



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Jamey Tesler, MassDOT Secretary and CEO and MPO Chair
Tegin L. Teich, Executive Director, MPO Staff

MEMORANDUM

To: Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) board members
From: Tegin Teich, Executive Director; David Mohler, MassDOT, MPO Board Chair; and Marc Draisen, MAPC, MPO Board Vice Chair
Subject: Framework for developing a Boston Region MPO Operations Plan
Date: March 23, 2022

The 2011 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Relating to the Comprehensive, Continuing, and Cooperative Transportation Planning Process in the Boston Metropolitan Area¹ requires the MPO to create an operations plan to address administration and finance, programming, policy, and technical products.

The lack of an existing operations plan was noted in the review findings of the 2019 Transportation Planning Certification Review of the Boston Region MPO final report.² The federal report recommended that the MPO develop an operations plan that should *clarify roles and responsibilities among [the Boston Region MPO] members and staff, particularly among CTPS, MAPC, and MassDOT, pertaining to collaboration, communication, work assignments, and products. Additionally, it should provide further clarification on the roles of the Chair and Vice-chair, define officer roles for subcommittees, and identify other necessary processes to support an effective 3C process and facilitate BRMPO operations as the regional forum for transportation decision-making.*³

While the operations plan is required, the process for developing the operations plan is at the discretion of the board members. Board members could establish an ad hoc Operations Plan Committee. Board members could discuss and reach consensus on the facilitator or chair of that committee, or they could respond to a recommendation from a subset of board members. Board member volunteers for the committee could work with the facilitator or chair of the committee to develop a work plan for the committee and expectations for periodic updates from the committee to the full board.

¹ https://www.bostonmpo.org/data/pdf/about/mpo/Boston_Region_MPO_MOU_2011.pdf

² <https://www.bostonmpo.org/data/pdf/about/mpo/Boston-Region-MPO-Recert-2019.pdf>

³ Source: Transportation Planning Certification Review of the Boston Region MPO final report (2019), p 13.

The following list of proposed topics for the operations plan is based on the MOU requirements and federal certification recommendations. The proposed topics are intended to provide a starting framework for developing the operations plan. The presence of a topic in this list does not indicate a presupposition that the status quo needs to be adjusted. In some cases, for example, the committee or board members might discuss a topic, and resolve it by deciding to retain the status quo. In other cases, they may decide that an existing policy or process may only need documentation in the operations plan if it is not formalized elsewhere. If, on the other hand, the MPO decides to adjust certain policies or processes, those decisions may, in certain circumstances, require amending the existing MOU.

Election of board members

- Document the process for electing the municipal board members, which is overseen by MAPC and the MBTA Advisory Board

Officers of the MPO board

- Define these roles' election, terms, authority, and responsibility for information sharing with board members

Board member roles and representatives

- Define roles and responsibilities of MPO board members
- Define requirements for engaging member municipalities and subregions
- Define expectations and process around assigning representatives for the appointed official
- Define roles, responsibilities, and expectations for ex officio members
- Clarify expectations around representation of the MPO to press and other stakeholders

MPO board meetings

- Further clarify the process for agenda setting
- Define expectations for facilitation of board meetings, including when the primary facilitator is not present
- Define meeting locations and requirements, whether digitally, in person, or hybrid
- Define expectations for frequency and length of MPO meetings

Standing and ad hoc committees

- Identify the purpose and responsibilities of committee meetings and their attendees relative to the MPO board meetings
- Confirm or adjust number, role, and officers of standing committees based on the expectations for both committee and board meetings.
- Define the trigger and process for establishing ad hoc committees and their officers

MassDOT information updates

- Further clarify the process for agency information sharing as described in the MOU
- Further clarify process and expectations for sharing federal funding assumptions (PL, 5303 & Regional Target) each year

MPO Executive Director

- Define the recruitment and hiring process for Executive Director of staff
- Clarify process for approval of the Executive Director's evaluation and salary adjustment

MPO work products

- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and collaboration around MPO products identified in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Maintenance of the Operations Plan

- Specify a realistic process for reviewing and updating the operations plan, including how changes are approved
- Align this process with the update of the Boston Region MPO MOU

Next Steps

Upon reviewing this memorandum, MPO board members are asked to discuss the topic areas and process described in this memorandum and establish the next steps for launching the development of the operations plan.