

Dear members of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO):

The Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) have reviewed the draft of the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021-2022 Unified Planning Work Plan (UPWP) and would like to provide some comments for your consideration. We recognize the unexpected fiscal conditions that the Boston MPO board has had to manage while developing this year's UPWP. This has meant that discrete studies may not have been funded at the amounts suggested in the development of the universe of ideas or studies that have regional impact were not funded. It also means that the Boston Region MPO has had to balance funding to advance the long-term goals spelled out in the Long-Term Regional Transportation Plan.

Overall comment

Reviewing the selection of studies by category (Appendix Table C-2), we believe that this UPWP could use more effort in advancing studies for active transportation and climate adaptation/resilience. In previous years, there has been at least one study on an active transportation topic while this proposed UPWP has none. In addition, there are also no discrete studies to advance work on climate adaptation and resilience for regional transportation.

Recommended Modifications

We would like to offer some recommendations on modifications that would both meet the current moment and shift some of the resources toward the region's goals, even though financial resources are more limited than in previous years. Given the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and the economic recovery, we believe that the study on "Post-COVID Recovery" (Item L3) should be funded more to provide as much assistance and relevant insights and reports as possible. Even a small increase in the amount of additional funding would mean more of the region and its municipalities would benefit from this study.

For the UPWP study "Addressing Equity and Access in the Blue Hills" (Item T2), we believe that this study is too limited in its scope. In particular, as a subarea within the region and given the information materials provided in the UPWP materials, we believe that the study would be limited in providing regionwide insights for addressing mobility and transportation issues. Rather, we believe that the funding for this study could be used for other studies that address regionwide issues of equity, mobility, active transportation, and climate adaptation. Specifically, the RTAC believes that further study of the region's transit fare policy post-COVID would continue the MPO's work on addressing inequality in a way that broadly benefits the region.

UPWP Study Ideas Worth Continuing

While several discrete study ideas were not funded, we believe that the work should continue in some form with another regional or state organization or as a returning idea in FFY 2022-2023 UPWP.

- "Vision Zero Phase 2" (Item A3) would address active transportation and traffic safety within the region, issues that remained important during the pandemic
- "CTPS Resilience Program" (Item R1) or "Network Resilience, Importance, and Sustainability" (Item R2) would advance important work to address future needs for regional transportation and mobility

Thank you very much for your consideration.