DRAFT: FFY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Study Ideas for Discussion

Project ID	Description	Cost estimates	Source	Proposed as discrete study or program
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION				
A-1	**Pedestrian-scale lighting for small- and medium-sized communities** Street lighting plays a vital role in enhancing safety and reducing nighttime crashes. Recent advancements in lighting technology have improved vehicular illumination, which helps increase driver safety. Also, most street lighting in the Boston MPO region was designed with an emphasis on drivers. This lack of attention to vulnerable users, such as people who walk, bicycle, or use assistive mobility devices, can compromise their safety and security using facilities such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and crossings. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), approximately 76 percent of pedestrian fatalities occur in dark and low-light conditions, and inadequate pedestrian-scale lighting designs and resources to guide communities are significant contributing factors. The Town of Brookline Select Board recently established a Pedestrian-Friendly Lighting Committee in response to this issue. This committee developed a plan to implement pedestrian-friendly lighting along busy sidewalks, assessed public demand for improved street lighting, and evaluated the costs associated with installing and operating new pedestrian-scale street lighting. To address the growing need for safer and more secure streets for vulnerable users, MPO staff can investigate best practices for pedestrian-scale lighting at intersections, mid-block crossings, sidewalks, and bike lanes in various settings such as commercial areas, villages, parks, and neighborhoods. The outcome of this synthesis will be a comprehensive guide outlining appropriate lighting specifications, such as lighting intensity, contrast, LED options, color temperature, and compliance with dark sky regulations for the identified areas. This guide will equip small and medium-sized communities with the tools and resources to evaluate lighting designs and select appropriate equipment to provide safer and more secure facilities for vulnerable users. Well-designed pedestrian-scale lighting can encourage more people to walk and bike at night and in low-light conditions, fostering a stronger sense of community and promoting mode shift.	$50,000	Seth Asante, sasante@ctps.org	Discrete study

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LAND USE, ENVIRONMENT, & ECONOMY				
L-1	**Impact of parking supply on property values** Reducing parking supply is an important aspect of travel demand management, reducing the convenience of driving and incentivizing alternative modes. It also impacts the number of housing units developers can build. Financing of new development has been cited as a challenge to reducing parking minimums or implementing maximums. Developers are hesitant to reduce parking supply because they worry it will make the property less valuable, but there is little evidence to support this conclusion. Thus, analyzing the relationship of parking supply and property values could provide the basis for authorities to lower or abolish parking minimums. This study would use historical records of real estate sales and parking supply to explore this relationship. Staff would use data from CoStar (available via MAPC) to analyze the interaction between parking spaces per square foot and sale price for particular properties. The analysis would control for a number of variables that influence property value and establish separate conclusions for commercial and residential properties.	$70,000	Seth Strumwasser, sstrumwasser@ctps.org Rose McCarron, rmccarron@ctps.org	Discrete study

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ROADWAY & MULTIMODAL MOBILITY				
M-1 & M-2	**TNC Trip Patterns and Mobility Impacts in the Boston Region** As Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) like Uber and Lyft continue to expand, understanding their role in regional mobility is essential for future transportation planning. This proposal explores potential use of the TNC dataset reported to the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) to examine various aspects of their impact, including travel behavior, congestion, public transit integration, and policy implications. One key focus is analyzing trip characteristics and usage patterns across different geographic areas. This includes examining variations in trip frequency, trip distances, time-of-day demand, and the prevalence of single-ride vs. pooled-ride choices. Additionally, the study could assess TNC contributions to vehicle miles traveled (VMT), particularly the percentage of deadhead miles (miles driven without passengers), providing insights into their effects on congestion, emissions, and overall network efficiency. Another important consideration is the relationship between TNCs and public transit. This includes determining whether TNCs complement transit by improving first/last-mile connectivity or compete with it by drawing riders away, as well as evaluating their potential to serve transit deserts where traditional public transportation is limited. Multiple teams within the Boston Region MPO can be involved in this study. The Data Management group could maintain and enhance TNC datasets, enabling the continuous evaluation of their impact and supporting informed decision-making for policy and modeling efforts. The Travel Model Development team could use these insights to refine TDM23 and prepare for the development of TDM27, ensuring TNC-related travel behaviors are accurately incorporated. The Planning and Policy team could analyze regulatory strategies if TNCs significantly contribute to increased VMT and explore ways to incentivize their use as transit-supportive services. By taking a coordinated approach, this study could provide a comprehensive understanding of TNCs' role in the transportation network, ensuring that policy, planning, and modeling efforts reflect evolving travel patterns and support a balanced and efficient transportation system in the Boston region. The much richer TNC dataset required by legislation is only just becoming available. We have already received an inquiry from another MA RPA about access and use of these data.	M-1: accomplished through program work M-2: $50,000	Marty Milkovits, mmilkovits@ctps.org	Discrete study
	Impact of TNC vehicles and delivery vehicles on travel time delays during peak hour Preliminary approach: Using the TNC data, analyse impacts of these rideshare vehicles on congestion, specifically in terms of traffic volume percentage, passenger hours of delay and average peak hour delays. Overall outcome: a report that feeds into the performance measures aspect of CMP, but as a separate study as it addresses a very specific question that also came up as CMP committee feedback.		Priyanka Chapekar, pchapekar@ctps.org	Discrete study

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M-4	**Multimodal bottleneck detection for the region** MassDOT, MBTA, RTAs, and municipalities face ongoing challenges in managing congestion around major transit hubs, particularly MBTA subway and commuter rail stations, where pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles interact in complex ways. To address this, a multimodal bottleneck detection system can be developed with regional datasets on walking, biking, and transit activity developed through the NO-HEAT project. Replica provides pedestrian and cyclist activity data. Using Reinforcement Learning (RL) models, the outcome of this study will be to identify road segments where multimodal conflicts are likely to occur.	$50,000 - $60,000	Dorcas Okaidjah, dokaidjah@ctps.org	Discrete study
M-5	**Guidance for Implementing Crash Response Processes** A key part of Vision Zero is analyzing and understanding the causes of specific crashes through an on-the-ground crash response process. A crash response process typically consists of an interdepartmental municipal group (can include residents) that meets within a specified time period following a fatal or severe injury crash. The group analyzes the site of the crash, and proposes short- and longer-term infrastructure or other changes that could help prevent or lessen the impact of future crashes at the site. While several municipalities in MA and around the US have adopted these crash response processes, they can continue to be somewhat challenging conversations for municipalities to have for various reasons. MPO staff could do a review of these crash response processes in the Boston region and beyond. This study would include peer research, interviews with municipal staff and leadership, and the development of guidance for municipalities to implement their own crash response process. Part of the project could involve working with Strong Towns to educate MPO members about the concept of crash analysis and to hold an example crash analysis studio.	$60,000	Ali Kleyman, akleyman@ctps.org	Discrete study

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COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION ACCESS				
E-1	**Representing the experience of limited mobility individuals** Throughout transportation planning and decision making, we characterize and quantify mobility metrics to understand travel throughout the region with limited capacity to reflect the perspective of people with limited mobility. The goal of this study is to strengthen and support disability-inclusive transportation planning throughout data-driven decision making efforts. MPO staff have made progress to characterize the walkability of neighborhoods and to calculate how the transportation system supports destination access. These efforts could be improved by developing strategies to better accommodate the perspective of limited mobility individuals. Through community engagement, literature review, and case study analysis efforts, this study will identify potential solutions to better represent how the transportation network serves people with limited mobility and recommendations to incorporate these solutions in data-driven planning at a regional scale. The output of this study will be a library of variables to characterize travel impacts and measure travel for limited mobility individuals. Additional References: Access and Persons with Disabilities in Urban Areas Report Amsterdam's Accessible Route Planning Project Project Sidewalk	$95,000 - $100,000 Can be scaled to $65,000	Emily Domanico, edomanico@ctps.org	Discrete study
PROGRAM-RELATED FEEDBACK				
P-9	**Roadway Pricing: Stakeholder Analysis** This study will build on the findings of the FFY25 roadway pricing study to conduct a stakeholder analysis focused on assessing attitudes toward the roadway pricing scenario and a high-level assessment of its impact on various populations/stakeholder groups. The study will also evaluate effective messaging around roadway pricing by reviewing strategies that other agencies have used successfully when implementing roadway pricing. The purpose of this study is to provide a framework for conducting stakeholder analyses of potential roadway pricing strategies that might be proposed in the Boston region, identify effective communications and engagement strategies, and provide key data that can support a successful implementation.	$50,000	Jennifer Rowe, jennifer.rowe@boston.gov Abby Cutrumbes Heerema, acutrumbes@ctps.org	Discrete study

Abbreviations:

CTPS = Central Transportation Planning Staff. CMP = Congestion Management Planning. FFY = Federal Fiscal Year. MAPC = Metropolitan Area Planning Council. MassDOT = Massachusetts Department of Transportation. MBTA = Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. MPO = Metropolitan Planning Organization. RPA = Regional Planning Association. TNC = Transportation Network Company. UPWP = Unified Planning Work Program.