so that the MBTA—the subject of this amendment—will receive the feedback in a timely manner. The substance of Amendment Seven proposes changes to all years of the FFYs 2024–28 TIP Transit Program to correct the funding allocations for various MBTA capital programs, so that they reflect the changes made in the MBTA’s draft CIP. This will ensure that the MBTA CIP and the MPO’s TIP reflect consistent information. These changes were already incorporated into the Draft FFYs 2025–29 TIP.

The funding allocation adjustments are to federal Section 5307, Section 5337, Section 5339, and Other Federal programs. Section 5307 details funding programs, not specific projects. These programs include the Bridge and Tunnel Program, the Revenue Vehicle Program, the Signals/Systems Upgrade Program, the Stations and Facilities Program, and Preventative Maintenance, which is a new program being introduced. The change to the Bridge and Tunnel Program is a funding decrease, from \$131 million to \$74 million. The remaining program changes are funding increases: the Revenue Vehicle program would increase by \$20 million, the Signals/Systems Upgrade Program by \$90 million, and the Stations and Facilities program by \$65 million. Using the Section 5307 funds, the new Preventative Maintenance program would have funding of \$62.5 million. The total increase of Section 5307 funding would be \$182 million.

Proposed funding allocations for all of these programs are also reflected in the federal Section 5337 Funding Program. The Bridge and Tunnel Program would increase by \$166 million, the Revenue Vehicle Program would increase by \$4.9 million, the Signals/Systems Upgrade Program would increase by \$224 million, and the Stations and Facilities Program change would decrease by \$45 million. The new Preventative Maintenance program would add \$176 million. The net increase within the Section 5337 Funding Program would be \$526.5 million.

The changes to the Section 5339 Funding Program would only be to the Bus Program, a funding increase of \$7.4 million.

Finally, there are some changes to other federal sources of funding, all of which are for new projects. The first of these is the Ashmont Station Battery Electric Bus Charger Design, which would receive \$127,000 through the Areas of Persistent Poverty Program (APP). The Attleboro Station Improvements project would be funded by the Greater Attleboro and Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) at \$516,000 and the Worcester Union Station Improvements would be funded by the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) for \$2.9 million. As noted in Amendment Six, the Ferry Boat Program will now fund the MBTA Catamaran Overhaul project, with \$501,000. Finally, the Lynn Broad Street Corridor Transit Signal Priority project would be funded by the MPO's FFY 2024 Community Connections Program, for \$200,000.

The MPO approved cost increases for three projects in the FFYs 2025–29 TIP: the Columbus Avenue Phase II project has a cost increase of \$7.5 million, the Jackson Square Station Accessibility Improvements project has a cost increase of \$7.2 million, and the Rail Transformation Early Action Items project a cost increase of \$6 million. Three new projects were also approved by the Boston Region MPO in the FFYs 2025–29 TIP: the Central Station Accessibility Project, with a budget of \$5 million, the Nubian Square Bus Circulation Improvements, also with a budget of \$5 million, and the Pedal and Park System Modernization, with a budget of \$2 million.

A project with potential funding from the federal Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) is a program to improve Positive Train Control (PTC), Automatic Train Control (ATC) and fiber optic upgrades (Fiber) for the MBTA system. This is a potential receipt through financing, or a line of credit, which has been rebalanced from \$469 million to \$100 million. Another source of potential funding would be from the RRIF and/or the federal Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA). The expected increase from \$737.5 million to \$782.5 million would be across all five years of the FFYs 2024–28 TIP.

E. Lapointe closed by requesting the board vote to release Amendment Seven, as presented above, for a shortened 15-day public review period. The reason for the shortened review period is that these changes are already reflected in other documents currently out for public review: the MBTA CIP, which was available for public review from April 25, 2024, to May 16, 2024, and the FFYs 2025–29 TIP, which was available for public review from April 22, 2024, to May 22, 2024. The MBTA board is also looking for the MPO's endorsement of this amendment before the MBTA board endorses the CIP. The MBTA board is hoping to receive these endorsements as soon as possible, in

order to have the changes in hand if they decide to pursue federal discretionary grants in June and July 2024. The public review period for Amendment Seven would begin May 20, 2024, and conclude June 3, 2024, if the 15-day review period is approved.

Discussion

B. Kane expanded on the fact that the MBTA CIP has been out for public review with all these changes included. Additionally, the CIP with changes has been in front of the MBTA Advisory Board already, and the MBTA Advisory Board has written an oversight report. For these reasons, B. Kane stated that a 15-day public review period for Amendment Seven was more than appropriate and he suggested that the public review period could even be waived.

D. Mohler then asked if the TIFIA and RIFF funding sources were shown in the TIP and E. Lapointe confirmed they were in the FFYs 2025–29 TIP. D. Mohler asked if there were projects associated with those programs in the CIP, or if they were just listed as funding sources. E. Lapointe clarified that they were just potential grant receipts and deferred to the MBTA Advisory Board for answers on specific projects. Sandy Johnston, MBTA Advisory Board, clarified that these programs were loan financing, rather than grants, and that they are associated with specific projects in the MBTA CIP. D. Mohler then clarified that these changes added \$716 million in additional funding, and E. Lapointe agreed that the funding was from federal formula sources. D. Mohler asked for clarification on whether this funding was a surplus unknown when the MBTA team created the original plan last year, or if the original plan had under-budgeted and this \$716 million was unspent funds. S. Johnston stated it was likely unspent funds but this needed to be checked with the finance team for confirmation.

Vote

A motion to release Amendment Seven for a shortened 15-day public review period, was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by the MBTA (S. Johnston). The motion carried.

10. FFYs 2024–28 TIP Amendment Eight— *Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar*

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

E. Lapointe then presented on Amendment Eight to the FFYs 2024–28 TIP. This vote was to approve the release of the amendment for a 21-day public review period. This amendment proposed changes to the FFY 2024 Statewide Highway Program and the FFY 2024 TIP Transit Program for the Cape Ann Transportation Authority's (CATA) projects. The Statewide Highway Program has a cost increase for two bridge projects:

the West Roxbury Parkway over MBTA Bridge Replacement project in Boston, and the bridge preservation contract on structures carrying Interstate 93 in Medford. CATA has three projects that include purchases of miscellaneous capital equipment, and funding adjustments for two replica trolleys.

Specific changes by program are an increase of \$1.4 million for the bridge replacement of West Roxbury Parkway over MBTA. This increase is based on the attainment of Plans, Specifications, and Estimates on November 28, 2023, and changes in the cost of hazardous materials disposal in the project area. There is an increase of \$2.8 million in the Bridge Preservation project of Interstate 93 in Medford. This is based on a revised 75 percent design submission in March 2024, and the type of work needs that each of these ten structures have.

Specific changes by CATA program are an increase to the Miscellaneous Small Capital line item, using Regional Transit Authority Capital Funding (RTACAP), and the Shop Equipment and Small Capital line item, using RTACAP and federal funding budgets. This would be an increase of \$171,000 and \$133,000, respectively, to purchase equipment and other capital items to maintain and improve its facilities and vehicles. Finally, there is a cost decrease for the Replica Trolley Replacement Project, funded federally and by RTACAP. This decrease of approximately \$50,000 is due to revised estimates for these replacement trolleys. In addition, the proportion of RTA matches to federal funding has been reduced.

Staff requested that the board vote to release Amendment Eight for a 21-day public review period, which would commence May 20, 2024, and conclude June 10, 2024.

Vote

A motion to release Amendment Eight for a 21-day public review period, commencing May 20, 2024, and concluding June 10, 2024, was made by the City of Boston (Jim Fitzgerald) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

11. Action Item: Draft FFY 2025 UPWP— *Srilekha Murthy, MPO Staff* ***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

1. FFY 2025 UPWP Executive Summary ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
2. FFY 2025 UPWP for Public Review ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

Srilekha Murthy, MPO staff, presented on the Draft FFY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), asking the board to vote to release it for a 21-day public review period. This UPWP has \$7.5 million programmed between Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) and Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), across 18

programs supporting the MPO and continuous, comprehensive, cooperative (3C) planning processes, two technical assistance programs, and three discrete studies. In FFY 2024 the UPWP programmed about \$7.1 million in funding. So there is a relatively minimal funding increase in FFY 2025, which means that nearly all programs are level funded, or close to being level funded, when compared to FFY 2024. As in previous years, the overall strategy of the UPWP is to maintain investments in the MPO's ongoing programs to ensure staff's ability to respond quickly to evolving planning needs throughout the year.

The draft FFY 2025 UPWP funds three discrete studies: a Bluebikes and MBTA Connections study funded at \$60,000, a Roadway Pricing study at \$50,000, and a study on Decarbonizing the Freight Sector at \$40,000. The UPWP Committee guided and chose these studies. On May 9, 2024, the UPWP Committee voted to move the Draft FFY 2025 UPWP to the MPO board for today's vote to release the Draft FFY 2025 UPWP for a 21-day public review period, beginning on May 17, 2024, and ending June 8, 2024. The final document will be presented to the UPWP Committee on June 13, 2024, and to the MPO board on June 20, 2024.

Discussion

S. Johnston congratulated the MPO staff on putting their emphasis on developing three-to-five-year work plans in this document for its MPO Analysis and Planning Program. S. Johnston expressed excitement at seeing the outcome of this program and encouraged staff to continue to work closely with the MBTA.

Vote

A motion to release the Draft FFY 2025 UPWP for a 21-day public review period, beginning May 17, 2024, and concluding June 8, 2024, was made by the MBTA (S. Johnston) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

12. Members' Items

There were none.

13. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane) and seconded by the MAPC (J. Wallerce). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members

Representatives and Alternates

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 Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Bill Conroy
	Jen Rowe
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Federal Transit Administration	Kirstie Hostetter
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
MassDOT Highway Division	John Bechard
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Sandy Johnston
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	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)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	Melisa Tintocalis
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Hull)	Christopher Diorio
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Wrentham)	
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood)	Tom O'Rourke
	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Brad Rawson	City of Somerville
Cam Sullivan	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)
Carolyn Cole	Massachusetts Cultural Council
Cecelie Cochran	FHWA
Cheryll-Ann	MassDOT Highway
Chris Klem	MassDOT
Derek Krevat	MassDOT
Jackie LaFlam	Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA)
Jim Nee	MWRTA
Josh Ostroff	MBTA
Joshua Barber	FHWA
Joshua Klingenstein	MBTA
Joy Glynn	MWRTA
Kent Keener	
Miranda Briseño	MassDOT
Paul Cobuzzi	
Raissah Kouame	MassDOT
Tyler Terrasi	MWRTA

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
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Annette Demchur
Betsy Harvey
Erin Maguire
Sean Rourke
Ethan Lapointe
Gina Perille
Hiral Gandhi
Judy Day
Meghan O'Connor
Sam Taylor
Srilekha Murthy
Stella Jordan

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