

Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Unified Planning Work Program Committee Meeting Minutes

April 3, 2025 Meeting

2:30 PM–4:00 PM, Large Conference Room, Second Floor, Suite 2150, 10 Park Plaza,
Boston MA, 02116

Chris Klem, 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:

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of February 6, 2025

Materials

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. February 6, 2025, Meeting Minutes ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
2. Draft FFY 2026 UPWP Universe of Discrete Studies and Program Feedback ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
3. Draft FFY 2026 UPWP Study Ideas for Discussion ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on pages 7 and 8.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Action Item: Approval of February 6, 2025, Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 6, 2025, was made by the Inner Core Committee (Tom Bent) and seconded by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Advisory Council (Hanna Switekowski). The motion carried.

4. Introduction: Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026 UPWP—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director*

T. Teich described how MPO staff developed the list of seven discrete studies for the committee to discuss. Each submission was evaluated based on alignment with MPO goals and agency priorities and if staff have the capacity to carry out these studies in the next fiscal year. She stated that the MPO is receiving relatively flat formula funding this year, so if certain work areas expand, others may downsize.

5. FFY 2026 UPWP Discrete Study Ideas—*Olivia Saccocia, MPO Staff* ***A-1: Pedestrian scale lighting for small- and medium-sized communities***

O. Saccocia, MPO staff, introduced study A-1: Pedestrian scale lighting for small- and medium-sized communities.

T. Bent stated that the MPO should use preexisting information related to this topic if this study is selected. He suggested learning what the existing standard for pedestrian scale lighting is, and what information has already come out of the Town of Brookline's Committee on Pedestrian Friendly Lighting. He asked if the study will specifically address intersection lighting, straight roadway lighting, or something else.

Julia Wallerice, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), expressed interest in this study as a way to highlight different strategies to address pedestrian safety. Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council, suggested that this study examine the consistency of lighting levels to address challenges in transitioning between high and low light conditions. Rachel Benson, SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee, asked how many municipalities in the Boston Region are considered small or medium sized. She also raised concern about communities that are dark-sky compliant, and S. Olanoff responded to this concern by stating that some municipalities have the ability to dim or turn off their lights after a certain hour of the day. R. Benson also mentioned that some municipalities do not own their street lighting, which may present a challenge for this study.

Seth Asante, MPO staff, further clarified the study proposal. He explained that there is literature about pedestrian scale lighting; however, it is important to synthesize this information to make it more accessible to municipalities. This study will help medium- and small-sized communities improve their pedestrian-scale lighting without deferring to consultants.

L-1: Impact of parking supply on property values

O. Saccocia summarized study L-1: Impact of parking supply on property values.

J. Wallerice stated that this study aligns with and will expand MAPC's Perfect Fit Parking work. T. Bent expressed interest in this study but mentioned that the MPO should build upon the studies that have been previously conducted, such as the MPO's Phase I and II of the Lab and Municipality Parking studies. He also stated that the Phase II of the Lab and Municipality Parking study was not as effective as it could have been since many biotech properties have been vacant over the past few years. He suggested that the MPO consider this factor if study L-1 is moved forward.

T. Bent also mentioned that this study might raise concern among the business community. Len Diggins, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, suggested that MAPC provide funding support for this study, as it aligns closely with their work.

Rose McCarron, MPO staff, provided additional background on this proposal. Through the MPO's previous work, she has observed a knowledge gap between developers and banks. While developers are typically interested in reducing parking, banks tend to be reluctant to finance such properties due to concerns about insufficient parking. R. McCarron explained that one target audience for this study is the finance industry.

Jen Rowe (City of Boston) mentioned that this study could also emphasize the tax revenue that municipalities would get from the sale of these properties. R. Benson raised concern about the practicality of implementing this study, and she wondered if banks would implement the findings of this study. J. Wallerice responded to this concern, mentioning that MAPC is conducting a case study of how municipalities have successfully implemented parking reform.

M-2: Impact of Transportation Network Company (TNC) vehicles and delivery vehicles on travel time delays during peak hour

O. Saccocia explained study M-2: Impact of TNC vehicles and delivery vehicles on travel time delays during peak hour.

J. Rowe asked if staff plan to track TNC congestion on a regional scale or on a smaller scale. Priyanka Chapekar, MPO staff, explained that staff are working with the Department of Public Utilities to gain access to TNC data, and the scale of the study will depend on what data is available.

T. Bent was interested in this study addressing the issue of delivery vehicles parking in bike lanes. H. Switekowski suggested that this study analyze TNC trip patterns to and from Logan Airport to assess the effectiveness of the new fees that have been implemented on these trips. She also recommended that this study analyze if TNCs use high-occupancy vehicle lanes. J. Wallerice suggested that the MPO coordinate with Allison Felix, who has done related work on this topic with MAPC.

M-4: Multimodal bottleneck detection for the region

O. Saccocia explained study M-4: Multimodal bottleneck detection for the region.

C. Klem recommended that this study also focus on addressing safety within bottleneck areas. S. Olanoff agreed and stated that he thinks safety is the most important aspect of this study. T. Bent asked if the study results would be in a report format or a publicly accessible, interactive dashboard. Rebecca Morgan, MPO staff, responded that this study would result in data that would be available for municipalities.

J. Rowe suggested that this study connect to other MPO work initiatives to enhance the agency's Vision Zero work. L. Diggins mentioned that he thinks this study could lead to many applications.

M-5: Guidance for implementing crash response processes

O. Saccocia summarized study M-5: Guidance for implementing crash response processes.

J. Rowe explained that the City of Boston has shifted its Vision Zero work to addressing systemic safety needs informed by crash history, and she mentioned that one challenge of this study is that it focuses on reactive responses to crashes.

S. Olanoff raised a concern about the difficulties of getting police reports in a timely manner to analyze crashes, and L. Diggins reiterated this point as well. T. Bent expressed another challenge of this study. He stated that its success depends on municipal leaders permitting their staff to be interviewed as part of the crash response process. S. Olanoff proposed that this study focus on making it easier for municipalities to access crash data.

E-1: Representing the experience of limited mobility individuals

O. Saccocia summarized study E-1: Representing the experience of limited mobility individuals.

H. Switekowski stated that if this study is selected, staff should partner with organizations that are conducting similar work, such as state-wide or municipal commissions on disabilities.

L. Diggins said that this study may produce other findings as well. For example, this study could identify how type of housing (e.g., apartments versus single family homes) affects how easily an individual can access the sidewalk and how often they leave their home.

S. Olanoff expressed that there is information already available regarding this issue. J. Rowe commented that there has yet to be an accurate representation of the quality of destination access in the Boston region for individuals with limited mobility. S. Olanoff suggested that this study provides tangible solutions to solve the issues that are already known.

Emily Domanico, MPO staff, clarified several aspects of this proposal. She explained that MPO staff have been conducting work to quantify destination access in the region; however, these analyses did not represent the experience of limited-mobility individuals. Through this study, staff would conduct a literature review to determine how the MPO can best represent destination access for limited mobility individuals within the MPO's work.

L. Diggins suggested conducting this study over two or three years, as this would allow staff to determine how pervasive this issue is and what steps could be taken to address this.

P-9 Roadway pricing: Stakeholder analysis

O. Saccocia summarized study P-9: Roadway pricing: Stakeholder analysis.

J. Rowe stated that the MPO is an agency that is well positioned to conduct an analysis on the effectiveness of roadway pricing communication strategies. J. Wallerice expressed interest in how this study would build upon previous work related to this topic, not only in Boston, but other cities as well.

S. Olanoff suggested that this study be conducted in two parts: one part could address roadway pricing solutions specific to downtown Boston, and the other part could address solutions for the region. T. Teich explained that providing specific solutions to roadway pricing would realistically be a multi-year effort, and this study would build pieces of the knowledge base so that eventually, stakeholders in the region would be able to discuss solutions for congestion pricing.

C. Klem stated that the communication element of this study is key to advancing roadway pricing in the region. H. Switekowski commented that she appreciated how this study was worded carefully, since "congestion pricing" is often a divisive topic. H. Switekowski recommended that this study focuses on all strategies for roadway pricing, not just congestion pricing. L. Diggins suggested that the study addresses how roadway pricing strategies could be applied equitably throughout the region.

C. Klem stated that there will be a survey available after this meeting for committee members to provide additional feedback on each proposal.

6. Members' Items

There were none.

7. Next Meeting

C. Klem stated that the UPWP Committee will meet next on Thursday, April 10, 2025, at 1:00 PM.

8. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by the City of Boston (J. Rowe). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Office of Transportation Planning)	Chris Klem
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Julia Wallerice
MBTA Advisory Board	Hanna Switekowski
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Len Diggins
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jen Rowe
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Steve Olanoff
SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Wrentham)	Rachel Benson

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Dan Jaffe	Charlestown resident
Anthony Jones	Federal Highway Administration
Ben Muller	Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Melissa Santley	Massachusetts Department of Transportation

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Seth Asante

Abby Cutrumbes Heerema

Priyanka Chapekar

Annette Demchur

Emily Domanico

Jenn Emiko Kaplan

Hiral Gandhi

Betsy Harvey Herzfeld

Dave Hong

Elena Ion

Ali Kleyman

Lauren Magee

Erin Maguire

Rose McCarron

Marty Milkovits

Rebecca Morgan

Dorcas Okaidjah

Sean Rourke

Olivia Saccocia

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