



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

June 8, 2022, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–3:30 PM, Zoom

Lenard Diggins, Chair, representing the Regional Transportation Advisory Council

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Lenard Diggins called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 5.)

2. Draft Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Universe of Proposed Studies—*Srilekha Murthy, UPWP Manager*

L. Diggins introduced the agenda item and noted that the Advisory Council's discussion and the results of the Advisory Council's Universe of Proposed Studies rankings survey would be used to inform the discussion of the Universe of Proposed Studies at the next meeting of the UPWP Committee.

Discussion

Franny Osman, Town of Acton, asked if Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff could share their views regarding the Universe of Proposed Studies and how these studies support regional transit authorities.

L. Diggins added that the Advisory Council would receive a draft of the FFY 2023 UPWP during the July Advisory Council meeting, although there will only be a brief period allocated for discussion on the draft FFY 2023 UPWP during that meeting.

Jon Seward, MoveMassachusetts, asked if the Advisory Council would be deciding to remove certain studies from the Universe of Proposed Studies and why. L. Diggins replied that the budget for discrete studies had not yet been finalized but was estimated to be close to \$500,000. L. Diggins added that there are certain projects that are not listed in the ranking survey but do come out of the UPWP funding, such as corridor studies.

J. Seward stated that he preferred studies with direct impacts and those that are cost effective.

John McQueen, WalkBoston, asked why the Universe of Proposed Studies had fewer studies than the FFY 2022 UPWP, and why the original list of proposed studies had been refined by MPO staff. L. Diggins responded that the ranking survey was sent to easily solicit feedback from the group. In respect to the process, Advisory Council members are welcome to add comments to the 3C report that will be included with the FFY 2023 UPWP.

J. McQueen stated that members may want to change their rankings after having this meeting after considering the discussion. L. Diggins stated that some of the study recommendations were combined to produce proposed studies. L. Diggins supports the 3C Committee commenting on the UPWP process and would consider requesting additional information. S. Murthy responded that more than 80 study proposals were received. Some proposals were phrases or fragments of ideas and not fully developed. These study proposals were hard to develop into full study scopes due to the lack of information. The original list of proposed studies could be shared but would not be applicable to this conversation due to the number of studies that were cut from the original list of proposed studies. The Universe of Proposed studies started as 77 viable concepts but was cut down to 12 studies based on internal discussions between MPO staff. Some studies were cut due to the lack of staff capacity.

F. Osman asked how much funding was available for discrete studies. F. Osman further proposed a study for new bus service that runs along the Route 110/119/27 corridor that would run between Lowell and Framingham, and at what point should Advisory Council members bring forward these proposals for study. S. Murthy replied that for funding, MPO staff is continuing to develop the budget for the upcoming FFY 2023 UPWP. In FFY 2022, there was \$300,000 allocated for discrete studies and slightly more funding is expected in FFY 2023. For the bus service proposal, S. Murthy stated that she would connect F. Osman with an MPO staff member who had more information.

L. Diggins clarified that F. Osman was proposing a new bus service as a study. F. Osman responded yes, and that bus service has never served a connection from Lowell to Framingham, and that a bus service or micro transit service should be considered.

L. Diggins asked if F. Osman's bus service proposal could be considered in the FFY 2023 UPWP. S. Murthy responded that it is too late to propose additional studies. MPO staff plans to complete a final draft of the FFY 2023 UPWP on June 30, 2022. MPO staff will present a final list of proposed studies to the UPWP Committee on June 15, 2022.

L. Diggins stated that he would be present at the June 15, 2022, UPWP Committee meeting and would discuss the Universe of Proposed Studies based upon the feedback of the Advisory Council.

Jen Rowe, City of Boston, stated that it would be helpful to see the list of 80 originally proposed studies, even if some proposals were fragments of ideas. It would be helpful to see which project ideas have yet to be advanced.

S. Murthy suggested that there may have been some confusion on how studies should be proposed. For study proposals that were fragmented or short, MPO staff may have been unable to advance the ideas due to the lack of information. S. Murthy suggested that it could be beneficial to create a guide on how to correctly propose a study for the UPWP.

J. Rowe suggested MPO staff hold office hours for MPO and Advisory Council members to work on study proposals directly with MPO staff.

L. Diggins agreed with J. Rowe and requested MPO staff share the original list of proposed studies.

S. Murthy stated that MPO staff would be open to working with the Advisory Council to enhance outreach efforts for proposed studies.

L. Diggins asked Advisory Council members to submit any feedback about the Universe of Proposed Studies before Tuesday, June 14, 2022, to be considered for the upcoming June 15, 2022, UPWP Committee meeting.

3. Chair's Report—*Lenard Diggins, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

L. Diggins reported that during the last MPO meeting, the MPO approved the FFYs 2022–26 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). In the future, the Advisory Council should advocate for giving MPO Board members more time to review public comments. L. Diggins stated that he would have preferred to have a conversation with members of the MPO staff regarding public comments before the approval of the TIP. In addition, L. Diggins is currently working with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Council to find new members to participate in the organizations.

Discussion

J. Rowe stated that timing for public comments has always been an issue and she would like to speak with L. Diggins regarding public comments and the amount of time the MPO Board members are given to react to comments.

L. Diggins stated he would like to get more information on the public comment process to find ways to allow for additional time to digest public comments.

David Montgomery, Town of Needham, added that historically, MPO Board members are always first to see draft documents before the Advisory Council.

L. Diggins stated that meeting minutes are currently being drafted for past Advisory Council meetings.

4. Old Business, New Business, and Member Announcements

There was none.

5. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by MoveMassachusetts (Jon Seward) and seconded by the Town of Needham (David Montgomery). The motion carried.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
Acton	Franny Osman
Boston	Jen Rowe
Medford	Patrick Snyder
Needham	David Montgomery

Citizen Advocacy Groups	Attendees
American Council of Engineering Companies	Fred Moseley
Boston Society of Civil Engineers (BSCES)	AnaCristina Fragoso
Institute of Transportation Engineers	Fayssal Hussein
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee (ROC)	Lenard Diggins
MoveMassachusetts	Jon Seward
WalkBoston	John McQueen

Agencies (Non-Voting)	Attendees
MassDOT Aeronautics	James Matz

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Anthony Gallagher	

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Logan Casey
Srilekha Murthy
Stella Jordan
Bradley Putnam

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