

# BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



August 2021  
Revised April 2022

# Public Engagement Plan

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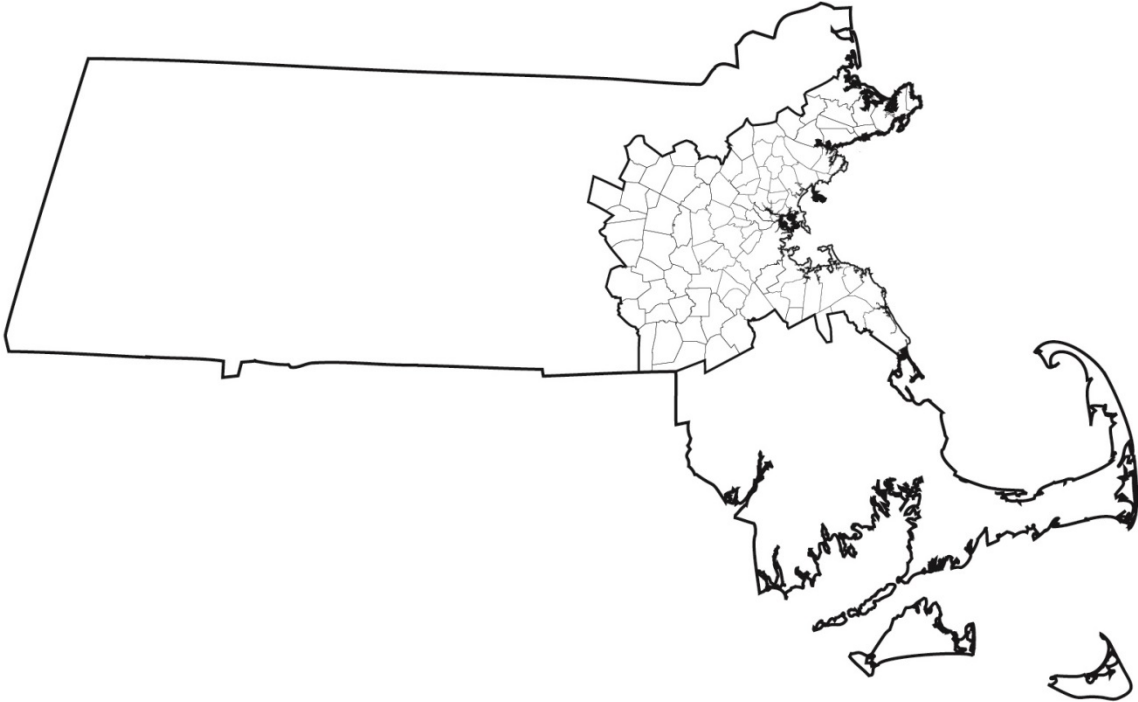
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The preparation of this document was supported by Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration through MPO Planning Contract #112310.

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August 2021  
Revised April 2022



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# Executive Summary

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) created this Public Engagement Plan (The Plan) to provide guidelines for achieving effective engagement in the regional transportation planning process. The Plan guides the MPO's Public Engagement Program (PEP), which comprises all engagement activities, public meetings, and communications, to ensure that all members of the public—including people who have been underserved by the transportation system and/or have lacked access to the decision-making process—are given the opportunity to be part of the metropolitan planning process. The PEP guides the MPO's efforts to offer continuous and meaningful opportunities for members of the public to influence MPO transportation planning decision-making in the Boston region. The Plan lists the procedures that guide the PEP.

The Plan is reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. Members of the public have an opportunity to provide comments and suggestions prior to the MPO board endorsing the Plan throughout the development and public comment period. Contained in the Plan are the details of

- the Boston Region MPO's composition;
- the MPO's public engagement vision, guidelines, and principles;
- opportunities to be informed by and involved in MPO activities;
- guidelines for MPO, MPO Committee, and MPO-sponsored meetings;
- notices and procedures; and
- physical, virtual, and transportation access guidelines.

The Boston Region MPO encourages public comment. This document is available on the Boston Region MPO website in addition to the companion PEP Guidebook. For any questions or comments, please contact the Public Engagement Coordinator, at [publicinfo@ctps.org](mailto:publicinfo@ctps.org) or 857.702.3658.





# Chapter 1—The Boston Region’s Background, Function, and Structure

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Public Engagement Plan (the Plan) is to describe the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) Public Engagement Program (PEP), which comprises the various engagement activities that the MPO engages in to ensure that all members of the public—including people who have been underserved by the transportation system and/or lacked access to the decision-making process—are given the opportunity to participate in the Boston regional transportation planning process.

The Plan guides the MPO’s efforts to offer continuous and meaningful opportunities for people to influence transportation decision-making in the Boston region.

The Plan describes federal and state public participation requirements, and the MPO’s specific engagement guidelines, policies, principles, schedules, and opportunities for public involvement. The Plan also includes several appendices that list federal laws guiding MPO engagement and more.

This plan reflects recent updates in information, communication technologies, and public engagement practices. The MPO has incorporated new virtual public involvement strategies for engagement activities and MPO meetings.

## 1.2 FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Federal metropolitan transportation planning rules require MPO public participation plans include the following:

- define details about how the MPO provides opportunities to be involved in its planning process, including methods used and the goals set
- establish strategies for engagement with all interested parties
- undergo periodic reviews and updates with involvement of the public, who are provided at a minimum a 45-day review and comment period before the updated plan is adopted by the MPO

Other federal legislation, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, also have public participation requirements that MPOs must implement to ensure access to the planning process for equity populations. Transportation equity populations include people who identify as minorities; have limited English proficiency; are 75 years of age

or older or 17 years of age or younger; have a disability; or are members of low-income or transit-dependent households. People who identify as minorities are those who identify as Hispanic or Latino/Latina/x/e and/or a race other than "white.". The United States Department of Transportation's Environmental Justice Order also requires that the agency and recipients of federal funding provide meaningful opportunities for public involvement for minority and low-income populations. To meet these requirements, the MPO, through the Transportation Equity Program, takes steps to include equity populations in engagement and regional planning. Details of these laws are listed in Appendix A.

MPO staff continues to adapt and innovate the PEP to be responsive to the community. Staff will continue to update the Plan in the future to reflect changes in federal guidance, requirements, and regional needs.

### **1.2.1 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Meeting Requirements**

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA), and MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA), which are FTA Section 5307 applicants, have consulted with the MPO and concur that the public engagement process adopted by the MPO for the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) satisfies the public hearing requirements that pertain to the development of the Program of Projects for regular Section 5307, Urbanized Area (UZA) Formula Program, grant applications, including the provision for public notice and the time established for public review and comment.

### **1.3 COMPOSITION OF THE BOSTON REGION MPO**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes the MPO's membership composition, structure, committees, processes for developing its certification documents, voting rules, and more. The full text of the MOU is available in Appendix C. The MPO will undergo an effort to produce an Operations Plan starting in 2021, proceeding the adoption of the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) Strategic Plan to expand on board practices and policies.

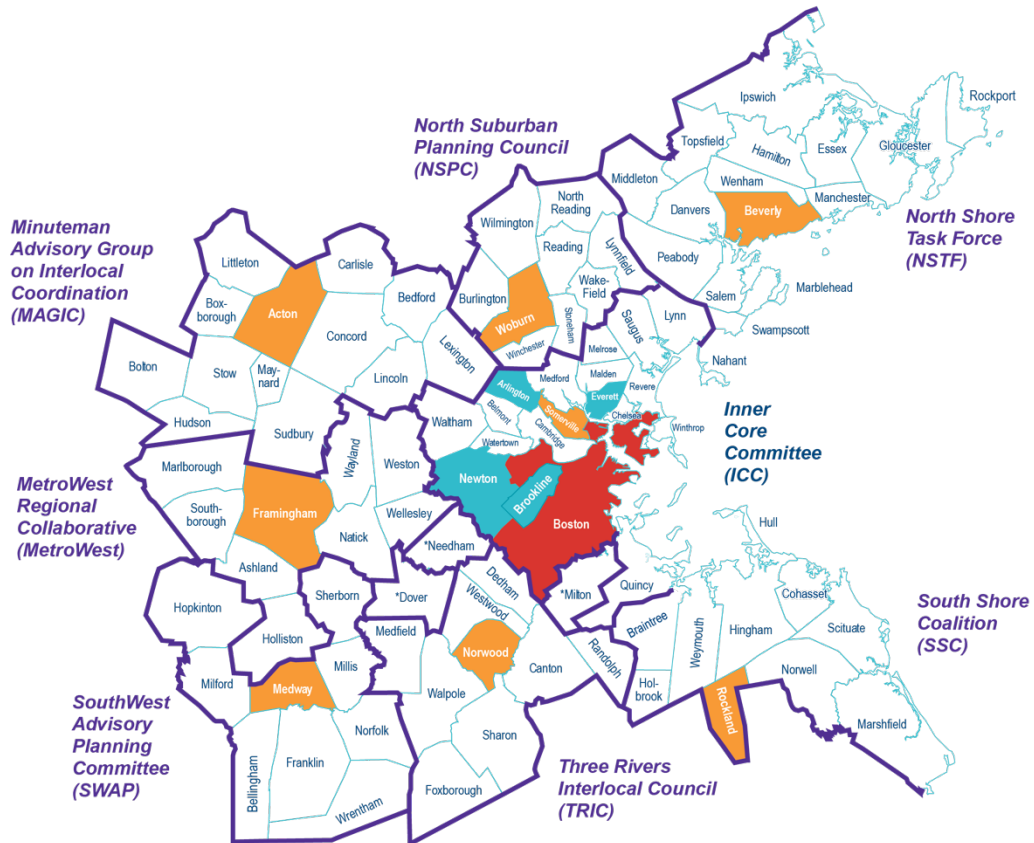
The MPO board is made up of 22 state, regional, municipal, and council members who work cooperatively to make decisions about regional planning and federal funding for transportation projects. The MPO's membership includes the following voting members:

- Eight municipalities represent subregions (elected)
  - Inner Core Committee (ICC)
  - MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MWRC)
  - Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC)

- North Shore Task Force (NSTF)
- North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC)
- South Shore Coalition (SSC)
- SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (SWAP)
- Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC)
- Two cities, at-large (elected)
- Two towns, at-large (elected)
- Two City of Boston representatives (permanent)
  - Boston Transportation Department (BTD)
  - Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA)
- Five transportation agencies (permanent)
  - Three seats for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
  - MBTA
  - Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport)
- Two advisory councils
  - The Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council) (Chair and Vice Chair elected)
  - The MBTA Advisory Board (permanent)
- One Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (permanent)

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and FTA serve as ex officio members. Figure 1 displays a map of the MPO subregions and current representatives as of August 2021.

**Figure 1**  
**Map of the Boston Region MPO**



\*Community is in more than one subregion: Dover is in TRIC and SWAP; Milton and Needham are in ICC and TRIC.

- 97 Cities and towns
- Subregion boundary
- MPO representative from subregion
- MPO city or town at-large representative
- Boston has two permanent MPO representatives

Elected municipal members serve three-year terms. Terms are staggered and each year, four seats are up for election. The chief elected officials of all the municipalities in the region can vote on the elected municipal seats. MAPC and the MBTA Advisory Board jointly administer the election. Elections take place in the fall annually.

The Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation (or a designee) serves as the Chair to the MPO, and the Executive Director of MAPC (or a designee) serves as the Vice Chair. It is not required by the federal government for the MPO to be chaired by the state's Department of Transportation, but in Massachusetts, MassDOT chairs each MPO.

The MPO currently has three recurring committees. The MPO Chair appoints MPO members as representatives to the committees. Any MPO member can ask to join a committee at any time. The three committees and their responsibilities are as follows:

- Administration and Finance (A&F) Committee—Reviews the MPO's operating budget, staffing, and spending
- Congestion Management Process (CMP) Committee—Discusses congestion in the region and makes recommendations for certain improvements to traffic flow that would reduce congestion and improve mobility and air quality
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee—Works with staff on recommendations for developing the UPWP each year, which includes selecting discrete studies for MPO staff to carry out; the committee also reviews the MPO's quarterly financial reports and progress reports for the various planning studies underway

## **1.4 MPO STAFF**

CTPS was created in 1974 as staff to the Boston Region MPO and to be a permanent resource of expertise in comprehensive multimodal transportation planning and analysis. CTPS authors planning studies, produces the MPO's certification documents, and develops and maintains technical tools that help the MPO conduct its work. CTPS also provides technical assistance to municipalities and transit providers and conducts contract work for government entities.

## **1.5 THE MPO'S CORE FUNCTIONS**

Congress created MPOs to promote cooperation among state agencies, organizations, and local cities and towns in regional transportation planning. MPO funding is established through federal transportation legislation, the most recent of which is the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act of 2015.

The Boston Region MPO carries out seven core functions:

1. Establish and manage a fair and impartial setting for effective regional decision-making in the Boston region
2. Evaluate potential improvements to the transportation system in the Boston region and study regionally significant transportation issues through the UPWP
3. Prepare and maintain a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Boston region, with a minimum of a 20-year horizon that establishes the MPO's transportation vision, goal areas, and objectives; establishes investment programs; and plans major transportation investments
4. Develop a five-year TIP of transportation projects funded in each investment program annually to fulfill the goals of the LRTP
5. Engage the public by offering all interested persons opportunities to engage in all the decision-making functions of the MPO through the PEP
6. Ensure compliance with federal and state civil rights and nondiscrimination requirements through the Transportation Equity Program, and invest in transportation projects and studies that improve access, mobility, safety, and other outcomes for underserved groups while minimizing burdens
7. Conduct performance-based planning by establishing targets and evaluating the impact of MPO actions

# Chapter 2—The MPO’s Public Engagement Vision, Principles, and Guidelines

Transportation enables mobility, social interaction, commerce, personal development, and fulfillment. The region relies on transportation to move people and to move goods, such as food, fuel, and medical supplies. The MPO’s challenge is to maintain the regional transportation network to meet existing needs, increase equity in the transportation system, and adapt and modernize it for future demand, while working within the reality of constrained fiscal resources.

## 2.1 THE MPO’S PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT VISION

The Boston Region MPO envisions a modern, well-maintained transportation system that supports a sustainable, healthy, livable, and economically vibrant region. To achieve this vision, the transportation system must be safe and resilient; incorporate emerging technologies; and provide equitable access, excellent mobility, and varied transportation options. This vision was endorsed in the MPO’s recent LRTP, *Destination 2040*, in 2019. The vision was developed over several years of engagement—a process that included technical analyses, studies of transportation needs, and incorporating public feedback. The vision guides the MPO in all of its work, and paints a picture of the desired regional transportation system of the future.

Public engagement improves decision-making by helping to illuminate the social, economic, and environmental benefits and drawbacks of transportation decisions. Public engagement also supports a continuous feedback loop in ever changing circumstances. The MPO’s vision for public engagement in the region is to hear, value, and consider, throughout all planning work, the views of and feedback from the full spectrum of the public and incorporate this input in all decision-making.

## 2.2 THE MPO’S PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The Boston Region MPO is committed to fostering a robust and inclusive public engagement process for regional transportation planning. The following principles guide the MPO’s efforts in public engagement:

- **Transparency**—Decision-making processes are accessible, open, honest, and understandable
- **Inclusion and Equity**—Dialogue and decision-making processes intentionally identify, reach, and encourage participation from diverse members of the community, with specific efforts made to engage people of color, people with limited English proficiency, youth, older adults, people



with disabilities, people with low incomes, and other people who have been traditionally marginalized using creative opportunities, tools, and technologies

- **Early and continuous public involvement opportunities**—Community engagement is an early and integral part of design and implementation of regional plans, policies, studies, and programs
- **High-quality process**—Community engagement processes are well designed to appropriately fit a plan, program, or project, and adapt to changing needs
- **Building relationships with diverse community members**—Staff develops long-term, collaborative working relationships and learning opportunities with members of the public, community organizations, municipalities, and advocacy groups
- **Continuous evaluation and improvement**—Staff continually evaluates engagement efforts through quantitative and qualitative measures to enhance the agency’s practice of public engagement and sharing public feedback

### 2.3 THE MPO’S PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Through the MPO’s public engagement guidelines, the MPO makes every effort to

- make MPO processes and activities easy to understand;
- communicate information that is clear, concise, direct, current, and easily available;
- produce creative visuals to enhance understanding;
- cast an inclusive net to invite participation of interested parties and the general public to bolster engagement with people of color, people with low incomes, older adults, youth, people with limited English proficiency, people with disabilities, and other people who have been traditionally marginalized;
- produce and host convenient, timely, and meaningful engagement opportunities;
- create a framework that encourages constructive contributions by members of the public;
- promote respect among all participants and create safe spaces for exchanges;
- measure effectiveness of engagement through quantitative and qualitative means;
- continue to adapt methods of communications and engagement to support the needs of community members in changing contexts;
- maximize effectiveness and efficiency by coordinating with partner agencies and community organizations in their engagement activities; and

- embrace new technologies and use virtual public involvement techniques to compliment in-person engagement.

## 2.4 MEASURING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

MPO staff uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures to evaluate public engagement effectiveness. The different methods used include:

- Quantitative
  - Number and types of events held
  - Number of documents or products distributed to the public
  - Number of participants at each event
  - Number of recurring participants and number of times they have participated in MPO events
  - Number of organizations represented at an event or throughout a project
  - Presence of public officials in events
  - Number of public comments throughout development and in the comment period of MPO products
    - Mode of receipt
  - Number of website hits
  - Number of social media engagements
  - Number of press inquiries
  - Average response time to inquiries (in days)
  - Resources dedicated to public engagement
- Qualitative
  - Evaluation surveys post event
  - Demographic information collected in all surveys
  - Feedback from MPO members
  - Presentations to the MPO and public on how public input was incorporated and information on demographics and organizations who participated in the project
  - Public comment letters

Beginning in FFY 2022, MPO staff will produce memorandums describing the effectiveness of public engagement activities at the end of each federal fiscal year and present them to the MPO. MPO staff also maintains a Consolidated Stakeholder Database to manage the contact information of stakeholders, and track event attendance and comments.



# Chapter 3—Opportunities for Engagement

The MPO’s engagement activities and programs are designed to meet the needs and preferences of the public. This section covers specifics on how the MPO provides opportunities for public engagement. Activities include presentations and discussions, interactive opportunities in various in-person venues, and online platforms for meetings, forums, workshops, and focus groups. Staff also uses the MPO website, digital and print flyers, emails, and social media channels to communicate with the public.

## 3.1 WAYS TO BE INFORMED

The MPO website provides comprehensive up-to-date information about all of the MPO’s work, such as:

- studies, reports, technical memoranda, dashboards, certification documents, and other work products related to the regional planning process;
- information about the structure and composition of the MPO, including the full MPO members and designee lists with contact information;
- MPO meeting agendas, minutes, virtual platform links to MPO meeting, and links to event video recordings;
- contact information for all staff members;
- tweets that highlight MPO activities, programs, and the results of MPO studies and reports in addition to retweeting partner agencies’ updates;
- the MPO’s blog, which covers timely MPO activities and transportation issues around the region; new posts are announced via email to subscribers;
- a feedback form where people can express their views to the MPO and receive a response from staff; and
- online surveys to collect public input on important MPO activities and projects.

To ensure web access for people with low or no vision who use screen readers, all documents and digital engagement materials are posted in both PDF and HTML versions. In addition, the MPO makes every effort to make data represented in tables fully navigable by a screen reader and provides alternative text to describe tables, figures, and images.

MPO staff is committed to producing materials in plain language following the Plain Language Act of 2010. The Plain Language Act requires that federal agencies use, “clear government communication that the public can understand and use...to enhance citizen access to government information and services by

establishing that government documents issued to the public must be written clearly.”

The MPO’s Language Assistance Plan (LAP) identifies the most commonly spoken non-English languages and the percent of the population in the Boston region that speak that language. Based on this information, the LAP describes the MPO’s strategies for providing oral interpreter services and written translations. The LAP is updated every three years to reflect changes in demographics in the region. The most recent LAP was produced and endorsed in 2021.

The MPO website features a translation function through Google Translate for more than 100 languages. In addition, vital documents (as designated in the LAP), engagement materials, and surveys are professionally translated into the six most commonly spoken non-English languages, which are:

- Spanish
- Brazilian Portuguese
- Haitian
- Simplified Chinese
- Traditional Chinese
- Vietnamese

The digital translated materials are posted on the website and the print translated materials are available at engagement events and upon request. Documents currently defined as vital in the LAP include:

- Notice of Nondiscrimination Rights and Protections
- Discrimination complaint procedures and form
- LAP
- Executive summaries of the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, and the PEP

All emails are automatically translated by the MPO’s email service, which is currently MailChimp. Readers can select the language to view the message by opening the email in the MailChimp browser window and selecting translate, and then selecting the language to see the content in.

As of March 13, 2020, videos of past MPO meetings and virtual MPO-sponsored activities are posted to the Boston Region MPO YouTube channel and linked to the corresponding Meeting Calendar date on the website. YouTube provides Closed Captions on all videos. Prior to March 13, 2020, MPO meetings were recorded audibly. These recordings, available as MP3 files, can be found on each of the corresponding Meeting Calendar dates on the website in addition to the support documents and endorsed minutes from that meeting.

The MPO uses a variety of other tools to inform the public, including email subscriptions, MPOinfo, and Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The MPO has email lists for the Transportation Equity Program, the Advisory Council, Bike and Pedestrian Activities, and other programs and projects. The MPOinfo email communications focus on major MPO updates, projects, and programs, such as certification document releases, amendments, and announcements of public comment periods, survey releases, and engagement event details.

## **3.2 WAYS TO BE INVOLVED**

The MPO hosts a number of meetings and events where members of the public can learn about MPO activities and participate in the regional transportation planning process. These include official MPO board meetings, MPO committee meetings, and hosting or presenting at engagement events. The purpose of these meetings is to present and discuss pertinent information, solicit feedback, and gather input from the public on specific topics to inform transportation planning decisions for the region.

### **3.2.1 MPO Board Meetings**

The MPO typically meets on the first and third Thursday of each month at 10:00 AM. During busier times of the year, an additional meeting might be scheduled during the month, while during slower times of the year, there might be one meeting scheduled per month. Most in-person components of the meetings are held at the State Transportation Building at 10 Park Plaza in Boston. Every quarter, the MPO works with MPO member communities to host an off-site meeting in a MPO municipality. Starting on March 13, 2020, the MPO hosted virtual meetings through video conferencing platforms. Links to virtual meetings are available on the MPO Meeting Calendar webpage along with agendas and support materials for that day. The MPO will maintain a virtual component of MPO meetings through video conferencing so that participants can attend either in-person or virtually, in compliance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

Each MPO meeting follows the general process below:

- The Chair leads the meetings, recognizing speakers and managing the flow of discussion.
- Agendas always include a public comment section where members of the public will be recognized to speak and present information.
- At the discretion of the Chair, members of the public may be recognized to speak during discussions of other agenda items.

Members of the public can also submit comments through the online Feedback Form on the MPO website or by emailing MPO staff. Members of the public can also call staff to provide comments or to ask questions. Staff responds to

questions and comments promptly by phone or email. Staff shares public comments on MPO agenda items on the corresponding date on the MPO meeting calendar web page in advance of meetings and summarize comments received during MPO presentations. If comments are not connected to specific agenda items, but are about MPO activities, MPO staff will routinely share these comments back to the board through the Executive Director's report.

Individuals with low or no vision or with low literacy are informed on the website and at meetings that they may submit comments through a recording or staff transcription of their spoken remarks before or after MPO meetings and MPO committee meetings. Any member of the public can provide a live public comment during the public comment section of the MPO meeting and MPO committee meetings.

Members of the public can provide a comment in any language. Staff will translate comments received in languages other than English. By request, MPO meetings can include interpreter service with two weeks' notice. However, if it is less than two weeks' notice, MPO staff encourages any interested individual to reach out and request interpretive services and staff will do their best to obtain those services.

### **3.2.2 MPO Committee Meetings**

The UPWP, CMP, and A&F committees meet as needed. Committee meetings are usually held before or after MPO meetings. All committee meetings are open to the public and have a virtual participation component. The Chair can also create ad-hoc committees for specific issues and activities. The ad-hoc committees follow the same policies as the permanent committees. Video recordings of committee meetings are available on the Boston Region MPO's YouTube channel and are linked in the MPO Meeting Calendar on the corresponding date.

### **3.2.3 The Advisory Council**

The Advisory Council is an independent body of community and professional organizations, advocacy groups, transportation management associations, and municipalities. Municipalities that sit on the MPO board cannot be part of the Advisory Council. The primary function of the Advisory Council is to help communicate information to different stakeholders and coordinate feedback to the MPO to advise on transportation policy and planning. Members of the Advisory Council elect their own Chair and Vice Chair annually.

Advisory Council meetings are designed to foster robust discussion on transportation topics related to planning and programming. Meetings are

generally held on the second Wednesday of the month at 2:30 PM in the State Transportation Building at 10 Park Plaza, Boston. As of March 13, 2020, Advisory Council meetings are held with a virtual component through video conferencing platforms. Links to virtual meetings are available on the MPO Meeting Calendar webpage, along with agendas and support materials. Video recordings of Advisory Council meetings are available on the Boston Region MPO's YouTube channel. Advisory Council meetings follow the same guidelines as MPO meetings. Agendas do not routinely include a specific item for public comment, but members of the public are allowed to speak and ask questions at the discretion of the Chair.

To improve public engagement opportunities offered by the Advisory Council, MPO staff works with members to hear and share ideas on specific MPO topics and supports the Advisory Council's membership engagement with organizations that focus on individuals who are more underserved by the region's transportation system.

### **3.2.4 MPO-Sponsored Meetings and Activities**

The MPO sponsors a variety of public engagement opportunities that are planned and managed by MPO staff:

- workshops
- information sessions
- forums
- focus groups
- pop-up engagement activities
- open houses

MPO engagement events are designed for as much interaction as possible among all in attendance. MPO staff also partners and collaborates with other regional, state, and municipal agencies and community organizations for engagement events and pop-up engagement activities.

MPO staff strives to host public engagement opportunities in areas with higher concentrations of people of color, people with limited English proficiency, people with low incomes and other people who have been traditionally marginalized, to expand inclusion in the regional planning process. In addition, staff works with local stakeholders to learn about particular cultural or language issues that should be recognized and respected when planning and operating the event, such as dates of community celebration or observations, and/or cultural preferences or restrictions.



### **3.2.5 Surveys**

MPO staff frequently conducts surveys to learn perspectives on topics like certification document activities, corridor issues, MPO policy decisions, and other transportation study issues. The MPO website houses survey links on project pages and/or homepage banners. The survey information and links are shared on social media, email blasts, and newsletters, in addition to staff directly reaching out to community stakeholders who forward the information and links to their members and community. MPO surveys always include a slate of demographic questions, the notice of nondiscrimination, and contact information for specific MPO staff. The current demographic questions are listed in Appendix B and are subject to change to adapt to more inclusive language in the future.

### **3.2.6 Website Feedback Form**

The MPO website features a feedback form section that viewers can reach from any page on the website. Using this function, members of the public are invited to submit a comment on any topic. Comments are directed to the appropriate staff member who responds to the comments promptly and considers the input for future MPO work. MPO staff also answers questions and directs members of the public to other helpful information, resources or contacts. Comments submitted during a formal comment period for a document under review, such as the TIP and UPWP, are summarized along with the staff responses and reported to the MPO when the MPO votes to endorse the document. Those comments are listed in the final document and posted to the website.

### **3.2.7 Coordinated Activities with MAPC**

MAPC Subregional Coordinators facilitate monthly or bimonthly subregional meetings of member municipalities and other stakeholders to discuss topics related to land use, community development, transportation, climate change, housing, and other issues. MPO staff regularly meets with MAPC's subregional coordinators and shares updates in the *MAPC Matters* monthly newsletter and subsequent subregional newsletters. MPO staff attends subregional meetings to present TIP and UPWP engagement opportunities and engages in conversations around subregional and regional transportation issues.

### **3.2.8 MPO "Invite Us Over"**

MPO staff works with advocacy groups, community organizations, professional organizations, and other stakeholder groups to host activities to discuss transportation issues that are important to them. MPO staff specifically focuses on connecting and collaborating with organizations that serve and/or are primarily comprised of people who are often underserved by the regional transportation

system. Staff will continue to work to increase the number of in-person and virtual “Invite Us Over” events to bolster the MPO’s visibility and expand engagement.

### **3.3 NOTICE OF MPO ACTIVITIES**

The MPO provides notification of meetings through the Meeting Calendar on the MPO website and email lists. MPO, MPO committee, and Advisory Council meeting agendas and materials are posted on the website one week in advance of the meeting, except in cases of emergency or other constrained circumstances. Under Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, materials have to be posted 48 hours in advance of a public meeting. Engagement event information is also posted on the MPO Meeting Calendar and sent through the MPOinfo and Transportation Equity email lists, and to the Advisory Council members and contact lists of stakeholder groups. Flyers for engagement events in communities with a higher proportion of non-English speakers are translated into the most spoken languages in that community.

### **3.4 ACCESS TO MPO MEETINGS AND MPO-SPONSORED MEETINGS**

The MPO aims to make all meetings accessible to all members of the public whether that be in person or virtually, and accessed in different languages.

#### **3.4.1 Transportation and Physical Access**

All MPO-sponsored in-person meetings are held in locations that are accessible to people with disabilities and are located near public transportation. To ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, locations for meetings held outside the State Transportation Building are selected through a process that includes an on-site review of the meeting facilities. As part of this review, staff refers to an accessibility checklist with a list of physical characteristics necessary to accommodate individuals with a variety of mobility limitations. This checklist is listed in Appendix D.

#### **3.4.2 Language Access**

When selecting meeting venues, staff consults the MPO’s LAP. The LAP identifies locations of people with limited English proficiency. Based on the meeting location, the LAP provides information regarding languages into which materials may need to be translated, and describes the language services that will be provided. Staff also frequently brings engagement material in the six most spoken languages in the region to events and meetings with community organizations. Staff also brings an interpreter(s) if the partner organization’s meeting provides activities in multiple languages or the event is conducted in a language other than English.

Members of the public can request interpreter services for MPO and MPO-sponsored activities whether the event is virtual, in-person, or both. Staff asks that requests be made two weeks in advance to ensure that an interpreter can be booked. Staff encourages participants to still request interpreter services if it is less than two weeks in advance, and staff will do their best to secure an interpreter. Upon request, interpreter services include, but are not limited to, Sign Language, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Haitian, Vietnamese, Cantonese and Mandarin.

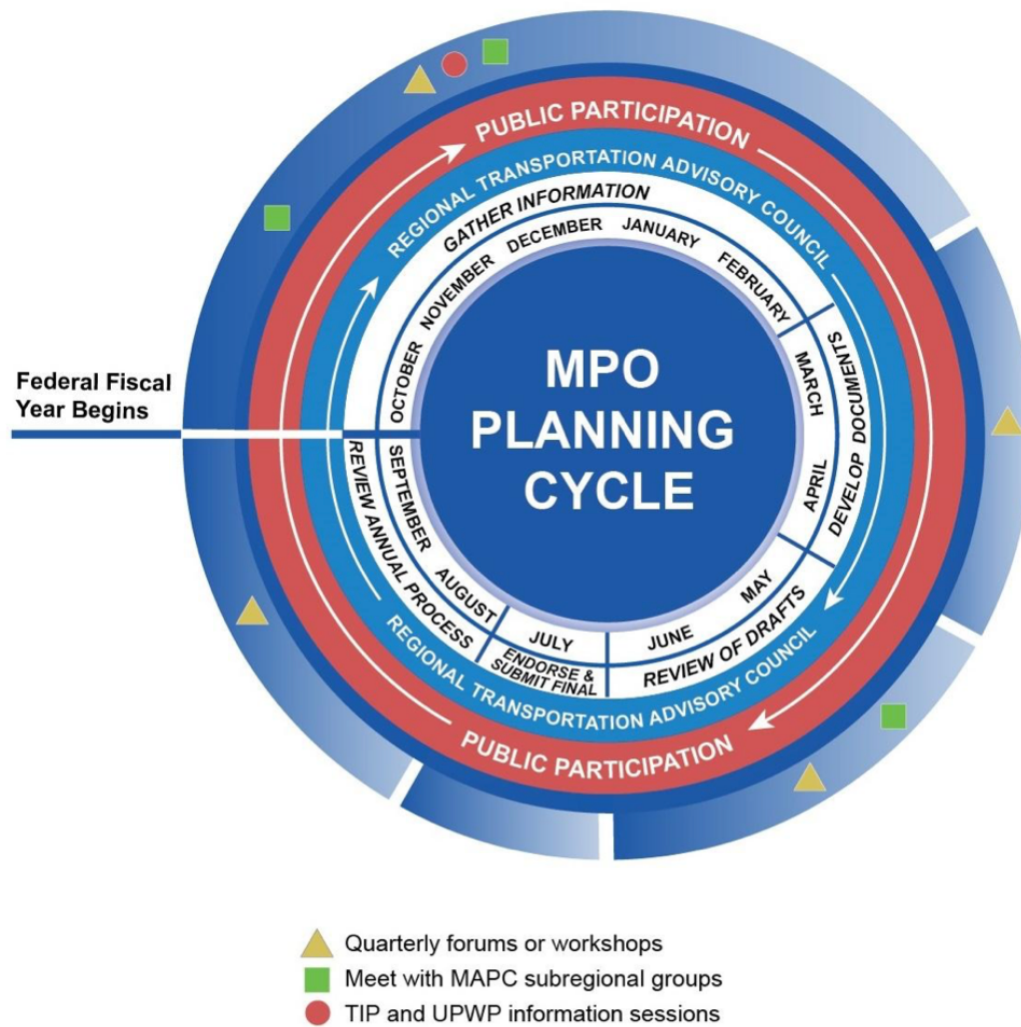
### **3.4.3 Virtual Access**

As of March 13, 2020, MPO meetings, MPO committee meetings, and online MPO-sponsored events are hosted virtually through a video conferencing platform. The MPO is exploring a hybrid format with in-person and virtual engagement for future MPO meetings and MPO committee meetings. MPO-sponsored events will take place either virtually or in-person. Virtual access is available through Zoom links on the MPO meeting calendar.

# Chapter 4—Public Engagement Schedules

The regional transportation planning process includes the development of the certification documents and other programs and studies annually. Development of the certification documents follows established cycles as depicted in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**  
**Annual Planning Cycle for the TIP, UPWP, and Public Engagement**



Public engagement to support this work follows similar cycles and is paired with general MPO outreach. The MPO makes the public aware of the details of each year's public engagement time frames at the beginning of the federal fiscal year to assure predictability for those who wish to participate in the transportation planning process. Public engagement opportunities for other MPO programs and studies occur throughout the year.

#### 4.1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE FOR THE TIP AND UPWP

The TIP and UPWP are produced each year. The schedule may change due to updated guidance from agency partners and MPO board decisions; however, the general schedule for the TIP and UPWP is as follows:

- October
  - MPO staff plans for the development of the documents including the approach to data collection, analyses to be conducted, and steps and activities to inform and involve the public.
  - MPO staff contacts municipalities to confirm municipal representatives, known as TIP contacts, who will provide information to municipalities on how to seek project funding, and to pass along information during the TIP process.
  - MPO staff hosts virtual information meetings and one-on-one conversations with TIP contacts to share details about the TIP process and answer any questions project proponents may have about getting projects funded.
- November and December
  - MPO staff discusses the upcoming document development activities with members of the public by
    - briefing the Advisory Council;
    - presenting at the MAPC Subregional meetings;
    - hosting in-person and virtual information sessions for interested stakeholder groups;
    - producing updated engagement material (if applicable); and
    - sending communications to the MPOinfo email list and posting on the MPO's social media channels.
  - MPO staff sends out a survey asking members of the public for study ideas to be included in the UPWP Universe of Proposed Studies in addition to directly engaging with a variety of stakeholders.
  - TIP contacts send information on new TIP projects to MPO staff.
  - Staff begins evaluating TIP projects using the project evaluation criteria.
- January

- Staff develops ideas for possible studies to include in the UPWP Universe of Study Proposals based on internal research and previous public engagement.
- Staff begins evaluating UPWP study proposals against criteria for emphasis areas.
- Staff completes evaluations of new TIP projects and shares draft scores with project proponents for their review and feedback.
- February
  - MassDOT confirms the specific amount of federal funding that will be available for projects in the TIP for the next five years of the plan.
  - Project proponents and members of the public provide comments on TIP updates at the MPO meetings, in written letters, through the online feedback form, or through emails to staff.
- March
  - Staff presents a series of draft TIP programming scenarios to the MPO board, getting feedback from the MPO board on the approaches that best align with MPO goals and the new projects that should be prioritized for funding.
  - Staff presents the final recommendations for programming TIP Regional Target funds to the MPO based on MPO feedback on earlier scenarios.
  - The MPO reviews other projects that will receive federal funds from MassDOT, the MBTA, MWRTA, and CATA.
  - MPO staff compiles the UPWP Universe of New Projects, capturing ideas heard through public engagement and internal research.
- April
  - The UPWP Committee discusses the UPWP Universe of Proposed Studies.
  - The MPO releases the draft TIP for a 21-day public comment period.
- May
  - MPO staff engages the public to gather feedback on the TIP.
  - The MPO board endorses the final TIP at the end of the public comment period after reviewing and considering all feedback.
  - Staff presents its recommendations for programming UPWP funds to the UPWP Committee.
- June
  - The UPWP Committee reviews the staff recommendations and the budget and makes its own recommendation to the MPO.
  - The MPO discusses the UPWP Committee recommendations and comments on the UPWP.

- The MPO releases the draft UPWP for a 21-day public comment period.
- MPO staff engages the public to gather feedback on the UPWP.
- The MPO submits the TIP to the federal agencies for review and approval.
- July
  - The MPO board endorses the final UPWP at the end of the public comment period after reviewing and considering all feedback.
- August
  - The MPO submits the UPWP to the federal agencies for review and approval.
- October
  - The approved documents go into effect after the beginning of the federal fiscal year on October 1.

## **4.2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE FOR THE LRTP**

The LRTP is updated every four years. Throughout those four years, LRTP engagement work continues, such as gathering data for the Needs Assessment and conducting scenario planning with public input. A specific public engagement plan is developed for each LRTP. The most significant public engagement is conducted during the fourth year, leading up to the endorsement of the LRTP. LRTP public engagement activities are coordinated with TIP and UPWP engagement when applicable. The draft LRTP is released for a public review period of 30 days.

## **4.3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE FOR CHANGES TO CERTIFICATION DOCUMENTS**

The certification documents can be modified or amended to reflect changes made through the course of the federal fiscal year. Any change to the LRTP is generally considered an amendment. For the TIP, consistent with federal guidelines, if a project is valued at five million or less, the threshold for defining a change to the project as an amendment is a change of \$500,000 or more. The threshold for projects valued greater than five million is 10 percent or more of the project value. Changes below these thresholds may be considered administrative modifications. These rules apply to Regional Target-funded projects and non-Regional Target-funded projects in the TIP. Changes to the UPWP, such as the addition or deletion of an MPO-funded study or project, major changes to a UPWP task description, and funding changes to a UPWP task budget of 25 percent or more, also trigger an amendment.

### **4.3.1 Amendments Procedure**

When the MPO considers amending the LRTP, TIP or UPWP, it votes to do so at an MPO meeting. MPO staff then posts the proposed draft amendment to the MPO's website, sends an email to the MPOinfo list, and posts on social media. The public comment period begins once the amendment is posted on the website. For TIP and UPWP amendments, the public comment period lasts 21 days, while the public comment period for the LRTP lasts 30 days.

The MPO notifies the Advisory Council and affected municipalities and agencies of pending amendments to inform them about the proposed changes, when and where decisions will be made, and how they can provide comments. The MPO also informs TIP contacts and project proponents of affected projects.

In extreme circumstances, such as an unforeseen regulatory requirement, the MPO may vote to shorten the public comment period to a minimum of 15 days. In emergency circumstances, such as the need to take immediate action to protect public safety or take advantage of an extraordinary funding opportunity, the MPO may waive the public comment period.

The MPO may extend a public comment period for an additional 15 days if a proposed amendment is significantly altered during the initial public comment period. If a significant alteration occurs after the close of the initial public comment period, the MPO may schedule an additional comment period lasting 21 days for TIP and UPWP amendments and 30 days for LRTP amendments.

MPO staff collects public comments and presents them to the MPO in both summary form and full text as submitted. MPO members review and consider these comments as they decide what action to take regarding the proposed amendment.

### **4.3.2 Administrative Modifications Procedure**

Changes to certification documents that do not rise to the level of an amendment may be addressed through an administrative modification. The MPO may decide to make an administrative modification without issuing a public comment period, although one may be scheduled at the MPO's discretion. If a public comment period is scheduled, public notification follows the same process that is used for amendments.



## **4.4 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE FOR LONGER-TIME HORIZON PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

### **4.4.1 The Transportation Equity Program**

The MPO's Transportation Equity program is ongoing and is part of all MPO planning work. Equity is an integral part of the MPO's vision, and is reflected in its goal areas and objectives.

The Transportation Equity program focuses on

- providing equity populations with meaningful opportunities to participate in the MPO's decision-making processes;
- ensuring that minority and low-income people receive a fair share of the MPO's transportation investments, and are not subject to undue burdens as a result of these investments;
- analyzing the impacts of MPO-funded projects on all equity populations; and
- considering demographic equity methodically when selecting studies and projects funded by the MPO.

The MPO engages equity populations to center equity in planning work, identify the transportation needs of protected populations, and promote involvement in the planning processes. The Transportation Equity program focuses on engaging organizations comprised of and/or serving communities with a high proportion of equity populations, in addition to engaging the public at community events in areas with a high proportion of equity populations. Staff continually explores creative ways to conduct outreach and produce communications to engage people who are underserved by the regional transportation system.

### **4.4.2 The Public Engagement Program**

The MPO reviews the PEP's progress and effectiveness on an ongoing basis. The MPO revises the PEP as needed to reflect changes in federal guidance, and regional needs, and improvements in the state of practice. The most recent Plan has specifically taken into account virtual public involvement opportunities and techniques. Changes and revisions to the Plan occur in consultation with members of the public and the MPO board.

## **4.5 FEDERAL RECERTIFICATION REVIEWS**

Federal recertification reviews of MPOs are conducted every four years. The federal transportation agencies evaluate the program and activities of the MPO to determine whether they are in keeping with the required 3C (continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive) process. The federal agencies certify that the MPO is operating as it should. A recertification review is conducted typically over

the course of a work week (Monday to Friday) in a series of public events. Members of the public are invited to participate. Members of the public are also invited to submit comments before and during the review sessions. The federal agencies may contact certain parties to hear their views on MPO programming and operations, including public engagement. The material prepared for the recertification review and the recertification report from the federal agencies is posted on the MPO's website. The most recent Boston Region MPO recertification review was conducted in 2018.

# Appendix A—Federal Public Participation Mandates

## A.1 TITLE 23, SECTION 450 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATION (CFR)

### A.1.1 §450.316 Interested Parties, Participation, and Consultation

The federal regulations concerning public participation in metropolitan transportation planning decision making are specified in Title 23, Section 450.316, of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The regulations include the following.

- a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.
  1. The MPO shall develop the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:
    - i. Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
    - ii. Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
    - iii. Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;
    - iv. Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;
    - v. Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;

- vi. Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
  - vii. Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;
  - viii. Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;
  - ix. Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and
  - x. Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.
2. When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93, subpart A), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.
  3. A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.
- b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, the MPO shall develop the metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan

area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

1. Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;
  2. Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and
  3. Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 201-204.
- c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
- d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
- e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under §450.314.

#### **A.1.2 §450.318**

This section specifies the public participation for MPO planning studies and project development.

#### **A.1.3 §450.322**

This section specifies the public transportation requirements for the development and content of the MPO's LRTP.

#### **A.1.4 §450.324**

This section specifies the public participation requirements for the development and content of the MPO's TIP.

#### **A.1.4 §450.334**

This section specifies the MPOs certify at least every four years that the metropolitan transportation planning process is being carried out in accordance with all applicable requirements including:

- 23 USC 134, 49 USC 5303 regarding metropolitan transportation planning

- Nonattainment and maintenance areas, sections 174 and 176 (c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 USC. 7504, 7506 (c) and (d)) and 40 CFR part 93
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 USC. 2000d-1) and 49 CFR part 21
- 49 USC. 5332, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age in employment or business opportunity
- Section 1101(b) of the SAFETEA-LU (Pub. L. 109-59) and 49 CFR part 26 regarding the involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in USDOT funded projects
- 23 CFR part 230, regarding the implementation of an equal employment opportunity program on Federal and Federal-aid highway construction contracts
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC. 12101 et seq.) and 49 CFR parts 27, 37, and 38
- Older Americans Act, as amended (42 USC. 6101), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance
- Section 324 of title 23 USC. regarding the prohibition of discrimination based on gender
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC. 794) and 49 CFR part 27 regarding discrimination against individuals with disabilities

## **A.2 AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 (ADA)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 states that “no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity.” Therefore, ADA requires that locations for public participation activities, as well as the information presented, must be accessible to persons with disabilities.

## **A.3 TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964**

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, together with related statutes and regulations, provides that “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” The entire institution, whether educational, private or governmental, must comply with Title VI and related federal civil rights laws, not just the program or activity receiving federal funds.

FTA C 4702.1B (2012), Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients, provides guidance on promoting inclusive public participation. This circular recommends seeking out and considering the viewpoints of minority, low-income, and LEP populations when conducting public

outreach and involvement activities. It identifies the following effective practices for fulfilling the inclusive public participation requirement:

- Schedule meetings at times and locations that are convenient and accessible for minority and LEP communities
- Employ different meeting sizes or formats
- Coordinate with community- and faith-based organizations, educational institutions, and other organizations to implement public engagement strategies to reach out specifically to members of the affected minority and/or LEP communities
- Consider radio, television, or newspaper ads on stations and in publications that serve LEP populations (could also include audio programming on podcasts)
- Provide opportunities for public participation through means other than written communication, such as personal interviews, or audio and video recording devices

## **A.4 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

Executive orders and regulations regarding environmental justice (EJ) also include public participation mandates for recipients of federal funds and their subrecipients.

### **A.4.1 Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 1994**

This executive order states that “each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” Traditionally underserved groups such as low-income and minority populations must be identified and given increased opportunity for involvement in order to ensure effective participation.

### **A.4.2 Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, 2000**

This executive order requires that recipients of federal financial aid ensure that their programs and activities that are normally provided in English are accessible to persons with limited English proficiency.

### **A.4.3 FTA Circular 4703.1, Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for Federal Transit Administration Recipients, 2012**

The purpose of this circular is to provide recipients and subrecipients of FTA financial assistance with guidance in order to incorporate EJ principles into their plans, projects, and activities. The circular identifies full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process as one of the guiding principles of EJ. The circular provides strategies and techniques for public engagement that are intended to help recipients and subrecipients identify the needs and priorities of EJ populations to inform the planning process and help balance the benefits and burdens of transportation decisions.



## Appendix B—Demographic Survey Questions

The demographic survey questions are included on all MPO outreach surveys to better understand who is taking the surveys and any gaps in outreach. These survey questions are adapted to meet inclusive language best practices. As with all survey text, the demographic questions are translated into the six most spoken languages in the Boston region in addition to English.

1. How do you self-identify by race or ethnicity? (Check all that apply.)
  - a. American Indian or Alaskan Native
  - b. Asian
  - c. Black or African American
  - d. Hispanic, Spanish origin or Latino/a/x
  - e. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
  - f. White
  - g. Prefer not to answer
  - h. Other (please specify)
2. What is your annual household income?
  - a. Less than \$24,000
  - b. \$24,000 to \$27,999
  - c. \$28,000 to \$37,999
  - d. \$38,000 to \$47,999
  - e. \$48,000 to \$57,999
  - f. \$58,000 to \$67,999
  - g. \$68,000 to \$77,999
  - h. \$78,000 to \$87,999
  - i. \$88,000 to \$104,999
  - j. \$105,000 or more
  - k. Prefer not to answer
3. How many people are in your household?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ (include yourself)
4. Do you have a disability?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Prefer not to answer
5. What is your age?
  - a. Under 18
  - b. 18 to 21
  - c. 22 to 34
  - d. 35 to 44
  - e. 45 to 64
  - f. 65 to 75
  - g. 75 and older
  - h. Prefer not to answer
6. How do you identify by gender?

- a. Man
  - b. Woman
  - c. Non-binary
  - d. Prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you speak a language other than English in your home? If so, what is that language?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Prefer not to answer
8. If yes, what is that language?
9. What is your home zip code?
10. How do you usually travel? (Check all that apply.)
- a. Take a train
  - b. Take a bus
  - c. Ride a bike
  - d. Walk
  - e. Drive my own vehicle
  - f. Take a ride share (Lyft or Uber)
  - g. Other (please specify)

# **Appendix C—Memorandum of Understanding**

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING RELATING TO THE COMPREHENSIVE, CONTINUING AND COOPERATIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS IN THE BOSTON METROPOLITAN AREA**

**Approved by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization  
July 7, 2011**

**Massachusetts Department of Transportation**

**Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority**

**Advisory Board to the MBTA**

**Massachusetts Port Authority**

**Metropolitan Area Planning Council**

**City of Boston**

**City of Newton**

**City of Somerville**

**Town of Bedford**

**Town of Braintree**

**Town of Framingham**

**Town of Hopkinton**

**Effective November 1, 2011**

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**Memorandum of Understanding Relating to the  
Comprehensive, Continuing and Cooperative  
Transportation Planning Process in the  
Boston Metropolitan Area**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

WHEREAS, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), formerly the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction, has the statutory responsibility, under Chapter 25 of the Acts of 2009, An Act Modernizing the Transportation Systems of the Commonwealth, to conduct comprehensive planning for and to coordinate the activities and programs of the state transportation agencies and, under Chapter 161A of the General Laws, to prepare the capital investment program and plans of the MBTA in conjunction with other transportation plans and programs; and its Highway Division, formerly the Massachusetts Highway Department, has the statutory responsibility under this Chapter for the construction, maintenance and operation of state roads and bridges, and also has the responsibility under this Chapter for the ownership, administration, control, operation, and responsibility for maintenance, repair, reconstruction, improvement, rehabilitation, finance, refinance, use, and policing of the Massachusetts Turnpike and the Metropolitan Highway System in the vicinity of Boston and the surrounding metropolitan area; and

WHEREAS, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (“MBTA”) under the provisions of Chapter 161A of the General Laws, has the statutory responsibility to design and construct transit development projects, to determine the character and

*Boston Region MPO Memorandum of Understanding*

extent of services and facilities to be furnished, as well as to operate the public transportation system for the area constituting the MBTA; and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Board to the MBTA (“Advisory Board”) established under Chapter 161A of the General Laws is composed of the chief elected official, or designee, from each of the 175 cities and towns within the MBTA district, and is the body authorized by statute to review and advise the MBTA on its annual operating budget and the Program for Mass Transit; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (“MAPC”) comprises representatives from each of the 101 cities and towns in the Boston Metropolitan Region, gubernatorial appointees, and representatives of various state, regional, and City of Boston agencies; has statutory responsibility for comprehensive regional planning under MGL Chapter 40B; is the designated Economic Development District under Title IV of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965; and promotes smart growth and regional collaboration in order to implement the current regional plan, *MetroFuture: Making a Greater Boston Region*; and

WHEREAS, the Massachusetts Port Authority (“Massport”) has the statutory responsibility, under St. 1956, c. 465 (Appendix to Chapter 91 of the General Laws), to plan, construct, own, and operate transportation and related facilities (including Logan Airport, Hanscom Field, Black Falcon Cruise Terminal, and the Conley Terminal), as may be necessary for the development and improvement of commerce in Boston and the surrounding metropolitan area; and

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WHEREAS, the municipalities in the Region, including the City of Boston, as the central city in the Region, and all other municipal governments, have an essential role in transportation planning and programming decisions; and

WHEREAS, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU); or its successors and Federal Highway Administration (“FHWA”) / Federal Transit Administration (“FTA”) joint planning regulations (23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613) require metropolitan areas to have a comprehensive, continuing, and cooperative transportation planning process (“3-C”) that results in plans and programs that consider all transportation modes and supports metropolitan community development and social goals. These plans and programs shall lead to the development and operation of an integrated, intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient, economic movement of people and goods;

WHEREAS, the Objectives of the 3-C Process are:

- a comprehensive, continuing, and cooperative transportation planning process resulting in plans, programs and operations consistent with the planning objectives of the metropolitan area.
- Comprehensive, including the effective integration of the various stages and levels of transportation planning and programming for the entire Region and examining all modes so as to assure a balanced planning effort. There is simultaneous analysis of various related non-transportation elements, such

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as land use, economic and residential development, demographics, sustainability, and equity within a total planning process.

- Continuing, affirming the necessity to plan for the short and long range needs of the regional transportation system, emphasizing the iterative character of the progression from systems planning to project planning, programming, operations and implementation. Frequent updating and re-evaluation of data and plans is necessary.
- Cooperative, requiring effective coordination among public officials at all levels of government, and inviting the wide participation of all parties, public or private, at all stages of the transportation planning process. A key objective of the process is to resolve issues and controversies by providing a forum for negotiation and consensus building. At the same time, the process is not intended to operate, and cannot operate, to dilute the ultimate authority or responsibility of those state, regional, or local public officials who, pursuant to statute or under contract, review and/or implement transportation plans, programs, and projects.
- Intermodal, and are intended to help provide the Boston region with the ability to maintain, manage and operate a multimodal transportation system that provides a high level of mobility and safety for people and freight, consistent with fiscal and environmental resources;

WHEREAS, in response to the FHWA/FTA Transportation Planning Certification Review Final Report of April 2004; and



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WHEREAS, the Signatories recognize that transportation planning and programming must be conducted as an integral part of and consistent with the comprehensive planning and development process, and that the process must involve the fullest possible participation by state agencies, regional entities, local governments, private institutions and other appropriate groups;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Signatories hereto jointly agree as follows:

**2. COMPOSITION AND ROLES OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)**

The Boston Region MPO consists of the following entities:

- Massachusetts Department of Transportation, with three representatives appointed by the Secretary, at least one of which is from its Highway Division
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
- Advisory Board to the MBTA
- Massachusetts Port Authority
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- City of Boston, with two representatives
- Twelve other municipalities elected from the Boston Region:
  - four at-large (two cities and two towns), and

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- eight (no city or town designation) from, respectively, each of the eight Metropolitan Area Planning Council subregional groups, and
- The Regional Transportation Advisory Council

In addition, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration are ex-officio, non-voting members.

Each elected municipality shall be represented by its chief elected official or their designee. The terms of office of the elected municipalities shall be three-years, except, in the initial implementation phase, for six members who will have one four year term (as specified in the Updated MPO Membership election Process, dated 6/30/11). The 101 municipalities of the Boston Region will elect the elected municipalities. Permanent member entities of the MPO are not eligible to run for an elected membership.

**A. Officers**

The Chair of the Boston Region MPO shall be the Secretary of MassDOT or the Secretary's designee. The Vice Chair shall be a municipal representative or an official of one of the two regional agencies and shall be elected to a one-year term by the MPO members by majority vote. This election shall take place at the first meeting after the election of Boston Region MPO elected municipal representatives.

The Chair or his/her official designee shall: set agenda with the advice and input of the Vice Chair; call meetings; preside at meetings; and disseminate timely information to members. The Vice Chair or his/her official designee

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shall preside at meetings in the absence of the Chair or his/her official designee.

**B. Records**

The Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) shall be the official custodian of the Boston Region MPO records. These records will be prepared and maintained by the CTPS, and shall be accessible in a central location.

**C. Municipal Membership**

The City of Boston is a permanent member. The process for nominating and electing the twelve other municipal members shall be approved by the Boston Region MPO to fulfill the objective of having a diverse membership. The municipal nomination and election process shall be administered by MAPC working jointly with the Advisory Board to the MBTA.

Election procedures should allow all municipalities an opportunity to be elected to the Boston Region MPO. Any changes to the election procedures shall be presented to the Boston Region MPO for approval.

**D. The Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council)**

To accomplish the objectives of the 3-C process, the Boston Region MPO has established a special advisory committee, known as the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council). The Boston Region MPO shall support the Advisory Council by providing financial and staff support through the Boston Region MPO staff. The members of the Boston

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Region MPO shall support the Advisory Council individually by rendering institutional support and also by attending the Advisory Council meetings, as practical.

In setting policy and work priorities for said staff, the Boston Region MPO shall be advised by the Advisory Council and, subject to overall work priorities, shall provide information and analysis to the Advisory Council to assist the Advisory Council in advising on issues arising out of the 3-C process.

The principal mission of the Advisory Council is to foster broad and robust participation in the transportation planning process by bringing together concerned citizens, community-based organizations, Environmental Justice populations, business and institutional leaders, representatives of cities and towns, and state agencies.

The Advisory Council will best serve the Boston Region MPO and the public by acting as a primary mechanism for public input to the transportation planning process. To accomplish the Advisory Council mission, the Boston Region MPO acknowledges that:

- the Advisory Council is defined as a principal public outreach and education arm of the Boston Region MPO;
- The Chair of the Advisory Council will also chair any Public Participation Committee of the Boston Region MPO; and

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- The Advisory Council shall assist with the implementation of the public participation plan in cooperation with the agencies and staffs as designated in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Boston Region MPO staff will provide ongoing support to the Advisory Council Chair to:

- Implement the Public Participation Plan and
- Further educate members of the public regarding activities of the Boston Region MPO and critical transportation issues generally.

Any additional specific revised functions, duties, and membership of the Advisory Council, proposed by the Boston Region MPO, shall be determined in cooperation with the Advisory Council.

**E. Voting Rules**

Votes of the Boston Region MPO on all certification documents and amendments to these documents shall be a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting, provided that a quorum, at least twelve member representatives, is present. Other votes will be by majority, and require a quorum

**3. FUNCTIONS AND ROLES OF THE BOSTON REGION MPO AND ITS COMMITTEES**

**A. Overview**

The Boston Region MPO shall perform all functions as required by federal or state law including jointly adopting an annual unified transportation planning

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work program for the region, as well as such transportation plans, programs and conformity determinations as may from time to time be required of the Boston Region MPO by federal and state laws and regulations.

The Boston Region MPO shall be the forum for cooperative decision making by principal elected officials of general purpose governments in the Boston region, and shall endeavor to provide the federal government the views of “responsible local officials” of the Region where called for under federal law with respect to the initiation of certain transportation programs and projects.

In the resolution of basic regional transportation policy, the Boston Region MPO shall seek and consider the advice of the Advisory Council. In so doing, the Boston Region MPO shall provide the Advisory Council with information and analysis in the form of reports, briefings, and discussion concerning their plans, programs, and priorities so that the Advisory Council can carry out its functions in a timely fashion.

In addition to the advice of the Advisory Council, the MPO shall seek the involvement of members of the public and the many entities and organizations with interests and views relative to the Boston Region’s planning and programming. To facilitate this, the Boston Region MPO will post on its website, at least 48 hours in advance of meetings, all materials related to meeting action items, unless waived by unanimous consent of the Boston Region MPO. The Boston Region MPO will also meet quarterly at locations outside of the City of Boston.

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The Boston Region MPO will consider geographic and demographic equity a goal when approving all certification documents. This means that after other factors, such as need, are used in evaluating and selecting projects, a final view toward geographic and demographic balance and fairness over the span of the document will be applied.

### **B. Planning and Programming**

The Boston Region MPO is responsible for planning and programming financial resources for a multi-modal transportation system for the Boston region by conducting the federal metropolitan planning process (3C Process) for the region, as referenced in Section 1 of this Memorandum. This includes preparation of the fiscally constrained certification documents (Long-Range Transportation Plan, Unified Planning Work Program, and Transportation Improvement Program), and the Congestion Management Program and other studies supporting MPO decision-making.

The Unified Planning Work Program identifies the transportation planning studies conducted in the region, along with their funding amounts and sources, during a given federal fiscal year.

The Long Range Transportation Plan is the comprehensive transportation planning document for the MPO. It defines transportation visions, establishes goals and policies, and allocates projected revenue to regionally significant programs and projects.

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The Transportation Improvement Program lists projects programmed and expected to be funded over the immediate four-year period. It is developed annually.

The Signatories agree to the arrangements outlined in Section 4 for the allocation of federal and state funds. Nothing in this document shall preclude the Boston Region MPO's ability to use the provisions of SAFETEA-LU (and successors) to transfer funds between highway and transit uses.

**C. Establishment of Committees and Task Forces**

The Boston Region MPO shall appoint committees it determines necessary and task forces to accomplish its business and assign duties to them.

**D. Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)**

The Boston Region MPO agencies shall contribute resources in the form of funds, staff, and other contributions, to support a unified inter-agency transportation planning staff, known as the Central Transportation Planning Staff ("CTPS"), to assist in carrying out the Region's 3-C process under the policy control of the Boston Region MPO.

CTPS shall provide planning services to the Boston Region MPO. From time to time, other parties may provide additional resources through the state planning program and through other resources. All work undertaken for the Boston Region MPO shall be in an approved UPWP. All work funded through federal financing for metropolitan transportation planning under 23 USC 104(f) and 49 USC 5338(g)(1) shall be approved by the Boston Region MPO



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in accordance with applicable rules provided that the cities and towns shall have a substantial role in the development of the UPWP particularly in the activities specified for metropolitan planning funds.

Since CTPS is not an agency, the Boston Region MPO retains a fiduciary agent for all of the Boston Region MPO's financial resources. MAPC is currently the fiduciary agent. While the CTPS staff shall be defined legally as employees of the fiduciary agent, they shall be administered according to policies established by the Boston Region MPO subject to applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations and to the availability of funds

At any time during which the fiduciary agent is a member of the Boston Region MPO, the role and actions of the fiduciary agent are distinguished from its role and actions as a policy member of the Boston Region MPO in that the fiduciary agent shall be limited to implementing actions of the Boston Region MPO subject to the applicable federal, state and local laws, and regulations and to the availability of funds.

The Boston Region MPO shall indemnify and hold the fiduciary agent harmless from liabilities occurring out of actions taken under its normal administration of the Boston Region MPO's activities. The Boston Region MPO and the fiduciary agent shall enter into an agreement detailing the financial and legal obligations of each party as determined by the Boston Region MPO.

All work not subject to federal transportation rules governing metropolitan planning funds must be approved by the Boston Region MPO for inclusion in the UPWP. CTPS may be selected by the sponsoring agency or other parties to deliver transportation planning services using these funds. The Boston Region MPO shall approve such requests provided it determines that: 1) CTPS has sufficient resources to complete such work in a capable and timely manner; and 2) by undertaking such work, CTPS neither delays completion nor reduces the quality of other work in the UPWP.

#### **4. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)**

##### **A. Overview**

The Boston Metropolitan Region, made up of urban, suburban and rural communities, requires a balanced approach to transportation investment. The Boston Region MPO shall endorse annually a multi-year spending plan for federal highway and transit funding. This Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) shall reflect a multi-modal transportation program that responds to the needs of the region.

The TIP shall be the result of a cooperative, open, and informed process that balances local, regional, and state input and priorities and applies established Boston Region MPO policies and priorities in a fiscally constrained document. TIP development and programming shall be in full compliance with federal regulations and guidance. The TIP may include projects and programs addressing needs on the Interstate and National Highway Systems, repair of deficient bridges, support of inter- and intra-

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regional mobility, community projects, multi-modal facilities, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, transportation enhancements, clean air and mobility, operations and management, and all forms of transit. The state, regional, and municipal members of the Boston Region MPO shall work in a unified, timely, and cooperative manner to develop and establish priorities for the TIP.

The Boston Region MPO shall maintain two lists of unfunded projects: a First Tier Projects list and a Universe of Projects list. These lists shall be compiled by the Boston Region MPO for information purposes and shall be included annually in an appendix to the TIP.

**B. Establishment of Financial Constraint and Development of TIP Targets**

Development of the statewide federal aid and non-federal aid highway funding estimate shall be cooperative and shall be discussed with a statewide group representing regional planning agencies and other MPOs; currently the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) is this group.

An initial step in the financial constraint and TIP target development process shall be timely transmission to MARPA of federal funding information on obligation authority. In each TIP year, the state will propose its priorities for non-High Priority Projects, mega-projects, statewide infrastructure, change orders, planning, statewide CMAQ expenditures, and other items as needed. The estimated cost of these will be subtracted from the estimates of federal obligation authority of the state to show the estimated amount available for

federal funding for MPO targets in the state. This amount and the state match for this funding will be allocated among the MPOs based on the MARPA formula. The Boston Region MPO share of available federal and non-federal aid has provided the Boston Region MPO with 42.97% of available funds since 1991. This will be termed the TIP Target. The resulting targets, federal and state funding levels, and projects and programs and their cost estimates will be discussed with the Boston Region MPO and other members of MARPA at a meeting early in the TIP development process of each year. Boston Region MPO Staff shall accompany MAPC to these MARPA consultation meetings. The state will be responsible for explaining the derived targets and providing additional information as requested.

The Boston Region MPO shall use these numbers as the estimate of available funding. The Boston Region MPO's portion of federal and non-federal aid will be programmed in its constrained TIP and MassDOT shall seek to advertise projects in the region in that amount.

**C. Prioritization Criteria**

The Boston Region MPO has developed criteria to be used to evaluate projects considered for programming. These criteria are a means to inform the MPO's decisions for all elements of the TIP. These criteria are consistent with and advance the visions and policies adopted for the latest Long-Range Transportation Plan. The criteria shall be reviewed each year and updated and improved as needed.

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MassDOT and other member entities implementing federally-funded transportation projects shall consider MPO priorities when setting their priorities.

**D. Transit**

It is the responsibility of the Boston Region MPO, working with the MBTA, MassDOT Rail and Transit Division, and other transit providers in the region, to coordinate regional transit planning and funding with other transportation modes within the Boston region. This work shall be conducted in full compliance with federal and state regulations. It shall include programming for all federally-funded transit modes and programs, including the federal Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom Programs.

The MBTA's authorizing legislation directs that every five years the MBTA shall prepare and submit to the Massachusetts General Court its Program for Mass Transportation (PMT), a long-range, fiscally unconstrained plan that outlines a vision for regional mass transit and a process for prioritizing infrastructure investments. Implementation of this plan is through the five-year fiscally constrained Capital Investment Program (CIP), which is updated annually.

Boston Region MPO regulatory requirements call for development every four years of a 25-year fiscally constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that defines a comprehensive plan and vision for the region's surface transportation network. Implementation of the LRTP with federal

transportation funds is through the Boston Region MPO's fiscally constrained TIP.

The Boston Region MPO and MassDOT and the MBTA will coordinate the parallel planning activities of the PMT/CIP and the LRTP/TIP and provide consistency between planned outcomes. This includes mutual consideration of visions and priorities articulated in each entity's transportation planning documents and project selection process. The MassDOT Rail and Transit Division will coordinate RTA investment with the MPO when setting priorities for programming.

**E. Highway, Bridge, Bicycle, and Pedestrian**

The TIP shall contain the Boston region's portion of all federal and state aid for each of the TIP's four federal fiscal years. It shall be prepared in accordance with federal regulation. It shall include programming for all roadway, bridge, bicycle, pedestrian projects and programs in the region, including costs for the Central Artery/Tunnel and the Accelerated Bridge Program. It shall include projects and programs that address the needs of truck and rail freight movement in the region.

**1. Central Artery/Tunnel Project**

The Boston Region MPO shall detail future federal aid payments for the Central Artery/Tunnel Project through FFY 2014 or until federal aid obligations to the project have been met.

2. Accelerated Bridge Program

The Boston Region MPO shall be informed of the commitments to Accelerated Bridge Program funding. All bridges leveraging federal aid via this program shall be listed in the appropriate TIP element. There shall continue to be a section in the TIP that details the amount of federal aid returning to the federal government for payment on this program until such time as full obligation repayment is received.

3. Road and Bridge Program

The Boston Region MPO shall have the ability to program projects for federal and non-federal aid. The ability to include non-federal funds in a TIP does not in any respect imply the application of federal standards, regulations or related requirements to state-funded projects, programs or initiatives. The fiscal year shall be from October 1st to September 30th for both federal and non-federal aid.

MassDOT Highway Division shall be responsible for administering the road and bridge elements of the TIP, which includes meeting the requirements for implementing them. These requirements include acquiring right of way, obtaining necessary permits and completing design review before or during the federal fiscal year in which projects are programmed so that they can be advertised in the federal fiscal year in which they are programmed.

**F. Improvement of TIP-Related Information**

**1. Overview**

All members of the Boston Region MPO recognize the importance of delivering timely, accurate and reliable information on projects and on the levels of transportation funding expected to be available to the region. This information is critical for the development of the financially constrained TIP. This information also provides a valuable resource for planning by the cities and towns in the region as future funding levels help inform local decision making about whether, or when, to invest local resources in project design and development.

At the same time, the Boston Region MPO recognizes that funding levels may be affected by circumstances beyond its control, such as changes in state or federal authorizations or appropriations; increased need for emergency or security-related expenditures; legislative requirements; or other unanticipated events. While the Boston Region MPO recognizes these contingencies may affect funding, it nonetheless needs to deliver a regional transportation program based on good project information and a realistic assessment of available funds.

**2. TIP Project Information and Dissemination**

The implementing agencies shall keep the Boston Region MPO informed of project status on a regular basis to support MPO planning and programming and to enable the Boston Region MPO to notify



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project sponsors of the outstanding issues that could cause the project to be deferred to a subsequent fiscal year. At least quarterly and on request, the implementing agencies shall submit this information to the Boston Region MPO Chair and staff for coordination and for distribution to the MPO members. This information shall include project status and other issues of interest to the MPO members and shall be compiled from all available resources, including municipalities, regional entities, state transportation agencies, and other sources. Boston Region MPO members shall provide needed and relevant information to Boston Region MPO staff for dissemination to the full Boston Region MPO. Staff shall utilize appropriate and up-to-date information systems for maintaining, processing, analyzing, and reporting information.

At the end of the federal fiscal year, the state agencies shall offer a full summary of how projects fared in the previous fiscal year before asking the Boston Region MPO to vote on the new TIP.

Boston Region MPO staff shall have primary responsibility for informing local governments regarding transportation funding and for collecting local input to the Boston Region MPO. All members of the Boston Region MPO, however, shall have a role in informing local governments about transportation aid and the programming process and in considering local input to the Boston Region MPO.

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The Boston Region MPO shall discuss and decide on the TIP development process for the upcoming TIP in the first quarter of each federal fiscal year. The process shall be documented in the TIP Development Memorandum to the MPO. The process shall provide for the collection of current information about projects to be considered for programming; review and possible revision of TIP project-selection criteria; application of the criteria in project evaluations; and maintenance of certain lists of projects, such as the set in use at the signing of this Memorandum of Understanding, the “First Tier” set of projects. (The First Tier Project List is in addition to the set of programmed projects and serves as the first resource pool from which to identify projects for programming. This list is comprised of projects that earn a high score based on the evaluation criteria but that might not meet fiscal-constraint standards or immediate-readiness factors.)

### **5. OPERATIONS PLAN**

The Boston Region MPO shall adopt a revised operations plan, which shall detail the operations of the transportation planning system and the preparation of all certification documents for the Boston Region MPO. The Boston Region MPO shall be responsible for fully complying with all federal and state regulations governing the 3-C transportation planning process in the Boston metropolitan area.

The plan should, at a minimum, address the following functional areas:

- Administration and Finance;

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- Programming;
- Policy; and
- Technical Products

### **6. REVIEW OF THIS DOCUMENT**

This document shall be reviewed every year, beginning in April, by the Signatories. Upon execution of this Memorandum of Understanding and in an effort to enhance municipal understanding of the Boston Region MPO process, the Boston Region MPO shall circulate this document to the municipalities of the Boston Region MPO. Proposed amendments will be circulated to the public prior to consideration by the Boston Region MPO.

### **7. EFFECT OF MEMORANDUM**

This Memorandum follows from: the Memorandum dated January 1973 and its Supplement dated March 1974; the Memorandum dated June 1976 and its Supplement dated May 1984; and the Memorandum dated November 1982; the Memorandum dated January 1997; and the Memorandum dated December 2001. However, in the event of any conflicts between this Memorandum and any previous Memoranda, this Memorandum shall prevail.

This Memorandum shall be effective as of November 1, 2011. Elected Municipal Signatories as of the date of the approval of this Memorandum shall serve in the new appropriate at-large or subregional designations established by this memorandum, until the end of their current term.

# Appendix D—Accessibility Checklist

## D.1 BOSTON REGION MPO ACCESSIBLE MEETING CHECKLIST

The checklist below should be completed by the person responsible for selecting and reviewing the meeting location for an MPO-sponsored meeting to ensure that it meets all accessibility requirements.

### *Publicizing the Meeting*

- ✓ Has the public meeting been publicized at least three weeks in advance?
- ✓ Has the meeting been publicized in the most spoken languages of the community and in community newspapers where the meeting will be held?
- ✓ Does the public meeting notice include accessibility information, how to request a reasonable accommodation, relevant dates for making requests, and who to contact to request a reasonable accommodation?
- ✓ Does the public meeting notice include information about how to request language interpreters?

### *Evaluating the Meeting Location*

- ✓ Where applicable (in areas where public transportation is available), is the meeting location one-quarter mile or less from the nearest accessible bus stop or rail station? Or is transportation provided from the stop/station to the meeting location?
- ✓ Where applicable, is there an accessible path of travel provided from the public transportation stop to the meeting location and meeting room?
- ✓ If parking will be available at the meeting location, will there be accessible spaces (review number of car and van accessible spaces)?
- ✓ Is there an accessible path of travel provided from the accessible parking area to the meeting area?
- ✓ If the main entrance to the building is not accessible, is there directional signage pointing towards the accessible entrance?
- ✓ Is the accessible entrance unlocked and able to be used independently? If the meeting is taking place at night, is the path leading to the alternate entrance well lit?
- ✓ If there are restrooms that are open to the public, are there accessible restrooms available within close proximity of the meeting area?
- ✓ If a stage or platform will be used during the meeting, is it accessible?
- ✓ If a podium will be used during the meeting, is the podium height adjustable? If not, is there a table (between 28 and 34 inches high) provided at the side of the podium?
- ✓ Is there a high-speed internet connection within the meeting space?

***Ensuring Appropriate Accommodations***

- ✓ Have language interpreters, if requested, been reserved for the public meeting?
- ✓ Have Communication Access Real Time (CART) services, if requested, been reserved for the meeting?
- ✓ Are assistive-listening devices available for the meeting? Is there a staff person who knows how to use the device? Have the devices been checked at least 24 hours before the meeting and rechecked immediately before the meeting starts?
- ✓ Are at least five large-print copies of meeting handouts available?
- ✓ Are printed materials available upon request, in alternative formats, and/or relevant languages?
- ✓ Are film or video presentations closed captioned?

***Facility/Room Setup (prior to meeting)***

- ✓ Is the accessible entrance unlocked?
- ✓ Is there an integrated seating area in the meeting room for individuals who use a wheeled-mobility device?
- ✓ Is seating available for attendees who are hearing impaired, and who have requested an accommodation, near the front of the meeting room so that attendees may see the interpreter/captioner or lip read?
- ✓ Is there an appropriately lit area in the front of the room for interpreters and/or CART providers?
- ✓ Are the aisles at least three feet wide and clear of obstacles or tripping hazards?
- ✓ Is an adjustable microphone stand available? Can staff be used as floaters with microphones as an alternative?