

Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Unified Planning Work Program Committee Meeting

January 7, 2016 Meeting

12:15 PM to 1:15 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Bryan Pounds, Chair, representing the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee agreed to the following:

- Approve the November 5, 2015 UPWP Committee meeting minutes.
- Submit new project ideas for the FFY 2017 Project Universe to Ali Kleyman by January 19, 2016.

Materials

Materials for this meeting included:

- Meeting agenda
- Draft minutes from the November 5, 2015 UPWP Committee meeting
- Handout: A discussion and brainstorming guide for generating ideas for projects to include in the FFY 2017 Universe of Proposed New Projects
- Handout: A summary schedule for upcoming UPWP Committee meetings and activities related to the development of the FFY 2017 UPWP

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Bryan Pounds, Chair, Unified Planning Work Program Committee (Massachusetts Department of Transportation) called the meeting to order at approximately 12:15 PM. UPWP Committee members and MPO staff introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 12.)

2. Action Item: Approval of UPWP Committee Meeting Minutes

There were no questions on the meeting minutes from the November 5, 2015 meeting. A motion to approve the November 5, 2015 UPWP Committee meeting minutes was made by Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, and seconded by Tom Bent, City of Somerville (Inner Core). The motion carried.

3. FFY 2017 UPWP Development Schedule

Lourenço Dantas, MPO Staff, Manager of the Certification Activities Group, described the UPWP and TIP development process schedule.

This meeting represented the first outreach to the Committee to start soliciting their ideas and getting feedback on what the activities of the staff should be during the next fiscal year. He described some of the MPO outreach meetings that have already taken place in Waltham (and upcoming in Chelsea) as well as the MAPC sub-region meetings that CTPS has attended. Ali Kleyman, UPWP Manager, and the Certification Activities Group has also met with staff to generate ideas and updates on current projects and what they foresee in the fiscal year.

The summary schedule handout provided an abbreviated version of the key activities in the UPWP development schedule. Key dates are monthly meeting dates from now through the spring.

- **Today's meeting (January 7, 2016):** Get initial feedback from the committee and start to generate and discuss ideas for new projects to include in this year's Universe.
- **February 18, 2016:** Review draft Universe for FFY 2017 – define projects and make recommendations.
- **April:** This will be a busy month in which the proposed projects will be evaluated and ranked. High priority projects will be chosen and scopes will be developed. The size/budget of the projects will be determined and where they fit into the UPWP. Since this is a busy month, the committee may need to schedule additional meetings in April, on non-MPO meeting dates.
- **May 5:** Draft TIP and UPWP recommendation by MPO
- **Mid-May to mid-June:** public review
- **End of June:** MPO vote and approval of final TIP and UPWP.
- **By end of fiscal year:** MassDOT coordinates review with federal agencies.

Lourenço asked for any questions. Bryan wanted to know if special meeting days would also be Thursdays. Lourenço answered yes.

There was then a discussion of the time that the committee will meet. Some people are interested in having the meeting prior to the MPO meeting (starting at 9 AM) and others think that this can be difficult given the hard stop for the MPO meeting at 10 AM. There was a discussion led by Eric and Bryan that if a lot of decision making is planned, it may make more sense to have the committee meeting after the MPO meeting. If the meeting is just review of quarterly status reports, it can be in the morning before the MPO meeting.

One of the most important meetings that is coming up is the one where the committee discusses the draft Universe. This meeting is scheduled for Feb. 18. Michelle Scott described that the March 17th meeting would occur after the MPO completed the committee member survey of the Universe projects and MPO staff would discuss the initial sense of priorities for projects – this happens before returning in April with formal staff recommendation and full budget and full list of projects. At this March 17 meeting, the public and others sometimes come and provide public comment – this takes some time. This would be a good candidate for an afternoon meeting following the MPO meeting.

Bryan discussed that there are certain things that may come up on MassDOT's (the Office of Transportation Planning) side such as updating the recent bike and pedestrian plans done recently throughout the region and updating the coordinated public transit plans – these were done for every region. These may come up as ideas to include in the Universe.

4. FFY 2017 UPWP Topics and Project Proposals

Preliminary Outreach and Feedback

Ali gave a quick update on the UPWP and TIP outreach that's been conducted so far and coming up in the near future:

- Outreach Meetings to date include:
 - o Southwest Advisory Planning Committee ("SWAP") sub-region meeting
 - o Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination ("MAGIC") sub-region meeting
 - o North Suburban Planning Council sub-region meeting
 - o Inner Core Committee ("Inner Core") sub-region meeting
 - o North Shore Task Force sub-region meeting
 - o MPO-sponsored outreach meeting in Waltham

- Detailed discussions:

- North Shore Task Force meeting
 - Identified some good candidates for future corridor studies
 - Discussion of trail networks and bicycle pedestrian planning on the North Shore
 - Discussion of the need to improve transit service on the North Shore: expanded transit hours, increased service frequency, improved connections to stations.
 - Importance of climate change adaptation
- North Shore Task Force
 - Transit connections and suburban mobility continue to be issues for these communities.
- Upcoming Outreach Meetings:
 - MPO-sponsored outreach meeting in Chelsea – Jan 12
 - Discussion at Regional Transportation Advisory Council meeting, part of MPO 101 discussion – Jan 13
 - Metrowest Regional Collaborative sub-region meeting – Jan 14
 - Three Rivers Interlocal Council (“TRIC”) sub-region meeting – Jan 19
 - South Shore Coalition sub-region meeting – Jan 21

Bryan asked for us to describe what the sub-region and outreach meetings have been like. Sean Pfalzer gives an overview of the TIP and UPWP process and Mark Abbott has discussed updates related to ongoing projects and new discrete work being undertaken by MPO Staff.

Eric, who attends the sub-regional meetings, added that if we know that a sub-region has a specific interest, we plan for a subject expert from CTPS to come to discuss that issue and related projects or project opportunities. There are challenges with sub-regional outreach – they tend to focus on corridors in their region or specific issues that are locally focused. Rather than regional issues related to data needs or larger needs. Overall, the meetings are generally well-attended.

This was followed by a discussion of some of the main areas of interest that have emerged at the sub-region meetings. Suburban transit and first-mile/last-mile projects are a huge interest. Several related studies have been done in the past. Eric wondered whether there are other ways we can study and provide recommendations for how suburban areas can address their transit needs. Liz Moore discussed that municipalities

do not understand the density that is needed in order for transit to make sense. The recommendations of previous studies have concluded that suburbs do not have enough density to support transit. Municipalities are often disappointed by these findings. However, since there are places where suburban transit has been successful, Dennis Crowley said it would be interesting to know which suburbs have succeeded and what worked there. Liz discussed that there was a study conducted in the previous UPWP cycle that looked at what factors should be examined to determine potential for transit. She noted that without a transit service present, it's hard to predict what form of transit would work and how successful it would be. This project consisted of digging into the household survey data about travel patterns and developed suggestions of what factors can be used to predict whether transit will be viable in a community. This study was related to the mode shift project and is almost complete.

Eric said that he thinks that many communities are asking: if fixed route doesn't make sense, help us know our options. Would an employer sponsored shuttle make sense? How can TMAs help this happen? What are other communities doing to fund their own systems? For example, the MAGIC Region (specifically in feedback from Acton and Littleton) has been trying to regionalize their council of aging services. Different regions are trying things, but there are challenges given the expense. These services can be very expensive and challenging to implement.

Eric questioned: Is there any way to take past work that staff has done combined with new analyses and come up with other ideas about what options are and what could actually be implemented to help transit in suburbs? We could tell municipalities what might work, but they need to find funding or for a public-private partnership. Relying on MPO or MBTA to completely fund these services is unrealistic. Giving them more concrete actions to address transit issues in their municipalities. TRIC is interested in this, Eric has also heard from Marlborough and Framingham. These communities are concerned with better connecting their workforce to Boston. There's also an interest in the Middlesex Turnpike Corridor – Bedford, Burlington, Lowell – these communities are interested in connecting employees in Cambridge to jobs in that area and bringing the workforce in Lowell to service jobs in Cambridge.

Discussion of Project Ideas for FFY 2017 UPWP

Lourenço and Ali explained that the purpose of this committee meeting was to get initial ideas from the committee Staff was interested in hear what are issues that may have emerged over past few months, what is being discussed in their respective communities, etc.

It was decided that members can email Ali with ideas prior to the next meeting, preferably by 1/19.

Dennis Crowley asked if the focus is on specific or general project ideas. Answer from MPO staff is that they are interested in both – whatever members think need to be studied. Staff does not want to limit idea generation among the UPWP Committee members.

Scott said that last year's Universe is the starting place for the next year's Universe.

Ali explained the brainstorming handout and discussed that these ideas were meant to guide discussion of project ideas now and additionally, committee members could think more about this after the meeting and email her with ideas.

Laura Wiener asked Eric about the right-size parking project being done by MAPC. Eric described that this project is ongoing. He noted that its hypothesis is that there is too much parking at residential developments. This results in increased prices for the developments, lack of affordability and less ability to build more affordable units. However, residential developers also cannot limit parking too much; this causes impacts to on-street parking. The right size parking project is looking for the right size for residential development parking lots.

The project is looking at 60 residential developments in Everett, Chelsea, Malden, Melrose, and Arlington. Getting data on different types of developments is part of what drove the choice of the study area. Everett and Chelsea are urban and Malden and Melrose are more suburban. The study was expanded to Arlington to support their possible zoning changes. The ultimate product of the study will be a tool for developers or municipalities to be able to enter characteristics of a development and receive information on the correct amount of parking that is necessary. This study is being funded through UPWP. There is general interest in building on this study.

Laura questioned whether this type of right-size parking study could be expanded to commercial/offices or retail land uses? What is the right next step? She is interested in seeing more studies on parking.

Eric responded that MAPC is very interested in expanding on the right-size parking study. Each municipality deals with it differently – many municipalities do not have the data or expertise to make changes. MAPC is doing a lot of more traditional parking studies to get at utilization and recommendations for parking ratios and pricing. They recently did a study for Malden that was funded through the UPWP. Bryan asked how

parking ratios are determined and Eric responded that ratios are most often based on number of units rather than square footage.

Tom Bent discussed some new parking technology that is being implemented in Somerville. Motion sensors are being installed in one of the parking garages in Assembly Square. There is a sensor at each space to know which spaces are empty and which are full as well as how many vehicles are moving into and out of the garage. The data will let the city understand what the utilization is throughout the day.

Eric said that MAPC has been talking to Scott Peterson a lot about doing studies in Somerville, Everett, and Boston and how to develop modeling assumptions that can be made that would tell us some things about parking.

Tom Bent described another new technology that Somerville is going to test. They have formed a partnership with Audi to test self-parking car technology in Assembly Row.

Bryan wanted to know what discussion has taken place at the sub-regional meetings about Complete Streets. Are people aware of this new program that Secretary Pollack announced at the Moving Together Conference? Eric replied that people are aware of the Complete Streets Program as a potential funding source and said there was interest in corridor projects that would come up with good Complete Streets recommendations. While most communities are aware of the program, Mark stated that only a few have completed step 1 of the eligibility process. More communities are trying to become eligible. Bay State Roads is providing courses to help communities take the first step to become eligible for funding. There is still interest from communities in doing projects under the on-going Corridor Program that CTPS has been doing.

Michelle discussed one of the things that we should also keep in mind are the new LRTP designated investment programs (such as the Community Transportation and Parking program). We should think about projects in the UPWP that could support implementation of projects under these investment programs [which begin in FFY2021]. We should think about how we can get communities ready to take advantage of this directed funding and actually get projects constructed.

Eric replied that this was a great point. He added that CTPS has done a number of studies of MBTA parking facilities and what the utilization rate is and where there could be growth. This could be a potential body of work. For example, if there is a desire to expand parking, where would it make the most sense? The study could look at utilization and what is available. Some of this data was collected through the CMP. The MBTA is interested in this. Additional questions that could be examined – is supply

sufficient, is it priced properly? Last year there was proposal to look at price sensitivity, but there are a lot of challenges to doing a project like this.

Scott discussed that there was a lot of interest in doing a price sensitivity analysis at transit stations last year and questioned how we can further develop this original topic, citing a few challenges.

Scott said that the MBTA is looking at raising parking prices and questioned what the potential is for a UPWP study. Many garages have a pricing structure built into the MBTA parking bond agreement. Basically, the owner needs to charge a minimum parking rate in order to get funding for the garage. Perhaps, a study could be an inventory of the parking lots: What are limitations on pricing on these garages; how many are MBTA-owned versus privately owned; where are most of the capacity constraints in the system? This could be a study looking at both MBTA parking and private parking, without looking at optimal pricing; the study could just aim to understand the inventory and the management structure that exists.

Mark explained that the last parking inventory was conducted in 2011-2012. Since then, MassDOT OTP and people from the former GreenDOT Office have shown interest in CTPS conducting new MBTA inventory studies – both on rapid transit and commuter rail system and updating the bicycle parking inventory as well. Although, he noted that this type of work is too large to fit under the present CMP budget: it would either become a discrete project or there would need to be an increase in the CMP budget.

Michelle said that another good resource for generating project ideas is the LRTP pamphlet that shows the inter-relationship between the LRTP, UPWP, and TIP.

Ali discussed more about the brainstorming handout and how committee members can use it to think about new project ideas.

On-Going UPWP Programs

What's the legacy of these ongoing programs? The Livable Community Workshop Program, Community Transportation Technical Assistance Program, and Regional Transit Service Planning Technical Assistance programs have been done, to some degree, for the past three years. The other group of projects (Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Sub-regional Priority Roadways, Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment, Bicycle Network Gaps: Feasibility Evaluations, and Safety and Operations at Selected Intersections) have been fairly regularly over the past couple of years. The first group of programs is built into the ongoing portion of the budget. The second group comprises studies that the MPO has come back to every year when

thinking about what new work should go into the UPWP. A lot of these types of studies have been fairly popular, so they tend to be repeated a couple years in a row, but there could be changes here as we evaluate the Universe this year. It is up to the Committee to discuss and decide the value of these programs, and whether it makes sense to continue to fund these projects, or should there be changes to fund new project ideas.

Mark described some of the ongoing programs and the level of interest:

- *Community Transportation Technical Assistance*: A number of communities are always interested in this on-going program. CTPS has been following up with communities and found that recommendations from completed studies under this program are being implemented. This is a good sign that this program is important to communities and useful.
- *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Sub-regional Priority Roadways*: This study program is very well received. There's no shortage of interest from communities wanting to add certain corridors to the program.
- *Safety and Operations Analysis at Selected Intersections*: This study program was not funded in 2016, however there is interest in undertaking projects here.
- *Low Cost Improvements to Freeway Bottlenecks*: This study was undertaken in place of the *Safety and Operations Analysis at Selected Intersections*. MassDOT has been very interested in this.

Even though these programs have been going on for a while, there is a lot of support for these and the communities are actually using and implementing recommendations from these studies.

Liz discussed the *Regional Transit Technical Assistance Program*. This is the newest ongoing program and has been a way to help communities fund smaller transit studies to understand what is possible. It would be good to think about whether we want to fund more of this.

Bryan asked whether there are any programs that staff thinks are not as successful and may be worth not funding. Mark and Eric agreed that the *Livable Communities Workshop Program* is one of these. WalkBoston is doing a lot of this type of work. Communities are more interested in the technical studies and plans. Members agreed that this would be one program that could merge with another ongoing program. The budget for the Livable Community Program was about \$40,000 and this amount could be added to another program or allocated to a discrete project.

Process to Develop the Universe of Projects

Dennis Crowley asked whether staff will maintain the UPWP Universe of Projects selection process the same as last year's, in which members vote online and rank projects. Lourenço responded that we could keep this process if the committee likes it. Dennis said he likes this approach.

Budget Discussion

Laura asked what budget for entire UPWP will be.

Michelle discussed that there are two sources of funding. Funding from the Federal government for funding MPO work is about \$5 million each year, and covers everything MPO-related – including modeling, administration, IT&S, etc. Money from transportation agencies is about \$1 million to \$1.5 million each year on top of the federal funding. The money for discrete UPWP projects is around \$500,000 – \$600,000.

5. Member Items

There were none.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on January 21, before the MPO meeting (starting at 9 AM).

7. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Dennis Crowley and seconded by Tom O'Rourke. The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large Cities (Town of Arlington)	Laura Wiener
At-Large Cities (City of Newton)	David Koses
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis
South West Advisory Planning Committee	Dennis Crowley
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Bryan Pounds
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood)	Tom O'Rourke
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/NVCC)	Steve Olanoff

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director
Elizabeth Moore, Director of Policy and Planning
Scott Peterson, Director of Technical Services
Ali Kleyman, UPWP Manager
Lourenço Dantas, Manager, Certification Activities Group
Ryan Hicks, Traffic Analysis and Design Group
Michelle Scott, Transit Service Planning Group
Mark Abbott, Manager, Traffic Analysis and Design Group
