

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Unified Planning Work Program Committee Meeting Summary

March 28, 2019 Meeting

1:00 PM–2:30 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 and 3,
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 of the February 21, 2019, meeting
- Approve the Meeting Summary of the March 7, 2019, meeting

Materials

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. Meeting Summary of February 21, 2019, meeting
2. Meeting Summary of March 7, 2019, meeting
3. Survey results from UPWP Committee Study Concept Ranking Survey
4. Staff-recommended List of Discrete Studies for FFY 2020

Meeting Agenda and Summary of Discussion

1. Introductions

Bryan Pounds, Chair, opened the meeting and circulated the sign-in sheet.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Action Items

a. Approval of Meeting Summary of February 21, 2019, meeting

A motion to approve the Meeting Summary was made by Eric Bourassa (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) and seconded by Tom Bent (City of Somerville). The motion passed unanimously.

b. Approval of Meeting Summary of March 7, 2019, meeting

A motion to approve the Meeting Summary was made by E. Bourassa (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) and seconded by T. Bent (City of Somerville). The motion passed unanimously.

4. Update on Staff-Generated Research—*Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager*

S. Johnston reminded the Committee that the MPO has been funding this budget line for several years now, and mentioned that he had sent out details on FFY 2017 work to the Committee by email. Annette Demchur (Interim Co-Executive Director/Director of Policy **&and** Planning) explained that Tom Humphrey is using the FFY 2019 Staff-Generated Research budget line to update and expand his existing work on ferries. S. Johnston explained that the Committee had already decided to include the budget line in the FFY 2020 UPWP, but with a slightly expanded scope that would include small technical assistance projects as well. E. Bourassa asked what the budget would be in FFY 2020, and S. Johnston said it would be \$20,000, the same as the current year.

5. Development of UPWP Committee’s Recommended List of Discrete Studies for FFY 2020—*Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager*

S. Johnston distributed two handouts to the Committee, one with a table of results from the survey that Committee members had completed to rank study concepts in order of preference, and the other with the staff’s recommended list of studies. S. Johnston explained that although previous committee discussions had mentioned the possibility of only asking the Committee members to rank their top eight to 10 studies, the data analysis works better when all rankings are included. He further explained that staff take several criteria into account in developing their recommended list:

- Budget (staff do not have an exact number for the amount of money available for discrete studies in FFY 2020 at this time, but it should be close to the same as in FFY 2019)
- Staff bandwidth and availability to do the work
- Coordination with other agencies and making sure different agencies are not executing redundant work
- Results of the committee survey

S. Johnston explained that staff are asking the Committee, at this meeting, to agree on a list of studies to be funded, in ranked order, in case budget doesn’t allow for funding all of them; a vote would be taken when the Committee reviews the full draft UPWP document before the MPO releases it to the MPO for public comment.

B. Pounds recapped the process of developing the UPWP, including selection of the recurring studies—those that are programmed every year. In response to a question from T. Bent, there was a brief clarifying discussion of how the study ranking survey results work.

At the request of the Chair, S. Johnston presented the list of staff-recommended studies (see Attachment 1) and explained why each one is a priority for staff. He then explained why each study that staff did not recommend was not on the list.

With regards to study M-7, Congestion Pricing Sensitivity Analysis, which staff did not recommend because of budget constraints, E. Bourassa asked what the projected budget would have been. S. Johnston said he thought staff had not come up with an exact number but that it would have been above the level of a corridor study (\$120,000). Scott Peterson (Interim Co-Executive Director/Director of Technical Services) explained that it would have been a large effort, possibly as much as \$140,000. E. Bourassa asked whether the Activity-Based Model that CTPS is preparing would be ready in time, and S. Peterson responded that it would be a good tool for this study, but likely wouldn't be ready until halfway through the coming fiscal year. Tegin Teich (Regional Transportation Advisory Council/City of Cambridge) asked whether it might be possible to segment the study, and reiterated her comment from the February 21 meeting that the effort is important and the MPO is behind in planning for the possibility of roadway pricing. Some discussion ensued. T. Teich asked for an update on MassDOT's planned congestion study. B. Pounds responded that it is mainly focusing on identifying locations of congestion, but has an aspect that examines behavioral changes. B. Pounds explained MassDOT's position that any study of pricing would be better considered after conclusion of the previous study—and that staff could better use available study funds in the short term for more actionable items—but allowed that the Committee could choose to go ahead if it so desired. T. Teich requested that staff keep the congestion pricing study in the Universe for the upcoming year and staff responded they would. Daniel Amstutz (Town of Arlington) said that he is supportive of the concept, but mostly comfortable pushing it out to the coming year.

With regard to study L-2, Zoning and [Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority \(MBTA\)](#) Ridership, S. Johnston explained that staff felt some aspects could be incorporated into ongoing LRTP and modeling work. B. Pounds remarked that MassDOT and other staff thought that the concept was interesting but required more definition, and could perhaps become an object of collaboration between MassDOT, [Metropolitan Area Planning Council \(MAPC\)](#), and CTPS in the future. E. Bourassa explained MAPC's ongoing MetroCommons strategic planning efforts and talked about the potential benefits of land use-transportation coordination to municipalities. B.

Pounds noted that, as staff had assessed, the budget to do something like this study correctly would be substantial and would require setting other things aside. T. Bent noted that Somerville is “living this right now” and would volunteer to be a location for the study. E. Bourassa explained that everything Somerville has done thus far has already been incorporated into the land-use data that MAPC provides to CTPS. T. Bent remarked that “Somerville and Cambridge can only do so much” and development needs to spread outside the Inner Core. T. Teich asked why MassDOT had ranked this study at the top of its list, and B. Pounds responded that they had suggested it originally, but since had had a chance to grapple with the full implications. Len Diggins (MBTA Rider Oversight Committee) asked how much study L-2 would have cost, and if it would have interacted with the Rail Vision study in any way. B. Pounds said MassDOT had originally intended it to focus more on bus and rapid transit, but it could be scaled up or down. Some further discussion ensued.

T. Teich asked about the capacity concerns staff had regarding study O-2, Implementing the Recommendations of the Governor’s Commission on the Future of Transportation, and whether staff were perhaps being too rigid in assigning specific work to specific groups inside CTPS. S. Peterson responded that there is some flexibility, but engineering staff are not necessarily the best qualified to work on policy, and vice versa. S. Johnston remarked that in fact O-2 would have involved one program manager distributing work among a variety of staffers across CTPS, but that staff think many of the elements of this study can be incorporated into other budget lines. B. Pounds remarked that staff were in fact already doing that, especially with regard to resilience.

A member asked about the bandwidth concerns staff had regarding study M-5, Low-Cost Intersection Improvement Program. Mark Abbott (Traffic Analysis and Design Group Manager) responded that in previous iterations this study had been conducted in conjunction with a ~~TIP-Transportation Improvement Program program~~ to fund implementation of the recommendations, but that would not be the case this time. Additionally, some of this work could be accommodated through the Community Transportation Technical Assistance program also funded through the UPWP. B. Pounds asked if some of this work couldn’t be accommodated in the Selected Intersections study; M. Abbott responded that that study looks at higher-cost and more intensive interventions.

B. Pounds directed the conversation back to staff’s recommended list. E. Bourassa asked if more details were available on study M-1, Incorporating Resilience into MPO-Funded Corridor and Location Studies. M. Abbott responded that staff will have to explore the concept further, as this study is largely intended for them to gain familiarity

with best practices in resilience. Some discussion ensued about the particulars of that study. Tom Kadzis (City of Boston) noted that Boston has encountered significant inertia around resilience but has had success with items such as elevating traffic signal control boxes, and argued that CTPS could be a useful voice on this topic.

E. Bourassa noted with regard to study T-3, Operating a Successful Shuttle Program, that MAPC had worked with municipalities to operate shuttles, and the main problem is financial and, therefore, political more than technical. A. Demchur explained that part of the idea would be to look at where shuttles have worked and how they have raised sufficient money, and that “we’ve seen so many fail, we’d like to see some good ones.” S. Johnston noted that in the Community Transportation Program, the MPO had placed significant emphasis on finding shuttle projects that would be fiscally sustainable, and that from his outreach efforts he had found that there is a knowledge gap where stakeholders know they want to do something but don’t have the know-how. B. Pounds said he thought the information was out there, but was interested to hear impressions that it wasn’t. T. Teich noted that CrossTown Connect, a successful shuttle operator, is a member of RTAC, and would have an accurate perception of needs. B. Pounds asked staff to connect with MassDOT staff about needs and making sure different efforts are not working at odds.

E. Bourassa noted that there is a significant need in suburban areas, but in urban areas, there are almost too many shuttles and there is a need for consolidation or opening some of those resources to the public, which is part of his logic behind proposing study T-2, Transit Development Mitigation. E. Bourassa confirmed with Katie Pincus Stetner (Transit Analysis and Planning Group Manager) that she had spoken with ~~Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)~~ MBTA staff to coordinate on the scope of study T-2. B. Pounds expressed some concern over the budget of the study.

B. Pounds asked staff to explain study T-1 again, admitting that he did not fully understand the concept behind it. D. Amstutz agreed and asked staff to explain how the outputs of the study would be used. K. Pincus Stetner explained that staff conduct analyses of who is affected by service changes. These analyses use one of two data sources: data from the MBTA Systemwide Rider Survey, conducted by CTPS on behalf of MassDOT, and Census American Community Survey data. The survey data is preferable since it is more detailed and reliable, and Census data has high margins of error at highly specific geographies. However, survey data is not available everywhere, particularly in areas where there is no existing transit service; Census data about area demographics is unlikely to match the demographics of transit riders in a particular area well. This project would allow staff to build a model to establish relationships between the two datasets and try to project what the demographics of transit riders might look

like in areas where survey data does not currently exist. T. Teich asked how the effort to establish a model and identify relationships would affect the ability to use the data in equity work, particularly as it regards the ongoing Disparate Impact/Disproportionate Benefit (DI/DB) process. T. Teich and B. Pounds wondered whether staff's time might be better used on a task with a higher priority and more obvious impact, or whether the money might be better distributed among other tasks. Some discussion ensued about how the products of T-1 could potentially be used, and whether the datasets available make the study feasible. Several members of the Committee asked the staff to work through whether this was in fact the best use of funds, and staff agreed to consider the question. L. Diggins noted that behaviors change over time as do technologies. There was a brief discussion about the relationship between T-1 and E-1; A. Demchur explained that they are separate work products that might have some mutual benefits.

B. Pounds said he thought the Committee was mostly in agreement with the list of studies as presented by staff, but asked staff to clarify the importance of study T-1. S. Johnston explained that, moving forward, the Committee could hold another meeting in April to continue discussing the list of studies, or meet on May 2 directly before the MPO meeting to approve the full UPWP draft document. Partially, the need for another meeting would depend on the amount of funding available.

B. Pounds invited Betsy Harvey (Transportation Equity Program Manager) to explain study E-1. She explained that the study concept is an outgrowth from the DI/DB process that had unfolded over the past year, but required extra work to define the thresholds for disparate impacts.

B. Pounds noted that he felt the Committee had reached consensus. S. Johnston and staff agreed to clarify study concept T-1 and send an update by email once there was clarity on that and on the overall budget; if needed, a meeting would be held in April.

6. Members Items

There were none.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 2, 2019. The Committee will vote to send a draft UPWP to the MPO, which would then make it available for public comment. The meeting would be held immediately prior to the MPO meeting.

8. Adjourn

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

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Daniel Amstutz
City of Boston (BPDA)	Tom Kadzis
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Bryan Pounds
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
Regional Transportation Advisory Council/City of Cambridge	Tegin Teich

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Maxwell Huber	MassDOT
Lenard Diggins	MBTA ROC
Jarred Johnson	TransitMatters
Josh Ostroff	Transportation for Massachusetts
Greg Thompson	MBTA
Adam Vaccaro	Boston Globe

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Scott Peterson, Co-Interim Executive Director
Annette Demchur, Co-Interim Executive Director
Ali Kleyman, Certification Activities Group Manager
Mark Abbott, Traffic Analysis and Design Group Manager
Hiral Gandhi, Finance and Operations Group Manager
Katie Pincus Stetner, Transit Analysis and Planning Group Manager
Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager
Betsy Harvey, Transportation Equity Program Manager

Attachment 1: Staff-Recommended List of Discrete Studies for FFY 2020, for UPWP Committee Review, March 28, 2019

Study	Staff Ranking	Estimated Budget
R-1, Exploring Resilience in MPO-funded Corridor and Intersection Studies	1	\$90,000
M-6, TIP Before-and-After Studies	2	\$55,000
T-4, Further Development of the MPO's Community Transportation Program	3	\$15,000
T-3, Operating a Successful Shuttle Program	4	\$45,000
T-2, Transit Mitigation Methodology for New Development Sites	5	\$60,000
T-1, Using US Census Data as a Proxy for Transit Rider Survey Data	6	\$75,000
E-1, Disparate Impact Metrics Analysis	7	\$40,000
Total for Staff-Recommended List	blank	\$380,000
Recurring Studies Total Budget*	blank	\$335,000
Overall Discrete Studies Budget if All Funded (FFY 2019: \$715,110)	blank	\$715,000
*Subregional Priority Roadways—\$120,000 Priority LRTP Corridors—\$120,000 Safety and Operations at Selected Intersections—\$75,000 Staff-Generated Research and Technical Assistance—\$20,000		
Alternatives	blank	blank
A-1, Locations with High Bicycle and Pedestrian Crash Rates in the Boston Region MPO Area		\$70,000
O-2, How the MPO Can Implement the Recommendations of the Commission on the Future of Transportation		\$30,000