

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

## **March 15, 2018 Meeting**

1:15 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 1, 2018 meeting
- Approve the Meeting Summary of the February 15, 2018 meeting

## **Materials**

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. Draft Meeting Summary of the February 1, 2018 meeting
2. Draft Meeting Summary of the February 15, 2018 meeting
3. List of UPWP Committee Preferred Studies (survey results)
4. Staff-recommended list of discrete studies for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2019

## **Meeting Agenda and Summary of Discussion**

### **1. Introductions**

Bryan Pounds (MassDOT/UPWP Committee Chair) called the meeting to order. Members introduced themselves and signed the sign-in sheet.

### **2. Public Comments**

B. Pounds noted that with increased public interest in the Committee's activities (as seen at the previous meeting) the committee added this opportunity for public comment to the meeting agenda.

There was one public comment, from Carl Seglem, a Boston resident. He noted that he largely agreed with the staff-recommended discrete studies list.

### **3. Action Items**

#### ***a. Meeting Summary of February 1, 2018, meeting***

B. Pounds asked for a motion and second to approve the meeting summary from the February 1, 2018 UPWP Committee meeting. Eric Bourassa (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) moved to approve the summary and several members seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### ***b. Meeting Summary of February 15, 2018, meeting***

B. Pounds asked for a motion and second to approve the meeting summary from the February 15, 2018 UPWP Committee meeting. E. Bourassa moved to approve the summary and Tegin Teich (Regional Transportation Advisory Council/City of Cambridge) seconded. The motion passed unanimously, with one abstention, Thomas Bent (City of Somerville).

### **4. Results of UPWP Committee Study Ranking Survey—Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager**

Sandy Johnston (MPO Staff/UPWP Manager) introduced the results of the UPWP committee study ranking survey, orienting members to a handout. Members had been asked to rank the proposed discrete studies according to how important they thought each one was. These rankings informed the staff recommendation (discussed next). B. Pounds asked how many committee members had filled out the survey; S. Johnston responded that eight members had completed the survey.

### **5. Staff Recommended List of Discrete Studies—Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager, and Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director**

S. Johnston introduced the staff-recommended list of discrete studies, including the handout. B. Pounds clarified the process by which staff had generated the list, explaining that staff had taken internal considerations, feasibility, and potential redundancy as well as the committee's rankings into account.

S. Johnston gave a few notes about the study list, including that staff intend studies L-2 and M-7 to be conducted in sequence within one year, and that staff's recommendations are largely shaped by analysis of staff availability in the coming year. Several of the studies (M-2, M-3, M-4, and O-1) in the staff recommendation were not included in the committee survey, as they are "recurring" studies that are funded on a scheduled basis, and which the committee had instructed staff to assume would be funded once again in FFY 2019. Karl Quackenbush (CTPS Executive Director) directed S. Johnston to explain which studies were not included in the staff recommendation, and why. T. Teich asked a clarifying question about how the rankings worked. A small discussion ensued between B. Pounds and S. Johnston.

S. Johnston clarified why several studies were not included in the staff recommendation.

- **M-9, Sweetser Circle Reconstruction:** Staff does not have capacity to handle this study; ongoing work in the area complicates an analysis of existing conditions; and the ability to implement short-term and low-cost improvements is unclear.
- **T-1, Allston Transit Study:** Staff has received significant public interest in this topic, but understands that this work will be undertaken through other means. B. Pounds noted that MassDOT is working with Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and other parties to undertake work on the topic.
- **M-1, Safety Improvements at Express-Highway Interchanges:** S. Johnston noted a typo on the handout: M-1 should show as not recommended, rather than recommended. B. Pounds said that it would have been nice to have this work sync up with the state highway safety plan, but it should be fine to do it in the future. K. Quackenbush explained that when staff say they don't have capacity to do something, it assumes that nothing else is canceled—and the committee does have the ability to defund something else. A brief discussion of this study ensued.
- **A-2, Locations with High Pedestrian and Bicycle Crash Rates:** S. Johnston explained that it is not recommended, largely because of availability issues in the TAD group.
- **M-6, Framingham Truck Study:** Staff felt this was not a regional priority, and this work could fit under other programs for technical assistance.

T. Teich asked if there was some possibility of executing short-term improvements to Sweetser Circle (study concept M-9) along the same lines as Allston, proactively studying transit improvements. Mark Abbott (CTPS Traffic Analysis and Design group manager) explained that in 2019, mitigation for the Wynn Casino project will have been implemented, so studies before those measures are undertaken would be premature. T. Teich asked whether bus service is being adequately considered in the mitigation. M. Abbott responded that he believes it is, and T. Teich noted that she could ask Jay Monty (City of Everett transportation planner and MPO representative). B. Pounds suggested talking to Scott Hamwey of MassDOT as well.

B. Pounds and K. Quackenbush discussed how, if the committee really wanted to fund study A-2, another study would have to be eliminated from the work program. T. Teich noted that at least one member of the Advisory Council had shown lots of interest in this study, and that there is lots of interest in bike and pedestrian studies. K. Quackenbush explained that the next run of the Safety and Operations at Selected Intersections

recurring study could be oriented around bicycle/pedestrian issues. Staff agreed to include this concept in next year's Universe.

S. Johnston explained each study that is included in the staff recommendation in order.

**Study L-1, Reverse-Commute Areas Analysis.** T. Teich and B. Pounds wanted to know how locations would be selected for this study. S. Johnston explained that input from fall outreach sessions could inform the study. T. Teich expressed support for doing some data analysis to establish the scope of this work. There was some discussion of what might be included in the scope for the UPWP and the scope presented to the MPO in the fall. E. Bourassa asked if the intention would be to look at all modes or just commuter rail. S. Johnston replied that commuter rail was the primary concern heard during fall outreach, but that aspect of reverse commute is being studied through MassDOT's Commuter Rail Vision Study; thus, this study would presumably include pedestrian, bicycle, and local transit elements that could be supported by the Community Transportation program. Annette Demchur (CTPS, Director of Policy and Planning) added that the study would include a look at all modes, to inform estimates of demand and encourage mode shift. E. Bourassa expressed interest in seeing what percentage of trips are being made as long reverse-commute trips. S. Johnston explained that using Census LEHD data, he had observed that in the areas with housing office parks around Route 128 in Waltham, the number of reverse commuters from Boston has grown by 30 percent in the last five years, and those trips now outnumber people who both live in Waltham and work in the ZIP codes that cover the office parks. E. Bourassa reiterated his interest in gathering more data on the topic. S. Johnston mentioned a previous CTPS reverse-commute study that had been executed in 2000 or 2001, using 1990 employment data. E. Bourassa noted that this would provide a strong basis for comparison. Steve Olanoff (Town of Westwood/Three Rivers Interlocal Council Alternate) asked if this study might include looking at the weakness of reverse-peak commuter rail schedules. A. Demchur said that is one aspect of looking at all modes. S. Olanoff added that his observation is that reverse-commute commuter rail traffic is increasing. S. Johnston noted that staff had heard the need for this study first and most loudly from TRIC subregion municipalities. B. Pounds said that E. Bourassa's point about data collection should be the first priority for this study.

**Study L-2, Transportation Access Studies of Commercial Business Districts.** E. Bourassa said that it would be important to study different community types. A. Demchur confirmed that this would indeed be the idea. Staff and committee members discussed plans to use data collected as part of study L-2 to inform study M-7 and conduct them in sequence, as well as the potential to integrate freight-related elements from concept M-6, which was not included in the staff recommendation.

**Study M-5, New and Emerging Metrics for Roadway Usage.** B. Pounds explained that his previous comment to staff about this study was that he was a little bit concerned about how the new metric development would be incorporated into the LRTP development cycle. T. Teich said that the metrics developed could potentially be relevant to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and other documents and studies. She also said that it would be good to make more report cards and interactive dashboards available online. B. Pounds noted that MPOs have to report on federal performance measures in the TIP. T. Teich responded that some of the criteria used for the TIP go beyond federal requirements. E. Bourassa asked if the project would be about examining different metrics, and then the MPO could follow up by incorporating them into various processes. Robin Mannion (CTPS, Deputy Executive Director) replied that this would be the intention. E. Bourassa said that this made sense as staff try to get their arms around rapidly developing research on this topic.

**Study M-7, The Future of the Curb.** E. Bourassa mentioned that the Boston Society of Architects and the City of Boston are both working on efforts along these lines. He suggested that it would be interesting to bring data to bear about double-parking, especially with regard to transportation network companies (TNC) pick-up/drop-off activity. T. Teich remarked that there is plenty of illegal curb use that's not double-parking. There was some discussion of various degrees of obstruction and double-parking. T. Bent remarked that this is a huge problem in the City of Boston. T. Teich noted that one could generate "endless" anecdotal evidence. E. Bourassa wondered if there is a way, through data, to define whether this is simply an annoyance or a serious issue. Members engaged in a brief discussion around countermeasures to this emerging problem.

**Study M-8, Express Highways Volume Charts.** Scott Peterson (CTPS Director of Technical Services) explained this concept. These charts were last done by CTPS in 2010. Traffic counts for this work come from MassDOT and are processed by staff. M. Abbott remarked that, following this discrete study, the production of the visualized counts could in the future be incorporated into the Congestion Management Process (CMP). T. Teich explained that members of the Advisory Council had been somewhat unsure of the project, but others were very enthusiastic about it. She advocated for making the results widely available to the public. There was some discussion.

**Study O-1, Staff-Generated Research:** B. Pounds said that the committee had not ranked this item, noting that it is popular among members, and would be continued in FFY 2019.

## **6. Development of Committee's Recommended List of Discrete Studies—*Bryan Pounds, UPWP Committee Chair***

B. Pounds reviewed the staff's recommendation. He stated that he accepted staff's recommendation, complimented the explanations of their choices, and opened the floor to question. T. Bent asked if there was a budget yet. K. Quackenbush responded that there was not at this time. K. Quackenbush explained that staff needs agency-side revenue figures, including from MassDOT, in order to generate those figures. Staff plans to present the projected costs for each study at the next meeting.

B. Pounds observed that he and committee members seem to agree with the staff-recommended list. The next step is for MassDOT staff and K. Quackenbush to come up with budget amounts and determine if any studies would need to be removed. S. Olanoff and T. Teich noted that some of the studies could be scaled up or down.

## **7. Members Items**

E. Bourassa said that he would talk about the MAPC side of the MPO work, perhaps at the next meeting.

## **8. Next Meeting**

The plan for the next meeting is April 5 (if the MPO meeting is held), and staff affirmed that they could have budget estimates if the agency revenue side is known by then.

## **9. Adjourn**

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

## Attendance

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<b>Members</b>	<b>Representatives and Alternates</b>
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Bryan Pounds
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Tegin Teich
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Steve Olanoff, alternate

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### **Other Attendees Affiliation**

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Name	Affiliation
Carl Seglem	Boston resident
Nelson Hoffman	FHWA

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

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director  
Robin Mannion  
Scott Peterson  
Annette Demchur  
Lourenço Dantas  
Mark Abbott  
Sandy Johnston  
Jen Rowe

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