

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

March 22, 2024, Meeting

10:00 AM–11:30 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

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

Decisions

There were none.

Materials

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. [FFY 2025 UPWP Universe of Studies \(pdf\)](#)
2. [FFY 2025 UPWP Universe of Studies \(html\)](#)

Meeting Agenda and Summary of Discussion

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 6.

2. Public Comments

Dan Jaffe asked about the Silver Line extension to Sullivan Square and expressed concern about the extension of the line into the Charlestown community. He proposed an Orange Line spur line into Everett. He mentioned some public developments that would cause increased traffic, and his belief that the community would be unable to handle it.

D. Krevat acknowledged the comment and thanked D. Jaffe for sharing. There were no other comments.

3. FFY 2025 UPWP Universe of Proposed Discrete and Program-based Studies—*Srilekha Murthy*

Discussion

Srilekha Murthy (MPO Staff) presented on the FFY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Proposed Studies. S. Murthy spoke about the proposed study of various bicycle and pedestrian plans from across the region. There were no questions or comments.

S. Murthy then discussed a proposed study about the removal of parking on commercial streets. Lenard Diggins (Regional Transportation Advisory Council) stated that this study could be incorporated into future freight studies. David Koses (City of Newton) asked how the data would be gathered. Rounaq Basu (MPO Staff) answered that staff does not have an answer to that yet. S. Murthy further clarified that these particular proposals are in very early stages. Jen Rowe (City of Boston) mentioned a study that showed that the removal of parking had an economic benefit to local businesses. D. Koses (City of Newton) voiced his support for the proposal.

S. Murthy mentioned another proposed study on bike and helmet use. There were no questions or comments.

S. Murthy then discussed an FFY 2023 Sustainability and Decarbonization effort. Erin Maguire (MPO Staff) added that stakeholders were interested in further steps. L. Diggins pointed out that this study could have multiple uses to various departments and interests. Tom O'Rourke (Three Rivers Interlocal Council) asked for a definition of "freight" in this context. E. Maguire clarified it was defined as any movement of bulk goods. J. Rowe added that another aspect would be electric-powered freight transport. D. Krevat voiced his support for the study.

S. Murthy then expanded on three more proposed freight studies. The first was a study about a freight priority network. T. Bent mentioned that some other cities used bus lanes for priority freight transport and asked if that idea would be part of the study. R. Basu said that it would not, but explained the Biden administration had recently released the nationwide freight priority network and that this was going to be the basis for much of the data mapping. D. Krevat pointed out that this topic could be part of the study on decarbonization, as previously discussed, and he also pointed out that results from this particular study could potentially assist with determining federal funding eligibility for certain roadways for the National Highway Freight Program federal formula source at a high level.

S. Murthy introduced the next study on using e-cargo bikes for first- and last-mile deliveries. S. Murthy said this study received significant interest and will be moving forward in the near future through the MPO as well as through other entities currently conducting a related study. There were no questions or comments.

S. Murthy then talked about a similar study on multimodal mobility, which will fall under the same category as the previous two studies. Rebecca Morgan (MPO Staff) expressed concern about the budget and commented that more discrete ideas were preferred due to budget. Brian Kane (MBTA Advisory Board) agreed with R. Morgan. He asked for a more specific strategy and offered connections in the freight industry. B. Kane also asked for more specific dialogue with people in the freight industry. L. Diggins agreed with B. Kane and then mentioned that car sharing fit in with multimodal mobility as well.

S. Murthy discussed the next study about multimodal mobility related to the usage of transit by bicyclists and related issues. D. Krevat asked if anyone from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) had done a similar study. L. Diggins said that some data were collected, and he offered to bring Scott Mullen, who proposed this study, to a future UPWP meeting to address questions. J. Rowe agreed there were some similar studies done at the MBTA. D. Krevat pointed out the connection to the BlueBikes study as well.

S. Murthy turned over the presentation of the next three proposed studies to R. Basu. R. Basu had submitted all of these proposals, one on the connection between bikes and trains, another on mode shift, and a third on roadway pricing. L. Diggins asked for a comment from J. Rowe, who mentioned there was a challenge concerning fees the MBTA required for e-bike stations on MBTA property. L. Diggins expressed support for the mode shift proposal and the role public transit could play in mode shift. J. Rowe agreed. D. Krevat expressed support for both proposals and asked if there was a connection to the current BlueBikes study. R. Basu explained the study was similar, but looked in a new direction.

Next, there was a discussion of a proposed study on roadway pricing. L. Diggins expressed his support. B. Kane asked for clarification on the timeline of this work. S. Murthy clarified the study would run from October 2024 to September 2025. B. Kane stated that a new study would not be useful, as the Governor's Transportation Funding Task Force would already be exploring this topic on a much tighter timeframe. J. Rowe disagreed, and pointed out that the studies differed in scope. B. Kane responded by advocating for implementation and publication of data already collected, rather than further studies. R. Morgan expressed a desire for prioritizing the study on a shorter time

frame. Tegin Teich (MPO Executive Director) clarified that work was being done to use data already collected to create policy. L. Diggins also advocated for active implementation and a shorter time frame. J. Rowe pointed out some studies had already been published and asked for clarification. B. Kane pointed out that valuable data remain unpublished, which made reference difficult. T. Teich commented that work was being done to prepare the relevant material for the board. D. Koses asked if data had been collected specifically on toll avoidance. L. Diggins answered that these data were collected in other cities. R. Basu agreed. T. Bent also mentioned seeing this traffic behavior. D. Krevat mentioned that MassDOT's draft Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan references an action item to explore congestion pricing at a high level and that in the future, if the study were to proceed, it would be more relevant to occur at a statewide level with adequate funding for a comprehensive assessment of implications of a congestion pricing program rather than at a regional level with limited funding.

S. Murthy discussed the next study on transit outages. L. Diggins expressed tentative support, but cautioned about the overuse of the term "emergency." B. Kane asked if this was a continuation of any previous studies; S. Murthy clarified it was not. B. Kane mentioned monthly community forums held by the MBTA on this subject and offered recordings and other data that had already been collected. He again expressed concern about the time frame. T. Bent noted some issues with the MBTA's use of buses during train station closures, mentioning it was either usually in excess or inadequate. J. Rowe expressed interest in the forum recordings.

D. Krevat went on to share a proposed study on identifying on-demand transit needs. L. Diggins commented on the potential cost of the project.

D. Krevat discussed a proposal on understanding how demographics of suburban areas and transit demand in those areas are changing as higher costs in the City of Boston and inner core are pushing lower-income residents further from the inner core area. S. Murthy noted that there is an issue with accessing historical data. L. Diggins suggested incorporating the impact of the pandemic in this study. J. Rowe asked if MBTA funding could be used for this study. D. Krevat said the study was a good candidate for that funding. T. O'Rourke expressed support.

S. Murthy then discussed a proposed study on dedicated bus lane use. B. Kane proposed an amendment to add a study of economic benefit from the dedicated bus lanes. R. Morgan agreed that that element could be added. D. Koses mentioned a study of bus lane use by general traffic and S. Murthy responded that the study was in progress. Stella Jordan (MPO Staff) clarified that survey responses were currently being

collected. T. Bent mentioned the need for enforcement and tied this idea back to the previously discussed freight studies. T. Bent also discussed the importance of implementing study conclusions. R. Basu added that there was limited funding for these particular studies.

S. Murthy then discussed a similar proposed study on bus and bike lanes and the impact on air quality. S. Murthy pointed out that this proposal needed more planning and scope work to make it more discrete and to fully map out the intentions and methods of the study. There were no questions or comments.

S. Murthy then presented a study proposal on climate change, specifically flood impact on destination access. D. Krevat and J. Rowe expressed interest and support. L. Diggins expressed curiosity about previous work done by staff using Conveyal, which this study would be built upon. D. Krevat explained Conveyal's work at a high level. S. Murthy mentioned that there is work ongoing using Conveyal, from which this proposal stems, and Judy Day (MPO Staff) expressed appreciation for the feedback.

Lastly, S. Murthy shared the proposal for a study on climate resilience, specifically about the change in air quality metrics and its impact.

S. Murthy closed by explaining that a survey would be sent out for staff and committee members to rank the preferences of the proposed studies. S. Murthy explained the results will be shared in the next committee meeting.

Vote

None taken.

4. Members' Items

There were none.

5. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by MassDOT (D. Krevat). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jen Rowe
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke
MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning	Derek Krevat

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Dan Jaffe	
Kathleen Ledoux	Massport

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Rounaq Basu
Casey Cooper
Abigail Cutrumbes
Judy Day
Annette Demchur
Hiral Gandhi
Betsy Harvey
Stella Jordan
Ethan Lapointe
Erin Maguire
Rebecca Morgan
Srilekha Murthy
Sarah Philbrick
Sean Rourke

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