

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

## May 19, 2022, Meeting

10:00 AM–11:00 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Derek Krevat, Chair, representing Jamey Tesler, Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

## Decisions

- There were none.

## Materials

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. [Draft Federal Fiscal Year 2023 Universe of Proposed Studies](#)

## Meeting Agenda and Summary of Discussion

### 1. Introductions

See attendance on page 5.

### 2. Public Comments

There were none.

### 3. Discussion: Universe of Proposed Studies for Federal Fiscal Year 2023—*Srilekha Murthy and Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff*

S. Murthy began the discussion by introducing Project TE-2, Equity Analysis of Demand-Response Transit in the Boston Region. This project, submitted by MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning, aims to study whether demand-response transit services meet the needs of the elderly and those with limited access to essential services. D. Krevat stated that this study was proposed in line with the new federal emphasis areas received from the United States Department of Transportation encouraging a focus on the transportation needs of the elderly and those with limited access to services. While there are a great deal of demand-response services in the region, this study aims to understand the gaps in service, as well as who is able to access demand-response transit services.

Lenard Diggins (Regional Transportation Advisory Council) expressed his support for this project and stated that there is an opportunity here for coordination with the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. Betsy Harvey (MPO staff) introduced herself as the point person for the Coordinated Plan, which is updated every four years in alignment with the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The Coordinated Plan currently conducts a qualitative gap analysis, mapping services that exist in the region. B. Harvey suggested that this study may fill in some of the gaps in understanding what needs are not being met and where.

David Koses (City of Newton) stated that he believed some of this work is already being done, and that areas with seniors tend to change over time. D. Krevat responded stating that the goal of the study is to determine levels of access at this point in time and whether locations of seniors are changing.

Amira Patterson (MBTA Advisory Board) expressed her strong support for this project, stating that the Advisory Board receives a lot of public comments related to the underrepresentation of older adults in transportation considerations, and that this project can begin to address those concerns.

Thomas Bent (Inner Core Committee) (City of Somerville) asked how much does the MBTA's RIDE program apply to this concern. Additionally, he suggested that people may not be aware of what services exist near them, and that public education may be part of the solution to limited access.

D. Krevat asked whether this feedback will be taken and incorporated into the final Universe of Proposed Studies. Sandy Johnston (MPO staff) stated that members will be asked to complete a survey with the original descriptions, and the feedback provided by members will be incorporated into the final descriptions and scopes of selected projects.

D. Koses questioned whether this study is truly filling a gap in transportation needs in the region. D. Krevat responded that the scope will be fleshed out more if selected, and members' feedback will be incorporated.

S. Murthy introduced Project TE-3, Assessing Mobility Options at Affordable Housing Developments. This project aims to take a case study approach to assess transportation options from affordable housing developments across the region to essential services such as grocery stores, hospitals, schools, and government buildings.

Daniel Amstutz (Town of Arlington) asked what specific tasks would be associated with this project. S. Murthy replied that case studies would be undertaken examining different development types in a diverse range of communities across the region.

D. Amstutz asked what geographical places would be considered in the study. D. Krevat replied that if the study was conducted in a case-study style approach, there could be opportunities for selecting cases from different contexts and different needs, and those are points that will be fleshed out.

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), asked who the audience of the study was. D. Krevat responded that transit providers were the proposed audience for this study, but municipalities may be a more appropriate audience when it comes to affordable housing developments.

Steve Olanoff (Three Rivers Interlocal Council) noted the varied price of the study and asked how many areas would be examined and what the real price of the study would be.

L. Diggins asked if this proposal could be completed with data that is already available, and if the TE-3 study and the previous TE-2 study could be wrapped into this one. D. Krevat responded that while there is certainly overlap with the other proposed programs, there are multiple opportunities to study all of these topics.

D. Koses stated that we might already know the answers and that the results of this study may not tell us anything new. D. Krevat responded that this study would document where there is a concentration of affordable housing and which concentrations are lacking access to key destinations or food stores. This study would be a needs assessment through the lens of affordable housing.

S. Johnston introduced TE-4 Chelsea Freight Electrification Study. This study seeks to map freight patterns, and staff would produce a memo outlining the advancement of freight electrification and impacts of electrification on an area's economy, as well as potential policy implications.

S. Olanoff stated that he was supportive of the study and that he hasn't seen the topic of freight in the UPWP in a long time. He further stated that the study should consider all modes of transportation, such as ferry boats that also need to be electrified.

L. Diggins stated that he is supportive of the study and would like to see the MPO be part of the collaborative that works on this study.

D. Amstutz stated that the project was interesting and highlighted the potential decarbonization aspects of the study, further stating that he liked the inclusion of bicycle freight potentials in the study.

T. Bent asked if the study was part of another study or a stand-alone study. S. Johnston stated that this would be a stand-alone project but would co-exist alongside the MPO's usual freight planning work.

T. Bent asked about the additional power requirements for electrification and the issue of public support for building power plants and substations. S. Johnston stated that the MPO's work on freight electrification planning fills an important and specific niche in the area's regional planning, and that the study will be cognizant of the issues between grid carbonization and local tailpipe emissions.

D. Koses expressed his support for the study and stated that the MPO should consider this issue and figure out what it can help support.

D. Krevat asked about next steps for the Universe of Proposed Studies. S. Murthy responded that the MPO staff is working to create and distribute a survey for members and staff to ask for input and to rank these studies to further refine the draft Universe of Proposed Studies.

#### **4. Members Items**

There were none.

#### **5. Next Meeting**

The next meeting date has not yet been set. Members will be notified when the date has been decided.

#### **6. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (Thomas Bent). The motion carried.

## Attendance

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<b>Members</b>	<b>Representatives and Alternates</b>
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Office of Transportation Planning)	Derek Kravat
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Daniel Amstutz
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
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
City of Framingham (Metrowest Regional Collaborative)	

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### **Other Attendees Affiliation**

Amira Patterson	Transportation Planner, MBTA Advisory Board
Laura Gilmore	MBTA
Benjamin Muller	MassDOT District 6

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### **MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Annette Demchur  
Marty Milkovits  
Mark Abbott  
Srilekha Murthy  
Sandy Johnston  
Jonathan Church  
Betsey Harvey  
Logan Casey

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