

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

January 23, 2020 Meeting

9:00 AM–9:45 AM, State Transportation Building, Transportation Board Room,
10 Park Plaza, Boston

Bryan Pounds, Chair, representing Stephanie Pollack, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee agreed to the following:

- Approve the Meeting Summary for the October 3, 2019, meeting

Materials

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. Meeting Summary for the October 3, 2019, meeting
2. Table of proposed changes to the UPWP document
3. PowerPoint presentation summarizing feedback received through the UPWP study ideas survey

Meeting Agenda and Summary of Discussion

1. Introductions

Bryan Pounds welcomed everyone to the first UPWP Committee meeting of 2020, and his last as UPWP Committee chair. The other members and staff present introduced themselves. B. Pounds introduced Ben Muller, a staff member on the MPO Liaison team at MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning. B. Pounds explained that he is getting more involved with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and so is passing on chairmanship of the UPWP Committee to B. Muller, who will also be the new liaison to the Boston MPO.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Action Item: Summary of October 3, 2019, meeting—Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager

B. Pounds asked for a motion to approve this meeting summary. The motion to approve the meeting summary was made by Tom Bent (City of Somerville/Inner Core Committee) and seconded by another member. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Potential Changes to the UPWP Process and Document—Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager

S. Johnston referred to a previous presentation he had made to the committee on the topic of changes to the UPWP document, and showed the committee a slightly modified version of the handout from the October 3, 2019, meeting. The focus of these changes is on making the document more concise and readable. S. Johnston presented to the committee a second handout with a simplified version of the UPWP Universe, to gain members' input on whether this would be appropriate for the upcoming development cycle. B. Pounds remarked that it would be helpful to note how long a project concept had been in the Universe previously; S. Johnston replied that staff had discussed adding a Notes column that would include that type of information. He also noted that the previous year's UPWP Universe had had 15 concepts, of which approximately 10 had been funded, so there would not be a lot of carryover. S. Johnston explained that he had talked with B. Muller about confirming the permissibility of some of the potential changes with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). B. Pounds said that he had also discussed the topic with FHWA staff, and they are generally supportive of changes intended to make documents more concise; however, they will still require some form of physical documentation.

Daniel Amstutz (Town of Arlington/At-Large Town) asked where he would find completed studies on the MPO website. S. Johnston replied that there is a "Publications" page on the website, under the "Stay Involved" menu, where all MPO studies are posted as they are finished. That page is not organized by municipality, but the capability to index studies by municipality is built into the UPWP Study Recommendations Tracking Database, which staff may at some point be able to transition into a public-facing online format. T. Teich encouraged members to reach out to staff if they have any questions or cannot find something; S. Johnston echoed that he is always happy to help. Lenard Diggins (Regional Transportation Advisory Council) encouraged retention of the explanation of the 3C planning process in the document, as opposed to moving it online. S. Johnston replied that staff had already decided not to move that content online this year; the relevant chapter is shared between the TIP and UPWP, so having the content online as opposed to in each document may, in the long run, be a more natural option.

5. Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) UPWP Survey Results—Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager

S. Johnston presented a PowerPoint slideshow summarizing the FFY UPWP survey results. Staff created and distributed an online survey through the SurveyMonkey tool asking respondents to tell the MPO what it should study. In addition, S. Johnston distributed a handout for members that summarized some of the results, categorizing them into “general concepts” and “specific ideas” that respondents suggested the MPO to study. The PowerPoint presentation summarized some of the demographic information that staff collected on respondents through the questionnaire attached to the survey. The survey received 127 responses, which largely arrived in two surges following email announcements through the MPO listserve on December 2, 2019, and January 9, 2020. The respondents showed the following characteristics:

- gender-balanced (approximately 55 percent male, 45 percent female, and 5 percent preferred not to respond);
- older (approximately half of respondents were age 55 or older);
- wealthier (almost half of respondents reported a household income of \$105,000 or higher); and
- majority white (approximately 80 percent of respondents), whereas the MPO region is about 30 percent minority

S. Johnston explained that staff would take the concepts identified in the survey and add them into the Universe of Proposed studies, to be presented in February. B. Pounds asked for questions on the survey results. D. Amstutz said would like to see the results mapped by ZIP code so that staff and the committee could see where the respondents lived. S. Johnston responded that staff had already collected the data and that he would map results by ZIP code for a future meeting. L. Diggins noted that it gave him some comfort that the racial demographics of survey respondents were at least close to the demographics of the region as a whole. He also asked how staff had publicized the survey. S. Johnston responded that staff had, in addition to listserv emails, publicized the survey on social media and created printed cards to distribute at outreach events to promote it. He also noted that staff had conducted outreach for the UPWP at Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) subregional group meetings and a variety of other meetings.

There was further conversation about staff’s outreach efforts. Eric Bourassa (MAPC) asked S. Johnston how he would use the concepts heard through the survey. S.

Johnston responded that the concepts would be entered into the “pre-Universe” document containing everything staff had heard in outreach that was related to the UPWP. Staff would then review that document and remove anything redundant with other upcoming work at the MPO or elsewhere; not within the MPO’s mission or capabilities; or not feasible. The result would be the Universe of Proposed Studies that the committee would see.

D. Amstutz said that, looking at the list of concepts brought up in the survey, he would support discussion of a congestion pricing study. S. Johnston said that staff had heard a considerable amount of discussion about congestion pricing everywhere they went. E. Bourassa said that he recognized the topic is difficult for the gubernatorial administration, but that the idea is very important. He added that Central Transportation Planning Staff’s modeling tools are the right way to understand whether congestion pricing would work or not, and what the price would have to be. He reinforced that it is an important conversation, because nothing being done at this time is making a real difference.

Tom Kadzis (City of Boston) recognized that E. Bourassa’s point about political palatability is valid, and he suggested that the administration could be convinced to consider the idea. He noted that ride-hailing vehicles make up about 10 percent of traffic, and he suggested that pricing them appropriately could make a difference. He complimented S. Johnston on the UPWP outreach efforts.

B. Pounds reminded the committee that there’s a finite amount of money left for studies each year, and he asked S. Johnston to explain how much money is typically spent on studies. S. Johnston explained that there is approximately \$700,000 remaining after taking care of core MPO activities, of which approximately \$300,000 is consumed by the recurring studies, leaving approximately \$300,000 to \$400,000 for new ideas.

B. Pounds said that the intention with UPWP studies is usually to lead to something that can be implementable, and sometimes policy-based studies require extra effort. L. Diggins said he thought that based on last year’s conversations about congestion pricing, perhaps the state was going to take a look at it. B. Pounds explained that MassDOT had been in the middle of the major congestion report at the time, and MassDOT anticipates that there will be some items in this year’s CIP that are results of that report. There was some discussion about how the MPO, MassDOT, and the MBTA avoid replicating each other’s work.

B. Pounds and S. Johnston discussed the next steps for the Universe, revolving around the initial meeting to discuss it on February 27. B. Pounds asked staff to assign some kind of level of effort or a rough budget to the study concepts if possible.

6. Members Items

T. Teich expressed her thanks to B. Pounds on his service to the committee and to the MPO board, and she welcomed B. Muller on board. B. Pounds thanked her and expressed his appreciation for the work of the Boston Region MPO and the UPWP Committee.

7. Next Meeting

S. Johnston said the next meeting would most likely be February 27, but possibly the February 6.

8. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by E. Bourassa and seconded by another member. The motion carried unanimously.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Daniel Amstutz
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Office of Transportation Planning)	Bryan Pounds
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Office of Transportation Planning)	Ben Muller
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke
Three Rivers Interlocal Council alternate (Town of Westwood)	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Austin Cyganiewicz	MPO member, Town of Acton (Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination)

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
 Annette Demchur, Director of Policy and Planning
 Hiral Gandhi, Director of Operations and Finance
 Mark Abbott, Traffic Analysis and Design Group Manager
 Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager
 Kate White, Public Outreach Coordinator
 Róisín Foley, Administrative and Communications Assistant

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) operates its programs, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency), be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives federal assistance. Related federal nondiscrimination laws administered by the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, or both, prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, and disability. The Boston Region MPO considers these protected populations in its Title VI Programs, consistent with federal interpretation and administration. In addition, the Boston Region MPO provides meaningful access to its programs, services, and activities to individuals with limited English proficiency, in compliance with U.S. Department of Transportation policy and guidance on federal Executive Order 13166.

The Boston Region MPO also complies with the Massachusetts Public Accommodation Law, M.G.L. c 272 sections 92a, 98, 98a, which prohibits making any distinction, discrimination, or restriction in admission to, or treatment in a place of public accommodation based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or ancestry. Likewise, the Boston Region MPO complies with the Governor's Executive Order 526, section 4, which requires that all programs, activities, and services provided, performed, licensed, chartered, funded, regulated, or contracted for by the state shall be conducted without unlawful discrimination based on race, color, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, disability, veteran's status (including Vietnam-era veterans), or background.

A complaint form and additional information can be obtained by contacting the MPO or at http://www.bostonmpo.org/mpo_non_discrimination. To request this information in a different language or in an accessible format, please contact

Title VI Specialist
Boston Region MPO
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116
civilrights@ctps.org
857.702.3700 (voice)