



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Stephanie Pollack, MassDOT Secretary and CEO and MPO Chair
Karl H. Quackenbush, Executive Director, MPO Staff

MEMORANDUM

DATE October 15, 2015
TO Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
FROM Karl H. Quackenbush
CTPS Executive Director
RE Work Program for: Research Projects on Topics Generated by MPO Staff

Action Required

Review and approval

Proposed Motion

That the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization vote to approve the work program for Research Projects on Topics Generated by MPO Staff, presented in this memorandum

Project Identification

Unified Planning Work Program Classification

Technical Support / Operations Analysis Projects

CTPS Project Number

90200

Client

Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization

CTPS Project Supervisors

Principal: Karl Quackenbush

Manager: Elizabeth M. Moore

Funding

MPO Planning Contract #89787

MPO §5303 Contract #84080 and Subsequent Contract

Impact on MPO Work

This is MPO work and will be carried out in conformance with the priorities established by the MPO.

Background

Over the past several Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) development cycles, MPO staff and members of the MPO's UPWP Committee have discussed the possibility of creating an MPO-funded program that would support research on topics of particular interest to MPO staff. These research projects would be smaller in scale and cost less than typical discrete UPWP projects, which are selected via the UPWP Committee's and MPO's study selection process. These projects would also differ from the MPO's ongoing programs, which are oriented to the development of specific MPO products or technical assistance, or to requests from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), or other transportation agencies.

This one-year work program supports this type of research as part of the UPWP. The MPO staff anticipates that this program will not only generate valuable information for the MPO's transportation-planning process, but that it will also support the MPO staff's professional development and give staff an opportunity to apply unique aspects of their expertise. The products from these research activities could be used to inform MPO or transportation-agency planning and decision making; could be incorporated into the MPO's public involvement activities; or could be used as a basis for proposing larger, longer-term UPWP studies.

Objective

The objective of this program is to support small-scale independent research projects on ideas or topics that meet the following criteria:

- Relate to the Boston Region MPO's metropolitan transportation-planning process
- Are of interest to MPO staff members
- Are not covered by an ongoing UPWP program or discrete project

Work Description

This work program describes the major tasks—project proposal development, research, and documentation—that will be carried out as part of this program. The specific tasks associated with each small-scale research project will vary; they will depend on the nature of the projects selected.

Task 1 Develop a Project Proposal

It is anticipated that the CTPS Executive Director will request research proposals from staff up to three times during federal fiscal year (FFY) 2016 and that applications will be collected on a rolling basis. Individual research proposals will be reviewed and discussed by CTPS directors and group managers, and then presented to the MPO before the final selection by the CTPS Executive Director.

Products of Task 1

Proposals for small-scale research projects

Task 2 Conduct Research and Analysis on Selected Topics

Once proposals are approved by the Executive Director, selected staff will conduct research and analysis activities in keeping with the nature of their topics. Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting literature reviews
- Exploring MPO or other data sets
- Surveying peer transportation or planning agencies

Task 3 Produce Documentation and Develop Presentations

Once research activities have been completed, MPO staff will document their findings, and may make recommendations for action or further research, when appropriate. MPO staff may choose to document their findings in a white paper or exclusively through other media, such as infographics or other visualization. MPO staff will also develop short presentations to convey their findings to the MPO and other audiences.

Products of Task 3

Written materials and/or graphics and presentations

Estimated Schedule

It is estimated that the tasks presented in this work program will be completed throughout the 12 months of FFY 2016.

Estimated Cost

The total cost of this project is estimated to be \$30,000. This includes the cost of staff time and overhead at the rate of 98.88 percent.

KQ/MS/ms