

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

Unified Planning Work Program Committee Meeting Summary

March 7, 2024, Meeting

1:00 PM-2:00 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Derek Krevat, Chair, representing Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee agreed to the following:

- Approval of the January 11, 2024, meeting minutes

Materials

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. Meeting summary of the January 11, 2024, meeting ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
2. Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025 UPWP Universe of Proposed Discrete and Program-Based Studies

Meeting Agenda and Summary of Discussion

1. Introductions

See page 5 for attendance.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Meeting Summary of January 11, 2024—*Approval of this summary*

A motion to approve the summary of the January 11, 2024, meeting was made by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Tom O'Rourke) and seconded by the Metrowest Regional Collaborative (Dennis Giombetti). The motion carried.

4. Transportation Policy Analysis—Abby Cutrumbes, MPO Staff

A. Cutrumbes summarized the scope of work for the Transportation Policy Analysis position. The position has a few main priorities. One priority is keeping the MPO apprised of regional, state, and federal transportation policy development. Another part of A. Cutrumbes' work is analyzing how current and proposed policies could align with the MPO's goals for the region. And other priorities include conducting independent research projects that support MPO goals, facilitating policy dialogues with MPO board members, and using their feedback to move forward research questions.

A. Cutrumbes provided an in-depth example of a research project by describing the production of a memo on roadway pricing in conjunction with Seth Asante and Ryan Hicks of Central Transportation Planning Staff's (CTPS) Multimodal Planning and Design group. Future research topics could include the Commonwealth's Chapter 90 Program funding, and potential options for transportation revenue generation.

Discussion

David Koses (At-Large City of Newton) asked whether the roadway pricing research was part of explicit UPWP study funding. A. Cutrumbes replied that this work is part of ongoing programmatic work, and CTPS Executive Director Tegin Teich elaborated that the Transportation Policy Analysis position is set up to help programs across the agency.

Julia Wallerce (MAPC) asked about a calculation made on transportation opportunity costs of congestion as part of the roadway pricing memo. A. Cutrumbes replied that opportunity costs of congestion involve economic losses to individuals during time spent in traffic. Jen Rowe (City of Boston) asked a related question about the denominator of the opportunity cost calculation. A. Cutrumbes replied that she was unsure of the number of drivers in the denominator and that CTPS staff can follow up with more information.

D. Krevat (MassDOT) asked about what specifically in the Chapter 90 Program CTPS staff would like to research. A. Cutrumbes stated that one possibility for Chapter 90 Program research is to survey to find which municipalities funds are distributed to and for which purposes. J. Wallerce offered that MAPC is also considering research on the Chapter 90 Program given its importance to funding in the region.

Lenard Diggins (Regional Transportation Advisory Council) suggested that roadway pricing research go beyond measuring vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) and include other measures about how much of a burden roadway users are putting on the roadway

system. J. Rowe suggested using CTPS's transportation demand model as well as parking data to inform roadway pricing research.

D. Koses offered a suggestion about studying strategies for funding successful municipal shuttle programs, particularly after MPO funding expires.

J. Rowe suggested researching more on micromobility, including topics related to electric bicycles and considerations around battery usage.

5. FFY 2025 UPWP Universe of Proposed Studies—*Srilekha Murthy, MPO Staff*

S. Murthy opened her presentation by summarizing highlights about the UPWP study submissions, as well as the criteria by which study submissions will be measured. CTPS staff recommended that 23 of the 121 study submissions be considered as discrete studies or be incorporated within ongoing program work. Murthy stated that future UPWP meetings will be used to solidify committee priorities, develop a committee-recommended list of studies, and for ranking studies via survey.

Discussion

Casey Cooper (MPO staff) summarized studies regarding active transportation that are being considered, in particular, a staff-submitted proposal about improving the MPO's database of pedestrian facilities. D. Krevat made a statement in support of such work. L. Diggins asked how the study would be conducted. C. Cooper responded that staff would work with TILE2NET, an external vendor, to develop the database. Rose McCarron (MPO staff) added that TILE2NET can use aerial imagery to update pedestrian facility data.

C. Cooper pointed out another particular study proposal from Iolando Spinola that recommended analysis of sidewalk infrastructure and offered that updating the aforementioned proposal to update MPO's database of pedestrian facilities may assist with I. Spinola's study. Steve Olanoff (Three Rivers Interlocal Council) asked whether MAPC keeps records about sidewalk infrastructure. J. Waller recommended that CTPS review the work being done as part of staff's Safe Streets and Roads for All efforts to check for updates to pedestrian infrastructure. L. Diggins made a statement in support of research of pedestrian infrastructure. D. Koses suggested that pedestrian infrastructure studies take an inventory of pedestrian beacons in the region. T. Bent voiced support for studying the pedestrian infrastructure inventory, but raised a question about where money may be obtained to improve such infrastructure. T. Bent also recommended coordination with municipalities to obtain pedestrian infrastructure data, and he clarified that the City of Somerville updates its sidewalk inventory on a rolling

three-year basis. J. Rowe mentioned that the City of Boston recently had an external vendor survey pedestrian infrastructure, and that information could be shared with MPO staff.

C. Cooper introduced the study proposal submitted on micromobility. L. Diggins asked for clarification on the definition of micromobility.

C. Cooper introduced the study proposal on Level of Traffic Stress (LTS). L. Diggins made a statement supporting the study of LTS. J. Rowe mentioned that the City of Boston recently developed a score on LTS that may be useful to MPO staff. J. Wallerice suggested that the study proposal be reframed to make this proposal more feasible for smaller municipalities looking to improve bicycle infrastructure.

C. Cooper also introduced the study proposal on enhancing the bicycle-and-pedestrian-count data application.

D. Krevat asked about the quantity of studies that will be selected as part of the FFY 2025 UPWP. S. Murthy responded that the number of studies will depend on the final budget determination, MPO priorities, and the level of interest in study proposals.

6. Members Items

There were none.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on April 11, 2024.

8. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Julia Wallerice) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (Tom Bent). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Office of Transportation Planning)	Derek Krevat
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Julia Wallerice
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jen Rowe
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood)	Tom O'Rourke
Three Rivers Interlocal Council alternate (Town of Westwood)	Steve Olanoff
Metrowest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Marie Louis	MBTA
Sandy Johnston	MBTA
Steve Olanoff	Three Rivers Interlocal Council
Ben Muller	MassDOT
Robert Hart	
Ria Gandhi	

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Annette Demchur

Rebecca Morgan

Rose McCarron

Rounaq Basu

David Hong

Sarah Philbrick

Sean Rourke

Casey Cooper

Ethan Lapointe

Betsy Harvey

Srilekha Murthy

Abby Cutrumbes

Judy Day

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