

## **Boston Region MPO Regional Transportation Plan Policies**

### **Policy 1: Promote transportation projects that support state, regional and local land use policies.**

Integrating transportation and land use policies can result in more efficient use of the regional transportation system, bringing jobs, housing, shopping and services closer together, and reducing sprawl.

To accomplish this policy, the Boston Region MPO will:

- A. Consider both existing development and densities and any adopted state, regional and local plans in transportation decision making and seek to develop transportation plans that are consistent with them. Priority will be given to projects in areas identified in local and regional plans as being suitable for concentrated development.
- B. Solicit the input of environmental, community, economic development and other appropriate agencies on MPO certification documents to promote the integration of transportation with these interests.
- C. Consider the impact of transportation projects on existing and future land use.
- D. Consider the appropriate use and maintenance of transportation rights-of-way to maximize public benefits.
- E. Encourage transportation investments that support transit-oriented designs, and increased potential for walking and bicycling.

### **Policy 2: Improve safety and security for all transportation system users.**

Travelers should be confident of a safe and secure trip. Safety can be enhanced through careful attention to design, redesign, and upgrading of facilities. Operational safety can be enhanced through timely and effective maintenance.

To accomplish this, the Boston Region MPO will:

- A. Support designs, projects, and programs that accommodate safe travel for all system users throughout the transportation network, regardless of mode. This includes designs that encourage bicyclists, motorists, transit riders and pedestrians to share the transportation network safely.
- B. Work with state agencies and communities to support design concepts that ensure that consideration of operational efficiency, comfort, safety and convenience of the motorist are balanced with the needs of the communities, the environment, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

C. Support maintenance and operations of system infrastructure to provide for safety.

**Policy 3: Improve transportation mobility for people and freight.**

Improved mobility requires access to the transportation system and the availability of safe, reliable, and convenient travel options so that users can choose the services that best fit their needs.

To accomplish this policy, the Boston Region MPO will:

- A. Support projects that increase the availability of transportation options.
- B. Encourage projects that reduce reliance on single-occupant vehicles.
- C. Support projects and programs that improve transit service by making it faster, more reliable, and more convenient.
- D. Support transit services, including water transit, that increase and complement connections among transit services and communities.
- E. Assist agencies and communities in planning and implementing projects that provide safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian connections to transit routes, between activity centers, and across communities.
- F. Support programs that improve reverse commute options.
- G. Plan and support transportation system management projects and programs that improve the operation of existing services, such as improved signal systems, bus rapid transit, bus lanes and traffic signal preemption, and incident management programs.
- H. Encourage the use of new technology and programs, including highway and transit Intelligent Transportation System programs and bus rapid transit, to improve the operation of the transportation system, improve safety, and reduce congestion.
- I. Support projects that expand transportation system capacity in areas that are identified as problems in the Boston Region Congestion Management System and as dictated by sound fiscal management. Transit capacity may be expanded by increasing service frequency, expanding vehicle capacity, or expanding the system. Highway capacity may be increased by improving interchanges or adding HOV lanes. Adding capacity by building general-purpose lanes should be considered only when no demonstrably better solution such as public transportation can be found.
- J. Expand commuter rail parking where necessary and practical.

**Policy 4: Minimize transportation-related pollution of the environment and promote energy conservation.**

This plan recognizes that reduced reliance on single-occupant vehicles and use of alternative fuel vehicles promote long-term air quality, reduced energy consumption and natural resource protection.

To accomplish this policy, the Boston Region MPO will:

- A. Place a priority on identifying and evaluating environmental impacts in the transportation planning process.
- B. Encourage projects and programs that increase the use of low-polluting fuels and efficient engine technology in vehicle fleets and transit vehicles.
- C. Encourage the design and construction of facilities that assure that materials used in operations and maintenance will not have detrimental impacts on soil and water, and will minimize light and noise pollution.
- D. Encourage the design, construction, and operation of facilities and services that promote energy efficiency and air quality.
- E. Plan and fund programs to reduce demand for transportation services and facilities, including ridesharing and employer-based congestion reduction programs.

**Policy 5: Provide and improve connections among transportation modes.**

This Transportation Plan promotes a multimodal, comprehensive approach to transportation, with the various modes complementing each other. Investment choices should be influenced by how an improvement to a single transportation mode can make the entire system work better.

To accomplish this policy, the Boston Region MPO will:

- A. Work to improve coordination among the local, regional, and state jurisdictions that own and operate the region's transportation system to better provide for local and regional transportation needs.
- B. Fund projects, such as vehicle and bicycle parking expansion, that provide additional capacity at intermodal facilities.
- C. Support projects that facilitate ease of transfer between modes, including improved fare collection systems and transit pass programs, and encourage transit schedules that promote timely transfers between services.
- D. Fund systems that provide intermodal information on incidents, alternative routes, parking availability, and transit schedules.

E. Support projects and programs that improve access to transportation facilities.

**Policy 6: Provide a transportation system that is accessible to all people.**

The transportation system should provide access to transportation options for all people regardless of physical limitation, economic status, age or ethnicity.

To accomplish this policy, the Boston Region MPO will:

A. Work with local, regional, and state jurisdictions to identify and assess structural and operational barriers to mobility for transportation disadvantaged populations and seek to address them through a comprehensive program of construction, maintenance and operational improvements.

B. Seek to provide better access for all to transportation throughout the region, including for our youth and for our elderly and disabled users.

**Policy 7: Promote the equitable sharing of the transportation system's benefits and burdens.**

All users and communities should be treated fairly in the provision of transportation services; should not be inequitably burdened by impacts from transportation projects; and should be invited to participate in transportation decision-making.

To accomplish this policy, the Boston Region MPO will:

A. Adopt measures of Environmental Justice for the region.

B. Use these Environmental Justice measures as an evaluation tool in planning and programming.

C. Apply planning resources to the resolution of identified environmental justice issues.

**Policy 8: Emphasize the preservation and modernization of the existing transportation system.**

Past investment in transportation facilities in the Boston region has resulted in a system that people and businesses rely on every day. Protecting that investment by preserving and upgrading facilities and services that meet a demonstrated need is a top priority.

To accomplish this policy, the Boston MPO will:

A. Put priority on projects that maintain and modernize existing infrastructure.

B. Promote public ownership and use of existing rights-of-way necessary for transportation needs consistent with statutory authority or other obligations providing for disposition of property.

**Policy 9: Promote public involvement in all phases of transportation planning and design.**

All users of the transportation system should have a voice in the transportation planning process. Public participation will continue through the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council), the MPOs advisory committee, and through other, complementary avenues.

To accomplish this policy, the Boston Region MPO will:

A. Adopt, in cooperation with Advisory Council, a new MPO Public Participation Plan that provides all users of the transportation system with the opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process.

B. Use extensive and effective means to reach users, including meetings and various media, always presenting information in a clear, jargon-free format.

C. Work to simplify the project review process by establishing review timelines and deadlines, providing updated status information regularly, and working with implementing agencies to ensure that all communities understand the process.

D. Continue to work with the Advisory Council in the development of all MPO documents, and support Advisory Council's work of bringing the public's views to MPO decision making.

E. Reach out to under-represented persons and groups to ensure that decisions are made through an open and participatory process.

**Policy 10: Strengthen the economic opportunities in the Boston region through transportation investments specifically taking into account areas targeted for economic development by state, regional and local plans.**

The transportation system is fundamental to and intertwined with economic activity.

To accomplish this policy, the Boston Region MPO will:

A. Put priority on transportation investments related to existing centers of economic activity; or to areas with adequate water and sewer infrastructure; or to areas targeted for economic development.

B. Coordinate available data on freight movements in the Boston region in order to inform MPO decisions on infrastructure investments.

C. Encourage development of a comprehensive plan for freight movement that includes an evaluation of: freight infrastructure needs and access to intermodal facilities (air, road, rail, and water), and consider impacts on neighborhoods and the environment.

**Policy 11: Support the preservation of community resources and character in the transportation planning process.**

To accomplish this policy, the Boston Region MPO will:

A. Encourage and support transportation enhancement projects to preserve and improve the natural and built environment.

B. Support the use of traffic calming when appropriate.

C. Work with state agencies and communities to support design concepts for roads that balance the needs of users of the facilities with the function and character of surrounding land uses, including scenic roads and historic areas.

**Policy 12: Efficiently and effectively secure and apply financial resources for the maintenance, modernization, and appropriate expansion of the regional transportation system.**

The Boston MPO has an obligation to provide maximum transportation benefit from its available financial resources and to explore and identify innovative financing options for transportation projects.

To accomplish this policy, the Boston Region MPO will:

A. Work to identify and acquire new revenue for transportation.

B. Explore and identify innovative funding sources including revenue sharing among communities and peak period pricing.

C. Promote new public-private partnerships as a way to provide needed services.

D. Work with implementing agencies, communities and project proponents to identify and adopt policies, procedures and information systems to estimate and contain project costs.