

OLD COLONY JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (JTC)

Meeting Minutes of the Old Colony Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) Held Virtually Via Zoom November 2, 2023 at 12:00 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

Abington	John Stone	MassDOT	Jean Fox
Abington	Bruce Hughes	GATRA	Mary Ellen DeFrias
Bridgewater	Yamaris Terrero	Office of State Senator Michael Brady	Al DeGirolamo
Bridgewater	Julianna Curry	Transit AMS	Jim Nihan
Bridgewater	Sristhi Jain	GPI	Sid Kashi
Brockton	Rob May	Howard Stein Hudson	Steve Findlen
Duxbury	Allison Shane	CDM Smith	Lisa Sherman
Hanson	Don Howard	OCPC	Charles Kilmer
Pembroke	Becky Coletta	OCPC	Mary Waldron
Stoughton	William Roth	OCPC	Kyle Mowatt
Whitman	Dan Salvucci	OCPC	Shawn Bailey
Whitman	Noreen O'Toole	OCPC	Guoqiang Li
BAT	Michael Lambert	OCPC	Bill McNulty
BAT	Glenn Geiler	OCPC	Ray Guarino
MassDOT District 5	Barbara Lachance		

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Noreen O'Toole called the meeting to order at 12:01 P.M. and then read the Meeting Accessibility Statement and the Title VI Notice of Protection Statement. Bill McNulty then conducted the roll call.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments at this time.

3. Minutes of October 5, 2023 Meeting

Chairperson O'Toole asked if there is a motion to approve the October 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made by Dan Salvucci and seconded by Don Howard to approve the Meeting Minutes from October 5, 2023.

The Old Colony JTC voted unanimously to approve the October 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes.

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4. Communications

Shawn Bailey reviewed the contents of the communications staff report. Included were letters of correspondence, as well as notices of workshops and conferences. They are as follows:

- FY 2024 Community Transit Grant Program (CTGP) Vehicle Application Schedule Reminder PLUS Vehicle Guide Now Available – Applications open in November.
- 2024 MassTrails Grant Application period is NOW OPEN! Applications are due Thursday, February 1, 2024
- The FY 2023 Application Period for the Thriving Communities Program (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Discretionary Grant) is Now Open!
- 2023 Clean School Bus Rebate Program – Open for applications through January 31, 2024
- Creating Master Plans Webinar Series – November 6, 2023

5. Reports

A. Brockton Area Regional Transit Authority (BAT)

Chairperson O'Toole announced that Glenn Geiler has accepted a job with the MBTA and will be leaving BAT. Chairperson O'Toole noted that Glenn has been representing BAT on the JTC for many years in her eight-year tenure with BAT. Congratulations to Glenn Geiler for her new job with the MBTA.

Glenn Geiler said that she has had a wonderful time at BAT and has learned a lot from the JTC over the years.

Glenn Geiler reported on the following items:

- BAT has implemented a new weekend service schedule. Saturday service frequency has doubled, and Sunday morning service has been implemented as well.
- Michael Lambert has applied with MassDOT for the Fare Free Program. BAT did the Fare Free program last year around the holidays. The application would be to start Fare Free service on December 1 and continue through the end of May, 2024.
- October 2023 Ridership reached a new record level following pandemic.
- Rockland Micro Transit Service surpassed 600 trips for the first time in October. Facebook advertising was also done for this service.

Charles Kilmer, on behalf of OCPC, thanked Glenn for being a wonderful colleague. Glenn has been a great person to work with and wishes her the best.

Mary Waldron stated that she has had a great impact on OCPC and also the whole region.

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B. Greater Attleboro-Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA)

Mary Ellen DeFrias reported on the following items:

- GATRA is participating in the Fare Free Application. The free service would be from Black Friday through New Year's Eve.
- Limited Sunday service has rolled out. GATRA's SAIL route, which runs up to Marshfield, and the Coastline which is the on-demand service. Sunday service is out to a slow start, but the demand is definitely there.

C. South Coast Rail Project

- **Invited Guest Speaker: Jean Fox, MassDOT, South Coast Rail Project Manager**

Shawn Bailey reported on the following:

In October 2023, work conducted involved fencing installation in seven communities on the Middleborough Secondary and New Bedford Main Lines; overnight traffic signal and road work in Fall River; construction of a pedestrian bridge over Route 18 in New Bedford; vegetation clearing at railroad crossings in five communities; utilizing two streets in Berkley to access right-of-way (ROW) for various project activities; road closure/detour and 24-hour railroad crossing work in Berkley, Lakeville, and New Bedford; road/sidewalk paving on two streets in New Bedford; daytime road and traffic signal work in Fall River and New Bedford; extended hours track work in four communities on the Middleborough Secondary Line; daytime roadwork on Route 28 in Middleborough; signal system installation and testing in seven communities.

Additional work done included daytime construction at station sites, layover sites, and along the right-of-way from Middleborough to New Bedford as well as from Berkley to Fall River. There was also transportation of soil by truck to designated project sites.

Jean Fox provided detailed presentation and project update on South Coast Rail.

Work Completed:

- 36 Miles of track installed.
- 18 bridges
- 25 grade crossings
- 21 additional culverts
- 2 stations
- 2 layover facilities
- 2 crew houses
- 50+ utility agreements

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The Fall River Secondary Line contract is substantially complete; with only punch list items left to complete. Middleborough Secondary/New Bedford Main Line and Systems Contract is 85% complete. New Bedford Station Pedestrian Bridge Contract is 19% complete; the contractor is performing abutment and elevator foundation work.

Critical Items for Revenue Service:

- Track Destressing
- East Taunton Station and Elevator Completion
- Automatic Train Control testing (nearly 2,000 required tests)
- Positive Train Control (software design and verification)
- Positive Train Control (Months of locomotive field testing of all 3 lines of SCR)
- Fire/Life Safety Training
- Safety Certification System (over 200 safety Critical Elements – Bridges, culverts, grade crossings, walls, track, stations, layovers, ATC/PTC systems, etc.
- Operational Qualification Field testing
- FRA Simulated Service Demonstration
- System ready for service – we anticipate passenger service to start in summer 2024.

Mary Waldron stated that she appreciates all the SCR communication, work and important updates.

Chairperson O'Toole mentioned the grade crossings and the fact that they have been painting the grade crossings in a diamond pattern. Jean Fox stated that there is a whole new protocol for grade crossings (reflectors, additional stripping) and this is a new safety initiative at grade crossings.

6. Old Business

A. FFY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Implementation

▪ Amendment 1 – Public Review and Comment Period

Bill McNulty presented Amendment 1, which was released to the 21-Day Public Review and Comment Period by the Old Colony MPO on October 17, 2023.

FFY 2024

- BROCKTON AREA TRANSIT (BAT) PURCHASE OF MISCELLANEOUS POWER END ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT
 - **ADDING PROJECT**
 - Total Project Cost is \$400,000
- BROCKTON AREA TRANSIT – PURCHASE OF BATTERY-ELECTRIC BUSES AND CHARGING EQUIPMENT
 - **ADDING PROJECT**
 - **FUNDING: FTA NO OR LOW EMISSION VEHICLE PROGRAM**

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- Awarded: \$10,694,736.

BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW (BIL) DISCRETIONARY GRANTS – PROGRAMMED IN FFY 2024

National Culvert Removal Restoration and Replacement Grant Program

- PLYMOUTH – TOWN BROOK STREAM RESTORATION: DEEP WATER CULVERT REPLACEMENT
 - ADDING PROJECT
 - Awarded: \$2,000,000.

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

- BROCKTON – DOWNTOWN BROCKTON INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
 - ADDING PROJECT
 - Awarded: \$7,843,750.

Chairperson O'Toole asked if there is a motion to approve Amendment 1.

A motion was made by Rob May and was seconded by Dan Salvucci.

The Old Colony JTC voted unanimously to approve Amendment 1.

7. New Business

- A. **Old Colony Regional Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Vision Zero Safety Action Plan**
 - **Project Overview**

Bill McNulty provided an overview of the Old Colony Regional Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Vision Zero Safety Action Plan.

Through a Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Old Colony Planning Council is contracting with a C9 consultant to prepare a Regional Vision Zero Safety Action Plan that will serve as an SS4A Compliant Action Plan for all seventeen member communities of the Old Colony region.

The Safety Action Plan will follow the same guidelines as the Safe Systems Approach utilized by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The consultant may add any additional pertinent information to the scope as their experience and expertise is so determined. This project will follow all required plan components and guidelines as stated in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) by the USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All Discretionary Grant Program. For more information on plan components, visit the FHWA website.

In summary, the final product will be an SS4A Compliant Action Plan that will visualize data that connects prevalent risk and crash characteristics to agency policy and processes, including implementing proven

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safety countermeasures, identifying projects or locations for priority funding, and supporting future local project development. This project will focus on all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, public transportation users, motorists, personal conveyance and micro-mobility users, and commercial vehicle operators.

The project is funded by a \$320,000 grant from the United States Department of Transportation and matching \$80,000 from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT).

B. Old Colony Congestion Management Process (CMP) Data Collection

▪ Results of October 2023 Data Collection

Shawn Bailey provided the results of the October 2023 Data Collection.

Between October 24th and 26th, members of Old Colony Planning Council's Transportation Department conducted its bi-annual Congestion Management Process (CMP) data collection at 15 MBTA Commuter Rail stations (including the BAT Centre's parking garage which provides parking for the Brockton station) and five MassDOT Park & Ride lots. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, utilization at the visited facilities was extremely low. Over time, the utilization has increased each time (with one exception for Commuter Rail and Park & Ride). Overall utilization is between 55-80% of pre-pandemic levels, and for the first time since October 2019, one location surpassed the 85% utilized congested threshold.

All 15 Commuter Rail stations experienced an increase of utilization from the April 2023 count, ranging from 7.9% higher utilization at the Brockton station (BAT Garage) to 187.3% higher at the Bridgewater station. Before the pandemic, all 15 stations yielded vehicle totals in the hundreds. The April 2023 data collection saw only six stations under 100 vehicles; October 2023 saw only one station under 100 vehicles. The Canton Junction station yielded 708 vehicles, making the lot 92.9% utilized and the first station since the October 2019 count to be at least 85% utilized. Even with people working remotely or hybrid, there is a clear increase in workers utilizing the commuter rail.

The Park & Ride lots had a different result; only three of the five lots experienced an increase and one of the decreases was by only two vehicles (the Bridgewater lot). The West Bridgewater lot, which historically has been well utilized, had over 100 vehicles for the third time since the pandemic. There have been multiple changes to the bus service for this lot since the pandemic, with Bloom, Plymouth & Brockton, and now Peter Pan (As of August 7th). It is unclear if that is a factor in the increases and decreases in utilization.

Chairperson O'Toole stated that it is really good news that the numbers are soaring, and people are taking the train to their destinations.

Glenn Geiler commented that BAT is adding additional bike racks at the BAT Centre. BAT is curious as to any electric vehicle information in future reports.

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8. Other Business and Public Comment

A. Community Local Technical Assistance Studies

Bill McNulty reported on the following items:

The Old Colony Planning Council has completed a study of pedestrian activity at the intersection of Main Street and Elm Street. The data has been distributed to the Town.

The Town of Plympton has requested a traffic study of truck traffic and potential HCVE zones on several roadways in the Town. This data collection is planned for Spring 2024.

Project Status Updates

Bridgewater

- Traffic Counts on Multiple Roadways
Data collection planned.

Brockton

- Traffic Study of Crescent Street (Route 27) at Quincy Street and Massasoit Boulevard
Congestion and safety performance analysis underway.

Duxbury

- Road Safety Audit of Halls Coner
Report in Development.

Plympton

- Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusion Zone Study for Multiple Roadways
Data collection planned for Spring 2024.

Stoughton

- Traffic Study and Road Safety Audit of Plain Street Corridor
OCPC coordinating with Town to schedule RSA.

Whitman

- Traffic Study of Auburn Street (Route 14)
Data collection planned for Fall 2023.

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B. Staff Reviews on ENFs, EIRs, and NPCs

Kyle Mowatt summarized the Environmental Notification Forms (ENFs), Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs), Notices of Project Changes (NPCs), and Certificates for projects within the OCPC region that are undergoing Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office review.

Submitting Comments to MEPA

The Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) accepts written comments on projects currently under MEPA review. Comments may be submitted electronically, by mail, via fax, or by hand delivery. Comments submitted to MEPA are public records and should be sent to the following address:

Secretary Kathleen Theoharides
EEA, Attn: MEPA Office
[Analyst Name], EEA No. _____
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

There are no new projects at this time.

C. Regional Concerns and Local Community Transportation Issues

Dan Salvucci brought up the issue of emergency response on the SCR. He contacted his son who is a paramedic. He stated that it is very difficult to get someone off the train who has a medical issue safely. We need to make sure that fire departments have equipment to deal with medical emergencies on trains.

Bruce Hughes inquired about Washington Street in Abington. John Stone stated that it should be done by the end of next week aside from some punch list items.

Al DeGirolamo stated that Senator Brady would like to get involved with making sure fire departments have the proper equipment for taking care of emergencies on trains. There may be a way to generate a grant program to fire companies to acquire the equipment. What equipment is needed is knowledge we need to acquire.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kyle Mowatt

Kyle Mowatt

Senior Transportation Planner

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List of Documents for November 2, 2023 Old Colony JTC Meeting

- Minutes of the October 5, 2023 Old Colony JTC Meeting
- Staff Report for November 2, 2023, Old Colony JTC Meeting Agenda Items
- Presentation on South Coast Rail (SCR) Phase 1
- Presentation on Old Colony Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Vision Zero Plan
- Presentation on Old Colony Congestion Management Process (CMP) Data Collection