

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

April 10, 2025 Meeting

1:00 PM–2:15 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Chris Klem, Chair, representing Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Materials

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. Draft FFY 2026 UPWP Program Descriptions ([PDF](#)) ([HTML](#))

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on pages 6 and 7.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026 UPWP Update—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director*

T. Teich provided an update on the current UPWP development cycle. She explained that at this meeting, committee members will have the opportunity to discuss four programs with MPO staff. Draft descriptions for the MPO's 13 programs, which were available for review prior to the meeting, were written by staff in accordance with each program's Multiyear Plan. Multiyear Plans were recently developed by staff to help ensure that the MPO is working to advance its long-term goals.

T. Teich also stated that over the past several months, staff have evaluated each proposal that was received during the FFY 2026 UPWP idea-intake period. Later in the meeting, staff will provide information on how the MPO will be incorporating many of these ideas into the agency's ongoing program work.

David Koses, City of Newton, asked if it will be requested of the committee to consider any shifts in staff focus on certain programs or budget changes for this cycle of UPWP development. T. Teich explained that the MPO's program work is supported by formula

funding that is administered by MassDOT. This year, the MPO is receiving relatively flat formula funding, so many of the program budgets will see minimal changes in FFY 2026.

4. Community Transportation Access Program Discussion—*Betsy Harvey Herzfeld, MPO Staff*

B. Harvey Herzfeld provided an overview of the Community Transportation Access Program and the program's anticipated outcomes for FFY 2026.

Jen Rowe, City of Boston, noted that this program advances the new United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) order, Ensuring Reliance Upon Sound Economic Analysis, which she interpreted as something the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will carry out. J. Rowe asked if staff have received specific guidance on how MPO's should advance this order. B. Harvey Herzfeld explained that the MPO is not mandated to carry out the work specified in the US DOT order, however, it is information that staff is monitoring. B. Harvey Herzfeld stated that staff are aligning the Community Transportation Access work with the administration's priorities to the extent that staff consider necessary.

Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee, noted that one anticipated outcome of this program will be to improve communication of the MPO's work to the public through developing plain language documents. He asked what will be different about the MPO's approach to accomplish this in the next fiscal year compared to previous years. B. Harvey Herzfeld said that staff will dedicate more time to developing plain language documents that articulate the impact of the MPO's work. Staff also plan to engage with community groups in person to promote these materials.

5. Multimodal Infrastructure Program Discussion—*Jenn Emiko Kaplan, MPO Staff*

J. Emiko Kaplan briefly explained the Multimodal Infrastructure Program and listed the program's anticipated outcomes for FFY 2026.

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council, asked staff to clarify how the program will "synthesize smaller-scale study findings" in FFY 2026. J. Emiko Kaplan stated that, through this program, staff carry out different types of work, which include technical assistance, discrete studies, and 5303-funded planning studies. In FFY 2026, staff will begin to organize these study findings by theme to ensure that the study recommendations are feeding into the MPO's broader planning efforts.

D. Koses noted the corridor and intersection studies that are conducted as part of this program. He asked if this type of work has always been part of this program and how the specific corridors or intersections are selected. Rebecca Morgan, MPO Staff, explained that corridor and intersection studies were once done as discrete studies, however, the Multimodal Infrastructure Program was created in part so that these studies could be conducted within an ongoing program. R. Morgan also stated that there is an analysis in the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan that identifies critical corridors and intersections that should be studied. Staff look to this list when choosing which municipalities to ask if they need support conducting corridor and intersection studies. She also clarified that through the MPO's Technical Assistance Program, which is a different program, municipalities tend to reach out to the MPO for assistance.

6. Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Program Discussion—*Kyle Casiglio, MPO Staff*

K. Casiglio presented the Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Program and listed the program's anticipated outcomes for FFY 2026.

S. Olanoff asked for more information about the Bicycle and Pedestrian Steering Committee, and K. Casiglio explained that the committee is comprised of municipal staff representatives, advocacy organizations, such as Walk Massachusetts, Walk Medford, and Bike to the Sea, and university representatives, such as Harvard. He explained that the committee meets quarterly to provide feedback on the MPO's bicycle and pedestrian planning work.

T. Bent asked if staff are planning to study bike lane obstruction and congestion. T. Bent also asked how MPO research can be used by municipalities or consultants when designing new bike lanes. K. Casiglio explained that municipalities often make their own rules on which users are allowed in bike lanes. He also stated that MPO staff aim to create an active mobility plan for the region and will consider different municipalities' decisions on which users are allowed in bike lanes when developing this plan.

S. Olanoff asked which MPO programs typically study first- and last-mile connections. R. Morgan stated that the Multimodal Infrastructure Program studies first- and last-mile connections for all types of modes, and the Freight Planning Program studies first- and last-mile connections specifically for freight vehicles. She mentioned that staff also conduct this research with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) as part of the 5303-funded work.

J. Rowe added that the City of Boston is also researching needs and gaps in the city's bicycle and pedestrian network. She would like to connect with Metropolitan Area

Planning Council (MAPC) and MPO staff to understand the different data sources that should be looked at when considering needs and gaps in the network.

7. Freight Planning Program Discussion—*Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan, MPO Staff*

S. Gopalan Narayanan provided an overview of the Freight Planning Program and the program's FFY 2026 anticipated outcomes.

C. Klem asked if staff will be studying ways to improve curb management of delivery vehicles. S. Gopalan Narayanan explained that the FFY 2025 cargo e-bike first- and last-mile discrete study will be completed at the end of this fiscal year and will result in a list of recommendations for curbside management of delivery vehicles in the region.

C. Klem also asked if staff could further explain the results of the FFY 2023 Regional Freight Decarbonization Plan discrete study and how the MPO plans to build upon this work. S. Gopalan Narayanan stated that the study identifies several different freight decarbonization strategies, including electrification and alternative fuels, air quality and reporting, and mode shift. The subsequent FFY 2025 discrete study on cargo e-bikes came from the mode-shift recommendation in the FFY 2023 discrete study. S. Gopalan Narayanan also explained that staff plan to engage freight stakeholders in the region to discuss decarbonization strategies to build off the findings from the Freight Decarbonization Plan.

8. FFY 2026 UPWP Program Updates—*Olivia Saccocia, MPO Staff*

O. Saccocia provided information on which UPWP survey submissions staff plan to incorporate into the MPO's ongoing work initiatives. She explained that there were 13 proposals that staff can initiate in FFY 2026, which include an analysis on anticipating new housing developments and transit needs in the region and creating a unified Transportation Improvement Program and Long-Range Transportation Plan project universe, for example. There were 19 additional ideas staff will consider integrating into the MPO's program work in future years, including a phase II of the Parking in Bike Lanes study and a small-scale participatory planning project.

Len Diggins, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, asked if staff could clarify what a small-scale participatory planning project would entail. R. Morgan explained that staff typically collaborate with municipalities when conducting planning analyses. With this project, staff would also engage directly with the community and advocacy organizations. She explained that staff plan to pilot this within the MPO's technical assistance program.

9. Members' Items

There were none.

10. Next Meeting

C. Klem stated that the UPWP Committee will meet next on Thursday, April 17, to discuss and vote on the FFY 2026 discrete study scenarios. Julia Wallerice, MAPC, expressed interest in the MPO hosting more in-person committee meetings, and C. Klem responded that he would work with MPO staff to discuss the possibility of hosting more in-person meetings in the future.

11. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the MBTA Advisory Council (Hanna Switekowski) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (T. Bent). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Office of Transportation Planning)	Chris Klem
MBTA Advisory Council	Hanna Switekowski
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Julia Wallerice
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jennifer Rowe
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Three Rivers Interlocal Council alternate (Town of Westwood)	Steven Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Ben Muller	Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Heidi Doyle	Town of Sherborn Planning Board
Maria Foster	Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Melissa Santley	Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Jenn Martin	City of Newton Department of Planning and Development
Marcia Rasmussen	Town of Sudbury Planning and Community Development

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Kyle Casiglio

Annette Demchur

Jenn Emiko Kaplan

Hiral Gandhi

Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan

Betsy Harvey Herzfeld

Dave Hong

Elena Ion

Ethan Lapointe

Erin Maguire

Rose McCarron

Marty Milkovits

Rebecca Morgan

Gina Perille

Olivia Saccocia

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