

OLD COLONY JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (JTC)

Meeting Minutes of the Old Colony Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) Held Virtually Via Zoom June 1, 2023 at 12:00 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

Abington	Bruce Hughes	MassDOT	Alex Duggan
Abington	John Stone	GATRA	Mary Ellen DeFrias
Avon	Bill Fitzgerald	Senator Michael Brady's Office	Al DeGirolamo
Bridgewater	Shane O'Brien	GPI	Sid Kashi
Brockton	Kamiya Parkin	FHWA	Joshua Barber
Easton	Greg Swan	Environmental Partners	Jim Fitzgerald
Hanson	Don Howard	Safe Routes to School	Rachel McCaffery
Kingston	Valerie Massard	OCPC	Mary Waldron
Pembroke	Becky Coletta	OCPC	Charles Kilmer
Stoughton	Bill Roth	OCPC	Shawn Bailey
Whitman	Dan Salvucci	OCPC	Bill McNulty
Whitman	Noreen O'Toole	OCPC	Kyle Mowatt
BAT	Michael Lambert	OCPC	Ray Guarino
MassDOT District 5	Barbara Lachance	OCPC	Guoqiang Li
MassDOT District 5	Shaun Handy		

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chairperson Noreen O'Toole called the meeting to order at 12:02 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 May 4, 2023 Meeting

Chairperson O'Toole asked if there is a motion to approve the May 4, 2023 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made by Dan Salvucci and seconded by Don Howard to approve the Meeting Minutes from May 4, 2023.

The Old Colony JTC voted unanimously to approve the May 4, 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:

- Draft MassDOT FY 2024-2028 Capital Investment Plan (CIP). Public comment period is from May 18 – June 9, 2023.
- Community Transit Grant Program Details and Eligibility – FY 2024 Application Cycle. Opened May 8, 2023 and will close June 23, 2023.
- Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program. Applications must be submitted electronically through grants.gov by Friday, August 18, 2023.
- Pamela R. Haznar will be retiring, and there will be a celebration on July 6th at the Reservation Golf Club in Mattapoisett.

5. Reports

A. Brockton Area Regional Transit Authority (BAT)

Michael Lambert reported on the following items:

- BAT successfully received board approval and then submitted to Federal Transit their Title VI plan, which is a joint project with Old Colony Planning Council.
- BAT is reacting to sudden closure of Compass Medical facilities. This is going to propose a public transit and public health challenge to the community. BAT will do everything they can to mitigate the impact on residents and visitors.

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

Mary Ellen DeFrias reported on the following items:

- Actively watching the budget. Depending on where we land, there will be additional funding coming to RTAs. The focus would be on 7-day/week service.
- Looking at long-term planning to improve service to the Plymouth area. There will be a maintenance facility built in Wareham. This would allow GATRA to have electric vehicles in Plymouth.

C. South Coast Rail Project

Shawn Bailey reported on the following:

In May 2023, work conducted involved fencing installation in eight communities on Fall River & Middleborough Secondary Lines and New Bedford Main Line; set up of the work site and initial

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construction for a pedestrian bridge over Route 18 in New Bedford; utilizing Cotley Street and Mill Street in Berkley to access right-of-way (ROW) for various project activities; daytime shoulder and lane closure on Route 140 Southbound in Taunton for utility installation & traffic signal modifications; daytime railroad work in Berkley; overnight testing at new Middleborough Station site; 24-hour trackwork at Wamsutta Layover, Middleborough Station, and New Bedford Station sites; road closure in Fall River for culvert work; daytime roadwork on Route 105 in Middleborough; nighttime roadwork on Route 105 and 28 near the new Middleborough Station site; bus service replacing train service between Bridgewater and Middleborough/Lakeville stations for two days; paving and striping of New Bedford Station site parking lot; road closure and detour in New Bedford; and signal system installation and testing in seven communities on the Fall River & Middleborough Secondary and New Bedford Main Lines.

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 were also transportation of soils by truck to designated project sites.

6. Old Business

A. FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Implementation

Bill McNulty provided an update on FFY 2023 in the TIP:

- DUXBURY – BRIDGE REPLACEMENT ROUTE 3 (PILGRIMS HIGHWAY) NB/SB OVER FRANKLIN STREET
 - Project advertised on March 25, 2023. Construction scheduled to begin Summer 2023
 - Project Cost is \$33,412,504

- STOUGHTON - CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS ON ROUTE 138 (607403) FROM 300 FT NORTH OF CHARLES AVENUE TO LINCOLN STREET AC YEAR 1 OF 2
 - Project scope changed to “From 300 FT North of Charles Avenue to Lincoln Street
 - Resubmission of PS&E Received May 19, 2023
 - Cost Estimate for AC Year 1 is \$8,441,003 (Total cost is \$17,528,945).

Barbara Lachance stated that MassDOT brought Phase 2 of this project to PRC today. Charles Kilmer asked if this is in an advanced stage of design. Barbara Lachance stated that it is. It is currently at 100% Design. MassDOT is hoping that advertising can move forward after Article 97 issues are addressed.

- STOUGHTON - INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS AND RELATED WORK AT CENTRAL STREET, CANTON STREET AND TOSCA DRIVE (608279)
 - Project is 100% Designed
 - Cost Estimate is \$5,242,643.

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7. New Business

A. Election of Old Colony JTC Officers for 2023-2024 Term

Kamiya Parkin, who was on the nominating committee, announced that they have nominated Noreen O'Toole as Chairperson and Dan Salvucci as Vice Chairperson.

Kamiya Parkin asked if there is a motion to approve the nomination. The motion was made by Michael Lambert and seconded by Don Howard.

The Old Colony JTC voted unanimously to approve the nomination of Noreen O'Toole as Chairperson and Dan Salvucci as Vice Chairperson.

B. Draft FFY 2024 Old Colony Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

▪ 21-Day Public Review and Comment Period

Charles Kilmer provided an overview of the Draft FFY 2024 Old Colony UPWP. The Old Colony UPWP provides an overview and budgetary information for the transportation planning tasks and activities, which are to be conducted in the region during the upcoming federal fiscal year.

The Old Colony MPO, during their meeting on May 16, 2023, reviewed and released the Draft FFY 2024 Old Colony UPWP to a 21-day public review and comment period. Following the completion of the public review and comment period, the Old Colony MPO will review the public comments and consider endorsement of the Draft FFY 2024 Old Colony UPWP. The Old Colony JTC is respectfully asked to review the Draft FFY 2024 UPWP and consider providing an approval.

Chairperson O'Toole asked if there is a motion to release the Draft FFY 2024 Old Colony UPWP to a 21-day public review and comment period.

The motion was made by Dan Salvucci and seconded by Don Howard.

Chairperson asked when the review period commenced. Charles Kilmer stated that it commenced on May 16th.

The Old Colony JTC voted unanimously to release the Draft FFY 2024 Old Colony UPWP to a 21-day public review and comment period.

C. Old Colony Vision 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

- Regional Profile Chapter with Socio Economic Projections**
- Environmental Chapter**
- Vulnerable Users Chapter**

Bill McNulty provided an overview on the Regional Profile Chapter:

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The University of Massachusetts' Donahue Institute (UMDI) in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) have finalized socioeconomic projections for the Commonwealth through 2050. These projections are developed for the sole purpose of supporting the travel demand model and may vary from projections and forecasts generated by other sources.

An aging population and housing affordability are the greatest challenges to maintaining population and employment growth through 2050. There is a need for continued planning for an aging in place population, including expansion of accessible age friendly infrastructure.

Bill McNulty provided an overview on the Environmental Chapter:

The environmental chapter focuses primarily on the threats that impacts of climate change present to the region, particularly on the transportation system.

Environmental Impact of Climate Change on the Region:

- Increased frequency and severity of urban flooding and inland freshwater flooding events
- Increased frequency and severity of severity of coastal storms, including hurricanes and nor'asters
- Damage from high winds
- Coastal inundation from storm surge
- Damage to structures from battering waves
- Increased frequency and severity of blizzards

Climate Change Impact Risk to Regional Transportation System:

Climate change will increase both the intensity and severity with which natural hazards affect the region. Although flooding will increase, late summer hurricanes, winter storms, and small wildfires will also be part of life in the region; however, they are for the most part at a manageable level at present. Other threats, such as tornadoes, earthquakes, and landslides are far less common. Each of these events, which will intensify in frequency and severity with climate change, can have disastrous impacts across the region and each has the potential to wreak havoc on the transportation system's two most common means of travel in the Old Colony region (road and rail). Road travel and rail are particularly susceptible to climate change and its resulting increases in precipitation, storm activity, and extreme temperature fluctuations.

Rail:

Commuter rail is a common form of transportation in the region. The primary rail system in the region is the MBTA Old Colony Commuter Rail, with most of its 14 stations in the region located in low-lying sites. Some stations and rail lines are in or near floodplains, as is the case in the Town of Whitman, where the station is adjacent to a 100-Year Flood zone, and the track in the southern portion of the town crosses a mapped floodplain. These facilities; however, were designed for their sites and are unlikely to be affected by local flooding. Other concerns with rail lines include extreme heat that may

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cause the track to buckle and cause derailments, as well as storms that can knock down signs and potentially cause safety issues.

The interruption of rail traffic is likely to become more common with more frequent flooding. Likely impacts include track inundation, erosion of the track subgrade, and the rooting of wooden crossties. Erosion of the subgrade can wash away ballast and weaken the track foundation, making the track unstable for the passage of heavy locomotives and railcars. High winds may impact the railroad signs, signals, and grade crossings, which has the potential to increase rail accidents at grade crossings.

Roads and Bridges:

The highway network is the most vital part of the transportation system in the Old Colony region, as it is used daily by almost all of the region's 393,249 residents who rely on it to get to their jobs, shopping, and social activities. The roads and bridges in the Old Colony region are some of the oldest in the country and when combined with severe weather events, this aging infrastructure is susceptible to major damage.

The most immediate impact of more intense precipitation is increased flooding of roadways, especially those located within the 100 and 500-Year Flood Zones as well as those areas along the coastline. While potential changes in average annual precipitation are likely to have little impact, an increase in the intensity of individual extreme rainfall events may have significant implications. An increase in the frequency of extreme precipitation events will result in more frequent short-term flooding and bridge scouring, as well as more culvert washouts that exceed the capacity of the current stormwater management infrastructure.

While most of the Old Colony region is located inland, the coastal communities of Duxbury, Kingston, and Plymouth must also deal with the potential rise in sea levels. According to the Transportation Research Board (TRB), expected sea level rise will aggravate flooding because storm surges will build on a higher base, reaching farther inland. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report on North America identifies coastal flooding from expected sea level rise and storm surge, especially along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts, as one of the most serious effects of climate change.

Higher sea levels and storm surges can also erode road bases and undermine bridge supports. The loss of coastal wetlands and barrier islands will lead to further coastal erosion due to the loss of natural protection from wave action. Additionally, strong winds from storms can also damage highway signs, traffic signals, and luminaries throughout the area. More significant safety and operational impacts are likely to be caused by debris blown onto roadways and from crashes precipitated by debris or severe winds.

The roadways and bridges in the Old Colony region are also exposed to a wide range of temperatures, from the extreme heat and humidity of the summer months to the cold and snow of the winter.

According to the U.S. Global Change Research Program, impacts related to projected changes in

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average temperatures appear to have only moderate implications for bridges and highways, while increases in extreme heat may be significant. Longer periods of extreme heat may compromise pavement integrity, such as softening asphalt and increasing rutting, the buckling of pavement (especially older, jointed concrete), and flushing or bleeding of asphalt from older or poorly constructed pavements. In addition, an increase in the freeze–thaw may occur, creating frost heaves and potholes on roads resulting in load restrictions on certain bridges and roads to minimize damage. Extreme heat can also cause thermal expansion of bridge joints, which adversely affects bridge operation. This will generally lead to increased maintenance costs wherever pavement thermal tolerances are exceeded. Extreme heat during the summer is also likely to increase the number of wildfires, threatening communities and infrastructure directly and bringing about bridge and road closures in affected areas.

Hurricane Surge Zones:

Maps from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health show the impact of the Hurricane surge zone on several OCPC coastal communities including Duxbury, Kingston, and Plymouth as well as those communities of Hanover and Pembroke near the coast, (including the non- OCPC communities just north and east, Marshfield and Norwell).

Recommendations:

- Promote hazard mitigation and facility hardening of vulnerable facilities.
- Support expanded electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Ensure all programmed TIP projects are designed to reduce GHG emissions.
- Support smart growth strategies that promote mode shift and active transportation choices.

Kyle Mowatt provided an overview on the Vulnerable Users Chapter:

Facilities for safe, convenient, and efficient bicycle and pedestrian transportation are key elements of a well-balanced regional transportation network. Many of the Old Colony’s goals, objectives, and policies include supporting a comprehensive and sustainable transportation network through the fostering of non-motorized active transportation choices.

Bicycling as a mode of transportation offers a high degree of personal mobility, providing door- to-door access, often at speeds comparable to or greater than automobile travel in high-density urban areas. In recent years, bicycling has become an increasingly popular healthy mode choice of travel for commuting to school, work, recreation, and exercise. The ever-increasing cost of automobile ownership, a growing focus on sustainability and the persistent issue of traffic congestion has driven much of the increase in the popularity of bicycling as a form of transportation.

Safe, convenient, and well-designed bicycle transportation infrastructure is essential to encourage bicycle use. Roads designed to accommodate bicyclists of all abilities will meet the needs of most users and encourage bicycling for everyday use according to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). Young children, women and the elderly are especially vulnerable and may require special consideration when designing bicycle transportation facilities, particularly on busy arterial streets and those roads with high-speeds and high traffic volumes.

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All bicyclists are best served by:

- Extra operating space when riding on the roadway such as cycle tracks, protected bicycle lanes, bicycle lanes, useable shoulders, or wide curb lane.
- Low speed streets (where cars and bicyclists share travel lanes).
- A network of designated bicycle facilities (bicycle lanes, side-street bicycle routes, and shared use paths).

All travelers are pedestrians at some point in their trip, and pedestrians are part of every roadway environment. Pedestrian facilities include sidewalks, walking paths, crosswalks, stairways, curb cuts, curb ramps and transit stops. In some areas, particularly in suburban and rural communities, pedestrians may be sharing the roadway itself or its shoulders. It is important to understand that there is no single “pedestrian type” and that the transportation network needs to accommodate a variety of pedestrians of varying abilities. For example, children perceive their environment differently from adults and are not able to judge how drivers behave. Children typically walk slower, have a shorter gait, and have lower eye height than adults. On the opposite end of the spectrum, older adults require more time to cross a street, desire more predictable surfaces, benefit from handrails in steep areas, and may require places to rest along their route. People who are blind or have limited sight require audible and tactile cues to safely navigate sidewalks and crosswalks.

An Act to Reduce Traffic Fatalities:

On January 2, 2023, Governor Baker signed An Act to Reduce Traffic Fatalities into law. This bill has a variety of components that will make roadways within the OCPC region and across the commonwealth safer for everyone.

Key components of the bill are as follows:

Defines Vulnerable Road User:

The legislation defines ‘vulnerable road users’ to include people walking and biking; roadside workers; people using wheelchairs, scooters, skateboards, roller skates, etc.

Safe Passing:

The bill requires “safe passing distance” to be 4 feet. Massachusetts is one of the last states to pass a safe passing distance, this will be in line with other states in terms of roadway safety.

Truck Safety Devices:

Requires state contracted trucks to be equipped with safety side guards, mirrors, and backup cameras to reduce fatalities of people walking and biking.

Safer Speed Limits:

Clarifies the process for municipalities to alter speed limits in thickly settled areas from 30 MPH to 25 MPH both on state controlled roads and on the roads they control.

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Crash Reporting:

To improve statewide data collection surrounding vulnerable road user crashes, the bill develops a standardized analysis tool to be used to report crashes and incidents involving a person biking or walking.

Rear Red-Light Requirement

To ensure cyclists are visible on our roadways, the legislation adds a new requirement for use of rear red lights at night. This means that when riding at night bicyclists should have both a front and rear light.

Inter-Regional Bicycle Connections:

Coordinate efforts to improve bicycle facilities with surrounding municipalities and regional agencies. To help form a more complete and contiguous network of bicycle facilities in the region and southeastern Massachusetts, local agencies should coordinate efforts with agencies and organizations outside the region. This includes, but is not limited to, researching the existing bicycle facilities of surrounding towns before formalizing new bikeways, and coordinating public outreach programs to help minimize the cost of these efforts.

Connections to the West

- Route 106

Connections to the South

- Route 138
- South Coast Rail Phase 2 Rail Right of Way (ROW)
- State Road (Plymouth) (Claire Saltonstall Bikeway)

Connections to the North

- South Coast Rail Phase 2 Rail Right of Way (ROW)
- Route 28 (Claire Saltonstall Bikeway)

8. Other Business and Public Comment

A. Community Local Technical Assistance Studies

Old Colony Planning Council recently completed a Road Safety Audit of the intersection of Plymouth Street (Route 106) at Pine Street in Halifax. The draft report for the Audit is currently under review by the community and stakeholders.

The Town of Duxbury has requested a Road Safety Audit for Halls Corner, the intersection of Washington Street, Depot Street, and Standish Avenue. Old Colony Planning Council is coordinating with the community and the Audit is expected to be scheduled this summer.

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Project Status Updates

Duxbury

- Road Safety Audit of Halls Corner
Coordination with Community underway and RSA to be scheduled Summer 2023.

Halifax

- Road Safety Audit of Plymouth Street (Route 106) at Pine Street
Stakeholder Review of Draft Report .

Kingston

- Road Safety Audit of Landing Road
Data collection underway; RSA planned for June 2023.

Stoughton

- Traffic Study and Road Safety Audit of Plain Street Corridor
Coordination with Community underway. RSA to be scheduled Summer 2023

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

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New Projects

EEA #16707 – Pinnacle Bogs Restoration – Plymouth Expanded Environmental Notification Form(EENF)

The proposed development includes the restoration of approximately 14.5 acres of recently retired commercial cranberry bogs to create self-sustaining wetlands mimicking pre-development conditions.

Certificates

EEA #16561 – Raynham Park Redevelopment - Raynham

The Certificate states that this project **adequately and properly complies with MEPA.**

EEA #16687 – Mill Street Roadway Improvement Project – Raynham

The Certificate states that this project **does not require an Environmental Impact Report.**

Public Notices

Notice of Intent to Initiate an Ecological Restoration Project – Kingston

This project consists of the replacement of the existing, undersized culvert at the Jones River in Kingston, MA. The project will replace the existing 48-inch diameter reinforced concrete pipe with an 18'-7" wide, open-bottom, aluminum box culvert.

Notice of Intent to Initiate an Aquatic Plant Management Program – Pembroke/Hanson

This project is located at Oldham Pond in Pembroke and Hanson. The project involves the mitigation of harmful algae blooms.

C. Regional Concerns and Local Community Transportation Issues

Bruce Hughes stated that the Abington/ Rockland Rail trail has been extended into Hanover. Don Howard stated that in Hanson there are detention and retention areas. Don Howard would like to provide a short presentation on underground retention areas.

Bill McNulty discussed the project: Intersection Improvements at Belmont Street (123) at Pearl Street and Stonehill Avenue. There was recently a project kickoff meeting for this project. MassDOT, OCPC, and the City of Brockton were in attendance. Bill McNulty showed appreciation to the Town of Abington for the improvements made to Old Randolph Street and Thicket Street. This project was recently completed through a grant the town secured.

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Discussion took place on whether a July JTC Meeting was necessary. There was a consensus that a July Meeting is not necessary.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kyle Mowatt

Kyle Mowatt

Senior Transportation Planner

List of Documents for June 1, 2023 Old Colony JTC Meeting

- Minutes of the May 4, 2023 Old Colony JTC Meeting
- Staff Report for June 1, 2023, Old Colony JTC Meeting Agenda Items