

Draft Memorandum for the Record

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

February 4, 2021 Meeting

9:00 AM–9:45 AM, Zoom videoconferencing platform. Recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FeGN5oAHcfA>

Benjamin Muller, Chair, representing Jamey Tesler, Acting 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 November 19, 2020, meeting

Materials

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. Meeting Summary of the November 19, 2020, committee meeting
2. PowerPoint to support discussion for agenda items four through six

Meeting Agenda and Summary of Discussion

1. Introductions

Ben Muller introduced the meeting and read the roll of attendees.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Meeting Summary of November 19, 2020—*Approval of this summary*

Lenard Diggins (Regional Transportation Advisory Council) made a motion to approve the meeting summary and Tom Bent (City of Somerville/Inner Core Committee) seconded it. The motion passed unanimously, with Erika Jerram (City of Framingham/MetroWest Regional Collaborative) abstaining due to not having attended the November 19 meeting.

4. Tentative Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022 UPWP Development Schedule—*Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager*

S. Johnston (Central Transportation Planning Staff UPWP Manager) walked the Committee through the proposed development schedule for the FFY 2022 UPWP. He first showed the “Development Page” for the UPWP on the MPO website (<https://www.bostonmpo.org/upwp-dev>), noting that the proposed schedule is largely similar to previous years. The schedule can be somewhat more relaxed with an aim to endorse the UPWP in July or August based on conversations with MassDOT and the MPO’s federal partners.

S. Johnston presented a draft schedule for the upcoming stages of UPWP development, construction of the Universe of Proposed Studies, and selection of studies. As of this meeting, MPO staff have conducted outreach to stakeholders to gather UPWP study ideas. A survey, available in multiple languages, is still open to gather ideas from the public. The proposed schedule was

- February 4: UPWP Committee discussion of development schedule
- February 18: UPWP Committee discussion of pre-Universe
- March 18: UPWP Committee discusses Universe
- April 1: UPWP Committee selects ranked list of study concepts

S. Johnston discussed details about different stages of the proposed schedule. Tom Kadzis (City of Boston) and B. Muller discussed the relationship between the UPWP and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development schedules. At the suggestion of David Koses (City of Newton/At-Large City), the Committee decided to move the February 18 meeting to March 4, since February 18 is already a busy day with an MPO meeting in the morning and a forum scheduled in the afternoon. L. Diggins and S. Johnston discussed opportunities for input from the public and the Advisory Council.

5. Potential Changes in the FFY 2022 UPWP—*Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager*

S. Johnston discussed the possibility of certain changes to the FFY 2022 UPWP compared to past versions of the document. He first discussed challenges relating to Chapter 5 of the UPWP, which covers “contract work” performed by CTPS for other entities (primarily MassDOT and MBTA). One challenge is that schedules for executing these contracts do not always align with the UPWP year; as a result, some contract work is never documented in any UPWP. Chapter 5 is generally the last element of UPWP to finalize, often late in the development process. S. Johnston also discussed Appendix A of the UPWP document, which documents studies in the MPO region not funded by the MPO. S. Johnston and B. Muller reviewed the federal guidance relating to

this appendix, and found that the core federal requirement is to document studies that are **funded by federal dollars and/or are “regionally significant,”** whereas the Boston MPO’s Appendix A had grown over the years to include a wide variety of local studies, making data collection difficult. This appendix is also typically among the last items to finalize.

S. Johnston presented two recommendations to resolve these challenges, and invited other ideas from the UPWP Committee. The proposals were as follows:

Proposal 1:

- Appendix A covers federally funded studies only
- Staff will work to implement an interactive dashboard
- Chapter 5 remains as it is

Proposal 2:

- Combine Appendix A and Chapter 5
- New chapter includes section on federally funded studies to be executed by other agencies

After discussion, including input from L. Diggins, D. Koses, Daniel Amstutz (Town of Arlington/At-Large Town), and B. Muller, the committee indicated its support for Proposal 1, feeling it is conceptually simpler and the interactive dashboard is a promising concept.

6. Recording of UPWP Committee Meetings—*Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager*

S. Johnston pointed out that the summary of the November 19, 2020, meeting was more concise than previous meeting summaries. Staff is now using video conferencing software that can generate an automatic transcript that can be made available to interested parties. Staff can also post the recording of the meetings on YouTube. These two factors combined mean staff can produce a shorter summary of the meetings, backed by the additional information that is available. S. Johnston asked the committee to affirm that they approve of him preparing meeting summaries in this style. He also requested permission to post meeting recordings on YouTube. The committee was supportive of this proposal, with particular contributions from L. Diggins, D. Koses, T. Bent, and B. Muller. L. Diggins asked how meetings would be handled as they are allowed to resume in-person, and if there would continue to be a digital component. S. Johnston responded that while staff are not sure yet, they are actively thinking about that question and would like to include a digital component. Several committee

members discussed with Matt Archer (CTPS Transportation Planner) plans for saving recordings digitally and securely and providing live closed captioning for meetings.

7. Coordinating with other MPOs—*Ben Muller, UPWP Committee Chair, and Jonathan Church, Manager of MPO Activities*

This discussion was deferred to the next meeting.

8. Members Items

B. Muller reminded committee members to send any study ideas to Sandy through the survey. Hiral Gandhi (CTPS Director of Operations and Finance) said she would be sending the Schedule of Operations and report on federal spending for the first quarter of FFY 2021 in the near future.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for March 4.

10. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by T. Bent and seconded by another member. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Office of Transportation Planning)	Ben Muller
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Daniel Amstutz
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke
City of Framingham (Metrowest Regional Collaborative)	Erika Oliver Jerram

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Annette Demchur, Director of Policy and Planning
Hiral Gandhi, Director of Operations and Finance
Mark Abbott, Traffic Analysis and Design Group Manager
Sandy Johnston, UPWP Manager
Kate White, Public Outreach Coordinator
Matt Archer, Transportation Planner
Ariel Patterson, Transportation Planner

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