



The Boston Region MPO and the Transportation Planning Process

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for carrying out the 3C process in the Boston region. The MPO region covers approximately 1,405 square miles and encompasses 101 cities and towns. It is the commonwealth's largest MPO and, with nearly three million people, it comprises nearly half of the state's population.

The Boston Region MPO is a cooperative board of 14 state, regional, and local entities. They are: the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board, the Massachusetts Highway Department, the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, the Massachusetts Port Authority, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the City of Boston, three elected cities (Everett, Newton and Salem), and three elected towns (Bedford, Framingham and Hopkinton). Three other members participate in a non-voting capacity. They are: the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council, formerly JRTC). The MPO has established the following objectives for its planning process:

- To identify transportation problems and develop possible solutions.
- To strike a balance between short-range and long-range considerations, so that beneficial incremental actions undertaken now reflect an adequate understanding of future impacts.
- To take into account both regional and local considerations and both transportation and non-transportation objectives and impacts in the analysis of project issues.
- To assist implementing agencies in putting policy and project decisions into effect in a timely fashion, with adequate consideration of environmental, social, fiscal, and economic impacts and with adequate opportunity for agency, municipal and public participation.
- Assign priorities to transportation activities in a manner consistent with the region's needs and resources.
- To maintain compliance by the Boston Region MPO with the requirements of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Clean Air Act.

Certification Documents

The MPO produces three certification documents in order for the MPO to be certified as meeting federal requirements and thus be eligible for federal transportation funds.

- The Transportation Plan states the MPO transportation policies and goals, describes the public participation process for transportation planning, assesses the current state of the region's transportation system, estimates future needs and resources, and lays out a detailed program for preserving and expanding the system for a period of 20+ years.
- The Unified Planning Work Program describes a fiscal year's transportation-related planning activities and sets forth budgets for projects using FHWA and FTA planning funds. The UPWP contains the funding used to carry out the transportation planning process in the region and to produce the Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program and associated Air Quality Conformity Determinations.
- The Transportation Improvement Program is a staged, multi-year, intermodal program of transportation improvements that must be consistent with the Transportation Plan for the Boston Region. It describes and prioritizes transportation projects expected to be implemented during a three-year period. The TIP contains a financial plan showing the revenue source or sources, current or proposed, for each project. While the TIP must be produced at least once every two years, in the Boston Region MPO it is produced annually. It is incorporated into the Statewide TIP after it has been federally approved as meeting the requirements of the Clean Air Act. One function of the TIP is to serve as a tool for monitoring progress in implementing the Transportation Plan.

Regional Transportation Advisory Council

The MPO values public involvement in the transportation planning process. It has established the Advisory Council as the MPO's citizen advisory group. The Advisory Council provides municipal representatives and citizens' organizations the opportunity to become actively involved in the planning processes for transportation services in the region. It reviews, comments on, and makes recommendations regarding certification documents. It also serves as a forum for identification of issues and alternatives, advocates solutions to the region's transportation needs, and generates interest and knowledge among the general public.

Comments and input from citizens and officials are always invited. If you would like to submit a comment or request information, please contact the MPO Activities Group (telephone 617 - 973- 7100, or the MPO Web site www.bostonmpo.org).

Boston Region MPO

