

Wednesday, August 10, 2022

Boston Region MPO Board
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

From: Regional Transportation Advisory Council

To: Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Board

Re: Comment letter on Federal Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Unified Planning and Work Program

Dear members of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization board:

The members of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council offer the following comments on this year's Unified Planning and Work Program (UPWP).

Development of this year's UPWP

The advisory council believes that the process to develop this year's UPWP was less transparent than in previous years. On our initial review earlier in the UPWP process, several of the proposed discreet studies did not have clear goals and objectives or appeared to be composed of different discreet ideas that were only partially related to each other. MPO staff modified the study descriptions since then. While these modifications improve our understanding of the intent of the discreet studies, we were left unclear with how those decisions were made.

Ongoing priorities

In addition, we have concerns with the lack of discreet studies that assist with the MPO's transit modernization and climate resilience programs. We are concerned that there seemingly are few projects in development for the transit modernization program. A discreet study this federal fiscal year that would assist in identifying potential projects for MPO funding would be well timed. In the development of the previous UPWP for federal fiscal years 2021 and 2022, we noted that the previous UPWP did not have any discreet studies to look at climate resilience and that MPO board and staff look to brainstorm ideas on how to address the issues and problems that come with climate change.

Additional suggestions

The advisory council appreciate that MPO staff have created a document that allows people to understand the long-term outcomes of several years of the UPWP. This is most evident in the appendix table C-2 that shows the number of studies in each fiscal year that address the goals in the regional long-range transportation plan. We would like to suggest that the MPO show additional information about inputs and outcomes. For inputs, this would include information like dollar amounts for each category. For outcomes, this would include information such as total number of work products – memos, reports, presentations.

Thank you very much for your attention to our comments and suggestions.

Members of the Advisory Council 3C Committee
Andrew Reker, City of Cambridge
Ana Cristina Fragoso, American Council of Engineering Companies

John Seward, MoveMass

Len Diggins, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, Chair

Schuler Larrabee, Boston Society of Architects