



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Stephanie Pollack, MassDOT Secretary and CEO and MPO Chair
Tegin L. Teich, Executive Director, MPO Staff

WORK PROGRAM

INFORMING THE BIG IDEAS BEHIND THE MPO'S SCENARIO PLANNING PROCESS

NOVEMBER 5, 2020

Proposed Motion

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) votes to approve this work program.

Project Identification

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Classification

Boston Region MPO Planning Studies and Technical Analyses

Project Number 13308

Client

Boston Region MPO

Project Supervisors

Principal: Jonathan Church

Manager: Kate White

Funding Source

MPO Planning Contract #112310 and MPO §5303 Contract #112310

Schedule and Budget

Schedule: Eight months after work commences

Budget: \$20,695

Schedule and budget details are shown in Exhibits 1 and 2, respectively.

Relationship to MPO Goals

The Boston Region MPO elected to fund this study with its federally allocated metropolitan planning funds during federal fiscal year (FFY) 2021. The work completed through this study will address the transportation equity goal area established in the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Background

The transportation world is rapidly evolving. The MPO and its staff have heard significant interest from stakeholders, including municipal partners, about examining how some of the large-scale ongoing transportation trends, open policy questions, and possible developments could affect the MPO's work and the Boston region's transportation system in the upcoming years. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed transportation behavior in the short term and could have long lasting effects on how people move through the region. The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is the MPO's main vehicle for tackling long-term and large-scale regional transportation questions. Since the next LRTP is scheduled for completion in 2023, now is the time to develop the questions the LRTP scenario planning process will explore.

This study will undertake a series of public engagement efforts that will inform these questions, which will in turn shape the types of transportation projects in which the MPO will invest in the coming two decades. More specifically, the results from the study will help the MPO develop possible transportation futures that will be examined through the MPO's scenario planning process over the next year and a half. Possible scenario elements to discuss with stakeholders include congestion pricing; free transit fares on some or all services; implementation of the Transportation Climate Initiative or another funding mechanism; impacts of climate change or other natural disasters, and the field of resiliency more broadly; and large-scale regional zoning and land-use changes.

Staff recognizes that conducting outreach is challenging in this time of deep uncertainty. However, the transportation challenges that the region faces—from the devastating effects of climate change to the critical transportation needs brought on by the pandemic, especially for those working on the front lines—means that understanding and responding to the transportation concerns of Boston region residents is more important than ever. The MPO is charged with grappling with what the future Boston region transportation system might look like and is working to develop goals that will help the region meet these challenges. Input from the public—especially the region's most vulnerable residents—is crucial to this effort.

MPO staff understand that some themes and challenges heard in outreach may not be applicable to MPO activities, but it is critical that the MPO recognize these themes. As a regional body charged with carrying out a cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the region, staff are in a position to further the conversation on issues that members of the public care about. The MPO's partnerships with state, regional, and local planning bodies puts it in a prime position to convene people across the region and ensure all people have a voice at the table.

Objectives

To support development of big picture questions to be explored through scenario planning, staff will conduct a thorough program of outreach to stakeholders—including MPO member municipalities, other agencies, community organization leaders, advocacy group members, and other stakeholders representing transportation equity populations—to determine priorities for possible scenario planning analyses. Staff will also review and summarize public outreach efforts conducted by other organizations to expand the scope of the work. This work has three objectives:

1. Identify, through equitable and inclusive direct outreach, diverse perspectives on key regional transportation challenges and driving forces in the Boston region
2. Review and incorporate quantitative and qualitative data collected on regional transportation issues by other organizations
3. Identify potential strategies to address these key challenges to help incorporate them into the MPO's scenario planning process for the LRTP

Work Description

Task 1 Review Existing Data on Regional Transportation Priorities from Other Community Organizations and Agencies

Staff will review existing quantitative and qualitative data collected from other community organizations and agencies on present and future regional transportation concerns. Examples include, but are not limited to, MassINC polling on transportation behavior and perceptions, and the feedback on transportation from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's MetroCommon outreach.

Products of Task 1

Summaries of public outreach data collected by other agencies and organizations

Task 2 Conduct Virtual Focus Groups and Interviews

Staff will conduct a variety of focus groups and interviews with stakeholders representing municipalities, agencies, community organizations, chambers of commerce, and advocacy groups. Staff will target stakeholders who work at the intersection of mobility and the following issue areas:

- Public health
- Youth
- Housing
- Economic development

- Social issues and policy
- Environment
- Technology
- Workforce development

Staff will particularly target stakeholders who represent organizations that work with communities that face barriers to participating in civic life and, therefore, are often underrepresented in the planning process. Staff will aim to host focus groups convening stakeholders who work in each of the specific issue areas. To the extent feasible within the budget for this project, staff will interview stakeholders who are not able to participate in the focus group due to timing and capacity.

The focus group questions will target regional transportation challenges, potential solutions for the future, and strategies to address the problems. Possible elements to discuss with stakeholders will include the effects of work-from-home policies; public transit service changes; congestion pricing; free transit fares on some or all services; implementation of the Transportation Climate Initiative or another funding mechanism; impacts of climate change or other natural disasters, and the field of resiliency more broadly; and large-scale regional zoning and land-use changes. All outreach will take place virtually to maintain safe practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Products of Task 2

Results of the focus groups and interviews

Task 3 Produce an ArcGIS StoryMap and Present Findings

Staff will create an ArcGIS StoryMap—hosted on the MPO’s website and available to the public—to highlight the themes heard in outreach events and to tell the stories of stakeholders who participated in the focus groups. Staff will also present the findings from the public outreach efforts and explain how they will inform scenario planning for the LRTP to the MPO.

Products of Task 3

StoryMap and presentation to the Boston Region MPO board

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) operates its programs, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency), be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives federal assistance. Related federal nondiscrimination laws administered by the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, or both, prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, and disability. The Boston Region MPO considers these protected populations in its Title VI Programs, consistent with federal interpretation and administration. In addition, the Boston Region MPO provides meaningful access to its programs, services, and activities to individuals with limited English proficiency, in compliance with U.S. Department of Transportation policy and guidance on federal Executive Order 13166.

The Boston Region MPO also complies with the Massachusetts Public Accommodation Law, M.G.L. c 272 sections 92a, 98, 98a, which prohibits making any distinction, discrimination, or restriction in admission to, or treatment in a place of public accommodation based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or ancestry. Likewise, the Boston Region MPO complies with the Governor's Executive Order 526, section 4, which requires that all programs, activities, and services provided, performed, licensed, chartered, funded, regulated, or contracted for by the state shall be conducted without unlawful discrimination based on race, color, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, disability, veteran's status (including Vietnam-era veterans), or background.

A complaint form and additional information can be obtained by contacting the MPO or at http://www.bostonmpo.org/mpo_non_discrimination. To request this information in a different language or in an accessible format, please contact

Title VI Specialist
Boston Region MPO
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116
civilrights@ctps.org
857.702.3700 (voice)
617.570.9193 (TTY)

Exhibit 1
ESTIMATED SCHEDULE
Informing the Big Ideas Behind the MPO's Scenario Planning Process

Task	Month								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1. Review Existing Data on Regional Transportation Priorities From Other Community Organizations and Agencies	█								
2. Conduct Virtual Focus Groups and Interviews		█							
3. Produce an ArcGIS StoryMap and Present Findings						█			A

Products/Milestones

A: ArcGIS Story Map

Exhibit 2
ESTIMATED COST
Informing the Big Ideas Behind the MPO's Scenario Planning Process

Direct Salary and Overhead	\$20,695
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Task	Person-Weeks					Direct Salary	Overhead (106%)	Total Cost
	M-1	P-5	P-4	P-2	Total			
1. Review Existing Data on Regional Transportation Priorities From Other Community Organizations and Agencies	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.5	\$1,666	\$1,766	\$3,432
2. Conduct Virtual Focus Groups and Interviews	0.0	0.0	0.5	2.5	3.0	\$3,457	\$3,664	\$7,121
3. Produce an ArcGIS StoryMap and Present Findings	0.3	1.0	0.0	2.2	3.5	\$4,923	\$5,219	\$10,142
Total	0.3	1.0	0.5	6.2	8.0	\$10,046	\$10,649	\$20,695

Other Direct Costs	\$0
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TOTAL COST	\$20,695
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Funding
MPO Planning Contract #112310
MPO §5303 Planning Contract #112310