

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Unified Planning Work Program Committee Meeting Summary

December 6, 2018 Meeting

9:00 AM–9:45 AM, 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 August 16, 2018, meeting

Materials

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. UPWP Tracking Database Fast Fact Sheet
2. Fourth Quarter Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2018 UPWP Budget Report Spreadsheets

Meeting Agenda and Summary of Discussion

1. Introductions

Members of the committee and other attendees introduced themselves and a sign-in sheet was circulated.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Update on FFY 2020 UPWP Outreach—*Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager*

S. Johnston (UPWP Manager) explained that the Committee had previously expressed interest in hearing how staff conducted outreach for the UPWP and other documents and processes. Staff attend meetings of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) subregions, meeting municipal staff, some elected officials, and others.

Currently, staff have been to four of the eight subregions, and they will visit the other four over the next six weeks. Additionally, S. Johnston will be meeting with a subcommittee of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Rider Oversight Committee and with the Regional Transportation Advisory Council. In addition, staff will engage in various digital outreach efforts. The Universe of Potential Studies had approximately 15 concepts in it last year and required a refresh; outreach has focused on generating new ideas for that.

Eric Bourassa (MAPC) arrived and S. Johnston gave him a brief recap of the previous discussion at the request of the Chair.

4. Update on Implementation of UPWP Study Recommendation Tracking Database—*Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager*

S. Johnston gave an overview of the effort to fill out the UPWP Study Recommendations Tracking Database. Staff has coded all study recommendations into the database, but response rates have been unimpressive. S. Johnston has requested via email updates on implementation from 60 municipalities and has only received a complete response from three. (Attachment 1 contains information on this effort.) E. Bourassa requested a list of all of the studies, and S. Johnston responded that staff would export it for him. B. Pounds suggested mentioning this challenge at the full MPO meeting. S. Johnston mentioned that Boston and Cambridge were the “guinea pigs”—they have had the data for a long time but have the most recommendations to review, so staff understand they will take a long time.

Tom Bent (City of Somerville) remarked that he has concluded that it can be best just to go out into the field and look at whether a recommendation has been implemented, and suggested that MPO staff ask municipalities to do that. B. Pounds asked if there was a timeline for when staff wanted this project completed. Karl Quackenbush (MPO Executive Director) replied that they had hoped it would be done earlier this year. Several technical issues arose during the construction of the database, which took time to resolve. This process is an alternative to what staff had completed in the past, sending staff intensively over a short period into the field to check on recommendations, which had proven very disruptive. Tom Kadzis (City of Boston) mentioned the importance of getting buy-in from the municipal staff who would be doing the work. E. Bourassa asked what types of studies are included in the Database. K. Quackenbush responded that all types of studies programmed in the UPWP are included. E. Bourassa suggested that perhaps the MPO could deny future technical assistance projects to municipalities unless they report. Some discussion followed of the concept of incentives. T. Bent noted that he had just reminded Brad Rawson, Director of Transportation and

Infrastructure in Somerville, to respond to the request for data, and emphasized buy-in as well.

B. Pounds asked how the request for data is delivered. S. Johnston responded recipients receive a spreadsheet with a drop-down menu giving status implementation options. T. Kadzis said the format is nice and very user friendly. B. Pounds asked if MPO staff also would be coming to MassDOT. S. Johnston replied affirmatively. Steve Olanoff (Town of Westwood/Three Rivers Interlocal Council alternate) noted that this project is on his agenda. David Koses (City of Newton) asked to whom the request had been sent. S. Johnston said it was sent to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) contact, and an MPO member if there was one from the town that the town planner knew personally. Some discussion ensued about who might be the right authority to answer some particular questions.

5. Action Item: Approval of the Meeting Summary for the August 16, 2018 meeting—*Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager*

A quorum of members having arrived, B. Pounds asked for a motion to approve the August 16, 2018, meeting summary (item #3 on the agenda). The motion was made by a member, seconded by another member, and passed unanimously.

6. Discussion of Fourth Quarter FFY 2018 Quarterly Reports—*Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director, and Robin Mannion, MPO Deputy Executive Director*

K. Quackenbush noted that the reports for fourth quarter FFY 2018 are a bit old at this point, representing the status at the end of September 2018, and already had been sent to the committee. There was significant discussion around clarifying particular points of the spreadsheet, as K. Quackenbush walked members of the committee through certain points on the way the spreadsheets work, and reasons why there might be budget discrepancies. A prime reason for under-runs in a project budget is if a staff member who was anticipated to work on that project leaves and a replacement cannot be found quickly. Robin Mannion (MPO Deputy Executive Director) noted that Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) ended State Fiscal Year 2018 with seven vacancies, several of which had been open for months. There was some discussion of the Staff-Generated Research budget line, which can be a difficult one to estimate because it is dependent on staff having availability to work on such projects aside from their usual responsibilities. K. Quackenbush answered several specific questions from committee members. B. Pounds mentioned briefly that MassDOT and CTPS staff coordinate to determine task prioritization for work CTPS performs under contract to MassDOT.

B. Pounds mentioned that MassDOT typically distributes financials at the annual Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies meeting in January, and so after that he might have 3C PL numbers, though 5303 would have to wait until later.

7. Members Items

There were none.

8. Next Meeting

There was some discussion of when in January the next meeting would be—potentially January 17, although B. Pounds would be absent.

9. Adjourn

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

Attendance

| Members | Representatives and Alternates |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| At-Large City (City of Newton) | David Koses |
| City of Boston (BPDA) | Tom Kadzis |
| Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) | Tom Bent |
| Massachusetts Department of Transportation | Bryan Pounds |
| Metropolitan Area Planning Council | Eric Bourassa |
| Regional Transportation Advisory Council | Ana Cristina Fragoso |
| Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce) | Steve Olanoff |

Other Attendees Affiliation

| Name | Affiliation |
|----------------|-------------|
| Lenard Diggins | MBTA ROC |

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director
 Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director
 Annette Demchur, Director of Policy & Planning
 Ali Kleyman, Certification Activities Group Manager
 Mark Abbott, Traffic Analysis & Design Group Manager
 Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager
 Jen Rowe, Public Outreach Manager
 Matt Archer, Technical Specialist

Attachment 1

UPWP Tracking Database Fast Facts

For the UPWP Committee, December 6, 2018

- The UPWP Tracking Database currently catalogues **1,859 recommendations** made by MPO staff in studies or technical assistance projects between 2008 and 2017.
- The database allows staff to analyze these recommendations in several ways. The recommendations can be sorted by municipality, and staff may generate “recommendation sheets,” which detail the recommendations and allow communities to update the implementation status for each proposed improvement.
- MPO staff initially sent recommendation sheets to Boston and Cambridge for review of the format and structure. After receiving feedback, MPO staff began sending recommendation lists to other municipalities on **October 5**.
- To date, **1,716 recommendations** have been sent to **60 municipalities**. A technical assistance memorandum detailing some recommendations for Arlington is still in draft form, so Arlington’s recommendation sheet will be sent upon completion of that memorandum.
- **87 recommendations** are to be confirmed by MassDOT, the MBTA, and the regional transit authorities.
- To date, MPO staff have received responses from **3 municipalities** that provided updates on **27 recommendations**. Of these, **5** were implemented, **21** are under consideration, and **1** was not implemented.
- MPO staff independently confirmed that **20 other recommendations** were implemented.
- Recommendations from studies and technical assistance projects finished in FFY 2018 and each year going forward will be added to the database on a rolling basis. Staff will develop a strategy for checking on their implementation status after an appropriate amount of time.