

Draft Memorandum for the Record

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

April 28, 2022, Meeting

9:00 AM–10:00 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Derek Krevat, Chair, representing Jamey Tesler, 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:

- Approve the summary of the November 18, 2021, Committee meeting
- Approve the summary of the March 3, 2022, Committee meeting
- Approve the summary of the March 31, 2022, Committee meeting

Materials

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. [Draft meeting summary of November 11, 2021](#)
2. [Draft meeting summary of March 3, 2022](#)
3. [Draft meeting summary of March 31, 2022](#)
4. [Draft Federal Fiscal Year 2023 Universe of Proposed Studies](#)

Meeting Agenda and Summary of Discussion

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 6.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Meeting Summary of November 11, 2021—*Approval of this summary*

A motion to approve the summary was made by Thomas Bent (Inner Core Committee/City of Somerville) and seconded by Daniel Amstutz (Town of Arlington). The motion carried.

4. Meeting Summary of March 3, 2022—Approval of this summary

A motion to approve the summary was made by T. Bent and seconded by D. Amstutz. The motion carried.

5. Meeting Summary of March 31, 2022—Approval of this summary

A motion to approve the summary was made by T. Bent and seconded by Steven Olanoff (Three Rivers Interlocal Council/Town of Westwood). The motion carried.

6. Discussion: Universe of Proposed Studies for Federal Fiscal Year 2023—Srilekha Murthy and Sandy Johnston, MPO Staff

S. Murthy stated that staff received approximately 76 study ideas between its various outreach methods, and that staff has narrowed down the Universe to 12 potential studies. S. Murthy noted that many of the specific highway or roadway projects were relegated to the new Corridor Studies and Complete Streets Program, and thus will not be included in the Universe, but will still be studied by MPO staff. The goal of the discussion is not to make decisions on which studies to fund, but rather for members to ask questions about the projects and become more familiar with the proposed studies.

S. Johnston facilitated the discussion of the Universe, beginning with Active Transportation studies: *Shared-Use Path Guidebook*, *Impact of New Active Transportation Facilities in the Boston Region*, and *Updating the Bicyclist/Pedestrian Count Database*. S. Olanoff asked why the Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Database is listed as a discrete study and not as an ongoing operation of the MPO. S. Johnston stated that this study aims to modernize the program. Mark Abbott (MPO Staff) stated that the goal is to improve some of the technical aspects of the program, including the purchasing of bike counters and expanding counts throughout the region, as opposed to its historical focus on the Boston area.

D. Amstutz asked how different the *Shared-Use Path Guidebook* would be from existing Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) trail guidelines and best practices. M. Abbott stated that this project would include interviews with communities that have shared-use paths to understand their processes, what hurdles those communities faced, and what guidance they might provide for communities looking to implement similar paths. D. Amstutz replied that it would be a good idea for staff to cross reference this project with the Mass Trails project or other DCR initiatives. D. Krevat stated that because there are existing resources on this topic, any literature review undertaken as part of this project should incorporate such resources as well as a qualitative approach. D. Krevat additionally highlighted that this type of project is a priority for MassDOT District Six.

Lenard Diggins (Regional Transportation Advisory Council) asked why counts have not been done since 2019. M. Abbott stated that since 2019, counts have been conducted but participation has been very low due to the pandemic. L. Diggins responded that he would be interested to see whether collaboration with MassDOT would be possible on this project. D. Krevat agreed to reach out to colleagues at the Office of Performance Management and Innovation to gauge interest.

T. Bent asked whether a similar study had been conducted or proposed in past UPWPs. S. Johnston replied that during his tenure, he has not seen such a project conducted.

John Strauss (Town of Burlington) stated that this study would be very valuable to Burlington.

D. Amstutz stated that MassDOT conducted a study on the benefits of shared-use paths in March 2021, so this study should reference that report.

S. Johnston discussed the study in the Roadway and Multimodal Mobility category: *Lab and Municipal Parking Study*. S. Johnston noted that many of the roadway concepts shared with MPO Staff will be included in the new Corridor Studies and Complete Streets Program. The *Lab and Municipal Parking Study* was developed in collaboration with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and is derived from its Perfect Fit Parking model. This study's primary focus is the parking needs associated with lab developments and will incorporate municipal parking needs as well.

Brad Rawson (City of Somerville) shared that the City of Somerville has been advocating for this type of technical assistance for a number of years. As Somerville is experiencing rapid growth in its office and lab development, questions about parking and congestion are more and more relevant.

T. Bent stated that this study would be useful for Somerville, but perhaps there would be different findings and considerations between Inner Core Communities and suburbs such as Burlington. He raised the issue of relying on outdated data to make determinations about how much parking is required by a given development. He also stated that the intersection between lab space development and housing should be emphasized through this study.

L. Diggins asked why the cost of the study (estimated budget of \$125,000) is so high. S. Johnston replied that data collection is expensive overall, and in the case of lab space, where workers may keep odd hours, data collection would have to occur overnight as well. In addition, because this study would include mapping to different geographies, the

data analysis and mapping would be expensive. L. Diggins replied that he would like to see this study go further in the question of parking than past studies have.

Tegin Teich (MPO Staff) agreed with T. Bent's comments about the reliance on old data to determine the amount of parking necessary in new developments. T. Teich additionally stated that the cost of this study is not abnormal given its scope, but that the MPO will be receiving additional funds in the coming fiscal year, which will allow staff to expand the scope of their studies.

David Koses (City of Newton) asked why the study focused on labs and suggested a study that examines municipal parking rates across the region and develop a database for towns and cities to use.

D. Amstutz additionally asked why the study focused on lab space only and whether it can be expanded to include other types of land use. He also asked whether this is an MAPC-directed study or a collaborative effort. S. Johnston stated that the focus on labs is due to the fact that there is not a lot of research on the specific needs of the lab/life sciences industry, but this study does not need to be limited to just labs. J. Strauss stated his support for this study given the impact of the pandemic on existing lab and office space, especially along the Route 128 belt.

L. Diggins stated that as more job functions in lab spaces become automated, this study may evolve in scope as well in the future.

S. Johnston introduced the next category of studies, Transit Studies, and began discussing the *Flexibly Fixed Route Bus Service* study. This project is primarily a mapping exercise and will visualize the on-demand stops of Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and Regional Transit Authority (RTA) routes.

L. Diggins expressed his strong support of this project. D. Amstutz asked whether RTAs are already doing this kind of mapping. S. Johnston replied that some RTAs do have designated stops, but this project also intends to address informal stops, where passengers can wave down a bus when necessary. J. Strauss stated that the Lowell Regional Transit Authority does not do this kind of mapping, so this study is filling a necessary gap.

D. Koses stated that there are many considerations for stops such as grade requirements, Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility, and level landing platforms, among others. S. Johnston replied that there are many potential impacts from this study and those considerations are important.

7. Members Items

There were none.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on May 12, 2022, to continue the discussion of the Universe.

9. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Lenard Diggins (Advisory Committee) and seconded by Thomas Bent (Inner Core Committee/City of Somerville). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Office of Transportation Planning)	Derek Krevat
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	
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)	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	
Three Rivers Interlocal Council alternate (Town of Westwood)	Steve Olanoff
City of Framingham (Metrowest Regional Collaborative)	

Other Attendees Affiliation

Brad Rawson	City of Somerville
John Strauss	Town of Burlington

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
Jonathan Church, Manager of Certification Activities
Srilekha Murthy, UPWP Manager
Matt Archer, MPO Staff

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Boston Region MPO
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116
civilrights@ctps.org

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