



APPENDIX G

BOSTON REGION MPO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN



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BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



October 2014
Amended March 30, 2017



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October 2014
Amended March 30, 2017

Public Participation Plan

For the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

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Central Transportation Planning Staff
Directed by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization. The MPO is composed of state and regional agencies and authorities, and local governments.

October 2014

Notice of Nondiscrimination Rights and Protections to Beneficiaries

Federal "Title VI/Nondiscrimination" Protections

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) operates its programs, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance. Related federal nondiscrimination laws administered by the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, or both prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, and disability. These protected categories are contemplated within the Boston Region MPO's Title VI Programs consistent with federal interpretation and administration. Additionally, the Boston Region MPO provides meaningful access to its programs, services, and activities to individuals with limited English proficiency, in compliance with US Department of Transportation policy and guidance on federal Executive Order 13166.

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Additional Information

To request additional information regarding Title VI and related federal and state nondiscrimination obligations, please contact:

Title VI Specialist -
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10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116
617-973-7100
TTY: 617-973-7089
publicinformation@ctps.org

Complaint Filing

To file a complaint alleging a violation of Title VI or related federal nondiscrimination law, contact the Title VI . Specialist (above) within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory conduct.

To file a complaint alleging a violation of the state's Public Accommodation Law, contact the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination within 300 days of the alleged discriminatory conduct at:

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)
One Ashburton Place, 6th Floor
Boston, MA 02109
617-994-6000
TTY: 617-994-6196

Translation

If this information is needed in another language, please contact the Boston Region MPO's Title VI Specialist at 617-973-7100.

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Summary

This public participation plan documents the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Public Participation Program, which comprises the various outreach activities that the MPO engages in to ensure that all members of the public—including populations that are described as traditionally underserved by the transportation system and/or have lacked access to the decision-making process—are given the opportunity to participate in the metropolitan transportation planning process that shapes the Boston region.

This plan provides information about the outreach activities in which the MPO engages, and the ways in which various federal civil rights mandates are incorporated into outreach activities to ensure inclusive participation. The plan includes in-depth descriptions of the various ways the public may be involved, the transportation planning and programming processes, and MPO meetings and activities. Also covered is the annual public engagement schedule for the MPO's three certification documents: Long-Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, and Unified Planning Work Program.

This plan is an update to the MPO's previous public participation plan, *Be Informed, Be Involved*. It was developed using information obtained through a public survey and research on other MPO public outreach activities, and it reflects recent changes in information and communication technologies. It was endorsed by the MPO on October 16, 2014 after a 45-day public review process.

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Chapter 1—Introduction

The purpose of this Public Participation Plan (the Plan) is to describe the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Public Participation Program (the Program), which comprises the various outreach activities that the MPO engages in to ensure that all members of the public—including populations that have been underserved by the transportation system and/or have lacked access to the decision-making process—are given the opportunity to participate in the metropolitan transportation planning process that shapes the Boston region. The Plan guides the MPO's efforts to offer early, continuous, and meaningful opportunities for the public to help identify social, economic, and environmental impacts of proposed transportation policies, projects, and initiatives.

The Plan incorporates federal and state requirements (listed in Appendix A) for encouraging and ensuring community participation and is modeled on the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) Public Participation Plan.



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Chapter 2—The Boston Region MPO's, Vision, Function, and Structure

In accordance with federal laws and regulations, Metropolitan Planning Organizations are established in urbanized areas across the nation to implement the federally required continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3C) transportation planning process. To be *continuing*, MPO work is conducted on an ongoing basis; to be *comprehensive*, the work covers all transportation modes, populations, and areas of the region, and addresses their individual needs; and to be *cooperative*, the work is performed in close communication and consultation with all of the region's municipalities and a broad base of agencies, organizations, and interest groups.

The MPO decides what transportation projects will receive federal money and conducts planning to support those decisions.

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE MPO

The purpose of the MPO is to decide how to allocate federal funds for transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian projects in the region it represents. The MPO also is responsible for setting the region's transportation vision, goals and objectives, and for completing the long- and short-range planning needed to program federal transportation funds.

Nationwide, there are more than 380 MPOs that conduct transportation planning in urbanized areas of more than 50,000 people. Each MPO has five core functions:

- Establish and manage a fair and impartial setting for effective regional decision making in the metropolitan area
- Identify and evaluate alternative transportation-improvement options and other information needed for MPO decision making through planning studies that are described in the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Prepare and maintain a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the metropolitan area, with (at least) a 20-year horizon, that fosters: mobility

and access for people and goods; efficient system performance and preservation; and a good quality of life, among other goals

- Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the short-range (four-year) program of capital improvements needed to implement the LRTP and make other investments to achieve the area's goals

The MPO plans for all surface transportation modes in the region and seeks to engage people, communities, and organizations in its planning process.

- Involve the general public by offering all interested persons, including affected constituencies, opportunities to participate in all the decision-making functions of the MPO, including those listed above

The end products of the MPO's work are represented in studies, reports, technical memoranda, data on transportation issues in the region, and the three federally required certification documents discussed above: the LRTP, TIP, and UPWP. Because each MPO

in the country must produce these three major documents in order to be certified by the federal government as eligible to program federal transportation funds, they are called "certification" documents.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the purpose of the MPO and the five functions listed above.

These functions and other responsibilities of MPOs are described in federal laws and associated regulations. Transportation planning requirements and specifically the 3C process described earlier, date to the Federal-aid Highway Act of 1962, and are regularly revised. The most recent federal transportation legislation is Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21).

2.2 THE BOSTON REGION MPO

Although all MPOs operate under the same federal guidance, there is great variability among MPOs, based on the geographic and political characteristics of the state and region in which they are located. Each is free to establish its own membership structure and define many other aspects of how it accomplishes its work. The following sections discuss the framework of Boston Region MPO specifically.

Figure 1
Purpose and Functions of the MPO



2.2a The Boston Region MPO's Central Vision

The MPO's central vision, as stated in the MPO's Long-Range Transportation plan, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*, both anticipates the future and responds to current needs. This vision has evolved over many years' engagement in metropolitan transportation planning—a process that includes technical analyses and other studies of transportation needs, as well as soliciting and incorporating the public's views. Its central vision guides the MPO in all of its work, and paints a picture of the desired, future-state for the region and its transportation network:

The Boston region will continue to be a major economic, educational, and cultural hub of New England. It will maintain its high quality of life based on its lively commercial and business enterprises, the strength of its institutions, and its healthy and pleasant environment, all supported by its well-maintained transportation system. Notably, looking ahead, an ongoing transformation will be taking place in the region's communities. Increasingly, they will be places in which people can have access to safe, healthy, efficient, and varied transportation options and find jobs and services within easy reach of affordable housing. The transportation options will include the transit, bicycle, and pedestrian modes, among others, and will reduce environmental impacts, improving air and environmental quality. The role of the region's transportation system in making the envisioned future possible will be a result of attentive maintenance, cost-effective management, and strategic investments in the system by the Boston Region MPO.

2.2b Work of the Boston Region MPO

As discussed above, the Boston Region MPO is responsible for carrying out the federally required 3C planning process and accomplishing core MPO functions, including development of the three certification documents—the LRTP, TIP, and UPWP.

Figure 2 on the following page depicts how these three documents are interrelated and how they connect with other processes and documents developed by the MPO (shown in blue) and to those of state and regional agencies (shown in green), such as the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). Other MPO documents and processes include the Congestion Management Process (CMP) and studies that are programmed in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Other state and regional planning initiatives include the MBTA's Program for Mass Transportation (PMT) and Capital Investment Program (CIP); MassDOT's CIP, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and other planning initiatives; and transportation studies conducted by others.

Figure 2
Relationship of MPO Certification Documents to other Transportation Planning Documents

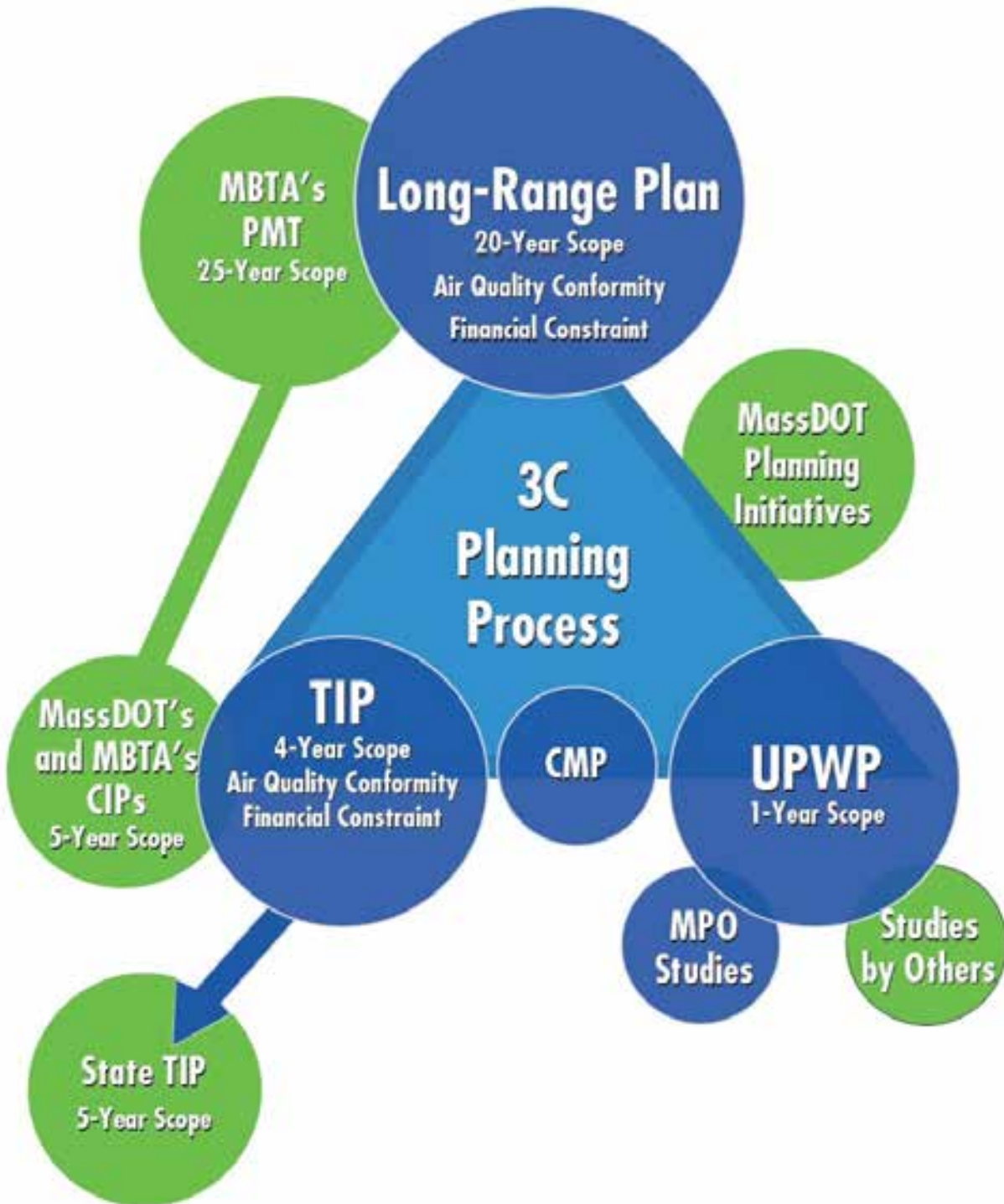


Figure 3
Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization Regions



In addition to the work described above, the Boston Region MPO coordinates transportation planning with the four other MPOs in the Boston Urbanized Area: the Merrimack Valley, Northern Middlesex, Old Colony, and Southeastern Massachusetts metropolitan planning organizations. This work is accomplished through periodic meetings of the MPOs in the Urbanized Area. Figure 3 on the previous page shows the areas served by Massachusetts' 13 MPOs. In addition, all MPOs in Massachusetts meet with MassDOT and the federal transportation agencies approximately monthly to coordinate on statewide and MPO transportation planning activities.

2.2c Composition of the Boston Region MPO

A board of 22 state, regional, and municipal members who work cooperatively to make decisions about regional planning and funding priorities comprises the Boston Region MPO. The MPO region encompasses 101 municipalities and approximately 1,405 square miles, stretching from Boston to Ipswich in the north, Duxbury in the south, and to approximately Interstate 495 in the west. It is home to more than three million people and approximately two million jobs. The diverse communities in the MPO area range from relatively rural communities, such as Dover, to the urban centers of Boston and Cambridge. Transportation planning must take into account demographic, cultural, environmental, and mobility diversity.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU, last updated July 7, 2011, see Appendix B) establishes the MPO's membership, composition, structure, committees, processes for developing its certification documents, voting rules, and more.

Current Membership

Currently, the MPO's membership includes the following voting members:

- Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT, three votes)
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
- MBTA Advisory Board
- Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport)
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
- Regional Transportation Advisory Council
- The City of Boston (two votes)
- Twelve other municipalities from the region, which are elected for three-year terms
 - Four at-large municipalities (two cities and two towns)
 - Eight municipalities (no city or town designation), each from one of the eight MAPC subregions

- The agency representatives serve as ex officio members, and the municipal members are elected; each year, a portion of the 12 elected members are chosen by the chief elected officials of all municipalities in the region; the MAPC and the MBTA Advisory Board jointly administer the election

Figure 4 shows the municipalities that belong to each of the eight MAPC subregional groups, and highlights the municipalities that currently hold seats on the MPO.

The MPO board also includes two nonvoting members:

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

The MPO is chaired by the state Secretary of Transportation (or his designee); the vice-chair is currently the Executive Director of MAPC (or his designee).

Figure 5 shows the proportion of MPO seats held by different types of entities, such as transportation agencies and municipalities.

MPO Staff: the Central Transportation Planning Staff

Created in 1974, the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) serves as a comprehensive, multimodal transportation planning staff to the MPO. As such, it is responsible for carrying out the work of the 3C transportation planning process under the direction of the MPO. This includes authoring planning studies and other analyses that are identified in the UPWP, producing the certification documents, and developing and maintaining technical tools, such as a travel demand model set, that help the MPO conduct its work.

MPO Committees

Currently, the MPO has three standing committees that it relies on to fulfill specific functions. The MPO Chair appoints representatives to the committees from among MPO members. Each of the committees reviews issues within its area of responsibility and makes recommendations to the MPO for necessary actions.

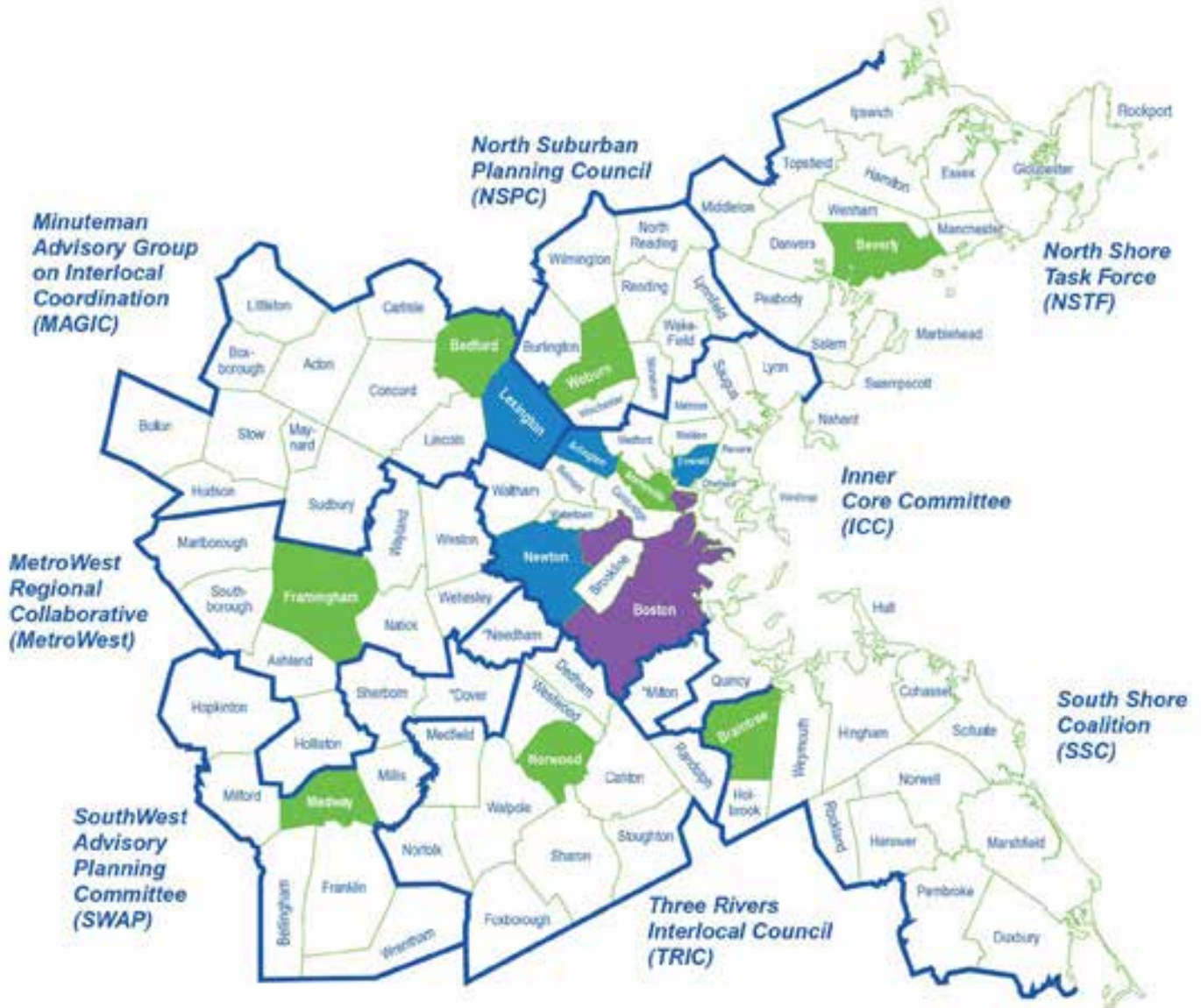
- Administration and Finance Committee (A&F)—Reviews the MPO's operating budget, staffing, and spending
- Congestion Management Process (CMP) Committee—Discusses congestion in the region and makes recommendations of certain

improvements to traffic flow that would reduce congestion and improve mobility and air quality

- UPWP Committee—Works with staff on recommendations for developing the UPWP, which includes selecting studies to be funded. The committee also reviews the MPO's quarterly financial reports, as well as progress reports of the various planning studies underway



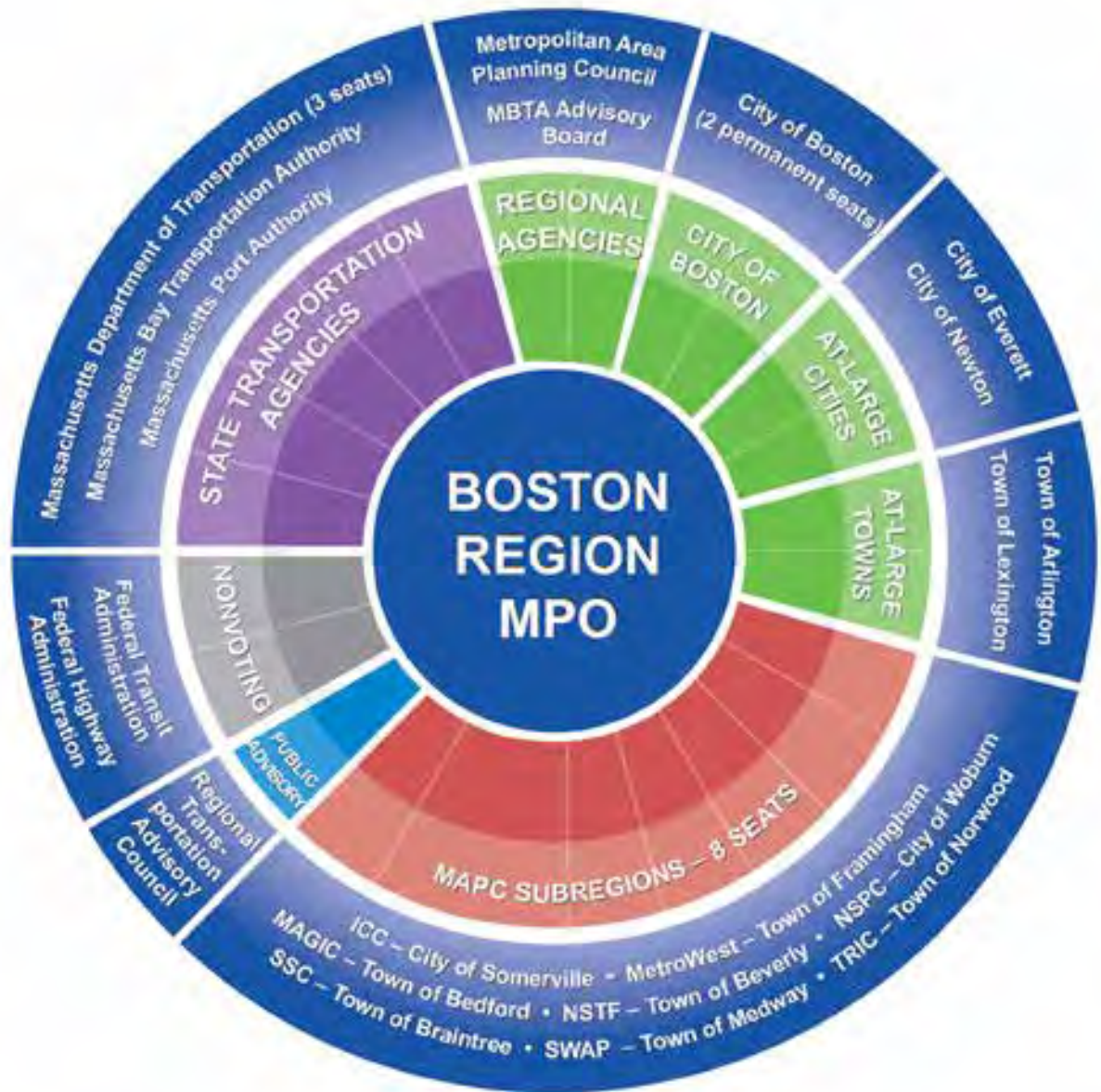
Figure 4
Boston Region MPO Area, MPO Municipal Members, and MAPC Subregions



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

- MAPC subregion boundary
- MPO representative from subregion
- MPO city or town at-large representative
- Boston has two permanent MPO representatives

Figure 5
Boston Region MPO Members



2014 Membership

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Chapter 3—The MPO’s Approach to Public Participation

The Boston Region MPO firmly believes that meaningful public participation should be integral to the organization’s transportation planning work. Public participation improves decision making by helping to illuminate many of the social, economic, and environmental benefits and drawbacks of transportation decisions.

As indicated in the introduction to this document, the MPO’s Program comprises activities the MPO undertakes and materials it produces to facilitate consultation on its planning and programming with all interested parties and members of the public. The Plan is the document (with text and graphics) that explains the Program and provides information about how to become involved in the MPO’s transportation decision-making process through Program activities.

3.1 FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

As discussed above, public participation is one of the five core functions of an MPO. Federal metropolitan transportation planning rules require MPO public participation plans to:

- 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 outreach to all interested parties, including the general public and particular groups (such as “representatives of the disabled”)
- Undergo periodic reviews and updates, along with involvement of the public, who are provided (at least) 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 protected populations (please see Appendix A for a list of federal legislation). To meet these requirements, the MPO takes steps to include people with disabilities, minority and low-income populations, and those with limited English proficiency (LEP), as discussed throughout this Plan.

3.2 UPDATING THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

As indicated above, MPOs develop and update their public participation programs and plans in consultation with members of the public and other interested parties. Staff performs updates as needed, to reflect changes in federal guidance, requirements and regional needs, and improvements in the state of the practice.

The MPO will continue to seek feedback on its public participation program to help it improve and evolve.

The Boston Region MPO approved its previous public participation plan, *Be Informed, Be Involved* in 2007 and revised it in 2010 and 2012. This document (which is an updated version of *Be Informed, Be Involved*) reflects changing public participation requirements and practices. Prior to beginning this update, staff sought input from the public through meetings and a survey to gain insight into ways the public

likes to be ‘informed and involved.’ Staff also researched other MPOs to study the innovative and effective practices they currently use. Please see Appendix C for a full discussion of the survey and research on other MPO practices.

Using the results of the outreach and research discussed above, as well as general awareness of changing communication techniques and technologies, in-house problem solving, and federal guidance, staff identified areas where updates to the MPO’s Program would be beneficial and recommended a number of specific actions and practices that have been adopted through this updated Plan.

To ensure that the Program continues to evolve and reflect the most current and effective methods, MPO staff will adopt a regular, frequent and more rigorous process for gathering data and evaluating the MPO’s outreach practices, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative techniques include tracking the level of attendance at events, number of comments received, and use of the website. Qualitative measures include soliciting feedback from members of the public through surveys (both online and at meetings) about their satisfaction with process and outcome, and sense of fair treatment.

3.3 MPO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION VISION AND GUIDELINES

The MPO’s vision for public participation in the region is to hear, value, and consider—throughout its planning and programming work—the views of and feedback from the full spectrum of the public, and use this input in its decision making.

In order to accomplish its vision, the MPO has established a number of public participation guidelines, which have been updated to reflect the insights gained through its recent research. The MPO makes every effort to:

- Provide a predictable, easy-to-understand process
- Offer information that is clear, concise, current, and easily available
- Make great use of visualization techniques to enhance understanding
- Cast a wide and inclusive net to invite participation of interested parties and the general public: bolster outreach to minority, low-income, elderly, and youth communities, the LEP population, and persons with disabilities
- Respond to participants' interests, views, and need for information
- Arrange convenient, timely, and meaningful opportunities for involvement
- Respect the views offered by members of the public; utilize these opinions, and other information offered, in programming and planning
- Promote respect among all participants
- Create a framework that encourages constructive contributions by members of the public to the work and decisions made by the MPO
- Allow flexibility in the Program
- Remain open to adopting new avenues of communication
- Explore strategies for connecting with people who do not use or don't have ready access to computers
- Maximize effectiveness by coordinating with partner agencies and their outreach activities
- Embrace, as feasible, new technologies with which to engage the public in an interactive way

3.4 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org, is a rich source of transportation information.

The MPO's activities and programs—presentations, discussions; various venues for meetings and forums; information on the MPO website; flyers; emails, other notification media, etc.—are designed to meet the preferences and needs of the public.

3.4a How to Be Informed

Primary among the MPO's outreach strategies is its website, which provides comprehensive information about all of the MPO's work and planning activities, including:

- Studies, statistical reports, technical memoranda, and other documents related to metropolitan transportation planning process
- Information about structure and composition of the MPO
- MPO meeting agendas and minutes
- Contact information for project managers of the MPO's major programs
- News Flashes that highlight MPO activities, programs, and results of MPO studies and reports—to capitalize on News Flashes' prominent location on the website (the home page) the MPO recently has increased their frequency and scope of topics covered
- *TRANSREPORT*, the MPO's bi-monthly, web-based newsletter, which covers timely MPO activities and transportation issues around the region—this is distributed via email to approximately 2,500 recipients, including public libraries, which can print it to make available to all visitors
- A comment section on the website, where people can express their views to the MPO and receive a response from staff
- Online surveys to collect public input periodically on important issues—going forward, staff will regularly evaluate potential for additional surveys

To improve access to, and the appeal of, information on the website, staff will explore the possibility of using an RSS¹ feed to notify interested parties of updated content on the MPO website. To the same end, staff also will use more graphics, such as text boxes in narratives for public information and flow charts, and other visualization techniques, in addition to and to augment written information. MPO staff has developed an internal *CTPS Nondiscrimination Handbook* that details the practices that staff follows to make the MPO website, and all documents posted on it, accessible.

To ensure web access for people with low or no vision, who use screen readers, all documents are posted in both PDF and HTML. In addition, the MPO makes every effort to make data presented in tables fully navigable by a screen reader and provides alternative text to describe those tables, figures, and images that cannot be read by a screen reader.

To make information more accessible for people with limited English proficiency, the website features a translation function for languages other than English, including Chinese (simplified and traditional), French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. In addition, vital documents are professionally translated into the three most frequently spoken languages other than English in the MPO region (Spanish, Chinese, and Portuguese), and these translated versions are posted on the website. Staff will reevaluate annually whether additional MPO documents should be identified as “vital documents,” to be translated into the languages of policy. Documents currently defined as vital include:

- MPO Notice to Title VI Beneficiaries
- MPO compliant procedures and form
- Summaries of key materials: a description of the MPO transportation-planning process and the certification documents, LRTP, TIP, and UPWP
- Meeting notices: generally prepared for out-of-Boston MPO meetings, and all MPO-sponsored meetings, workshops, forums, and other similar input-sessions

All documents on the MPO website are available in PDF and HTML for those with low or no vision. Materials also may be translated into other languages.

Audio recordings of MPO meetings are posted on the website so that those who cannot attend meetings can listen to the discussions at any time. These

¹ RSS (Rich Site Summary) is a format for delivering regularly changing web content.

recordings also provide easy access to meeting content for individuals with low or no vision or with low literacy.

The MPO utilizes various other tools to keep the public informed, including an extensive email list with almost 3,000 contacts, MPOinfo, through which it sends information to interested individuals and entities. The MPO also has email lists for Transportation Equity, Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT), the Advisory Council, and interested parties. In general, notices sent via the email lists focus on major MPO milestones, such as certification document amendments or announcements of public comment periods. The MPO staff also has begun sending News Flashes to email list recipients and distributing more press releases, and will explore the use of Twitter as another way to share information. The MPO also intends to explore local access cable television as another medium of communication.

For those who are not connected to email or the internet, staff works with public libraries, requesting that they post and/or distribute MPO information.

3.4b How to Be Involved

Everyone is welcome to attend MPO and MPO committee meetings. They are held in Boston and in other municipalities around the region.

The MPO hosts a number of meeting and event types at which the public can learn about current MPO activities. Among these are the meetings of the MPO itself, meetings of MPO committees, and various public participation opportunities. One purpose of these meetings is to present and discuss information, solicit feedback, or gather input from the public on specific topics or plans, in order to inform transportation planning and programming

decisions for the region. The other primary purpose is to provide an open and constructive context in which those decisions are made by MPO members.

MPO and MPO Committee Meetings

The MPO typically meets on the first and third Thursday of each month at 10:00 AM. Most meetings are at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, in Boston; however, once a quarter, the MPO convenes its meeting off site in one of the MPO municipalities.

MPO meetings follow the general process below, which includes opportunities for public comment:

- The Chair (the Secretary of Transportation or his designee) leads the meetings, recognizing speakers, and managing the flow of discussion
- Agendas include a public-comment time, in which any member of the public will be recognized to speak and present information
- At the discretion of the chair, members of the public also may be recognized to speak during discussions of other agenda items

The three MPO standing committees, UPWP, CMP, and A&F meet as needed. As with MPO meetings, these committee meetings usually are at the State Transportation Building, either before or after an MPO meeting. However, when necessary, committee meetings may be held off site in conjunction with an MPO meeting. Committee meetings are also open to the public.

To extend the public's ability to provide input to the MPO, staff will research, and if feasible and useful, create a mechanism for submitting public comments on MPO agenda items in advance of meetings

MPO staff takes comments and respond to questions from individuals who contact them via telephone or email. Individuals with low or no vision or with low literacy will be informed on the website and at meetings that they may submit comments via a recording or staff transcription of their spoken remarks, either before, during or after MPO or MPO-sponsored meetings.

Regional Transportation Advisory Council

The Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council) is an independent transportation public advisory committee that is an active and voting member of the MPO. The primary function of the Advisory Council is to advise the MPO on transportation policy and planning. Advisory Council meetings provide an ongoing avenue for public participation that invites informed involvement. The Advisory Council's members are municipalities, professional organizations, transportation advocacy groups, and state and regional agencies. The chair of the Advisory Council is elected by its members.

The Advisory Council provides advice to the MPO on a broad range of issues and may discuss topics that do not always exactly track those of the MPO meetings. Advisory Council meetings are designed to foster broad-based and robust discussions on transportation issues and topics related to planning and

The Regional Transportation Advisory Council is an independent body that brings public viewpoints and advice to the MPO.

programming. Meetings are held each month, generally on the second Wednesday, at 3:00 PM in the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston.

Advisory Council meetings adhere to the same general process as MPO meetings. Although the agendas do not routinely include a specific item for public comment, at the discretion of the Chair, members of

the public who are not Advisory Council members are allowed to speak and ask questions.

To improve the public participation opportunities offered by the Advisory Council, MPO staff will work with the Advisory Council to hold jointly-sponsored programs and forums on timely transportation topics; solicit the Advisory Council's views and ideas on specific, MPO-defined topics; and support the Advisory Council's membership outreach to low-income, minority, and LEP populations, persons with disabilities, and other traditionally underrepresented populations.

MPO-Sponsored Meetings

As part of its Program, the MPO sponsors a variety of public-engagement opportunities, convened and managed by MPO staff. The purpose of these meetings is to provide information about MPO work underway and gather information and views from members of the public. Therefore, they are designed for as much interaction as possible among all in attendance. When appropriate, the transportation agencies will be part of MPO-sponsored meetings.

The MPO often holds public meetings in areas with high concentrations of minority, low-income, and/or LEP populations to facilitate their inclusion. In addition, staff consults with personnel in host municipalities to learn about particular cultural or language issues that should be recognized and respected when planning and operating the meeting (for example, dates of community celebrations or observations and/or cultural preferences or restrictions).

Workshops:

MPO staff schedule workshop-type meetings in public venues in municipalities all throughout the MPO region. These workshops are set to coincide with the public review of the draft certification documents, typically in May or June every year. Other MPO documents and programs also may be discussed.

Often the workshops include brief presentations followed by question-and-answer sessions. Subsequently, there are opportunities for one-on-one interaction between members of the public and MPO staff. Workshop formats may follow an exhibit-style format, with tables, staffed by program managers, set up for each major topic on the agenda. Participants are invited to move from topic to topic as their interest guides. Materials may be in any number of communications vehicles: print, large print, web based, PowerPoint slides, table-top display boards, maps, etc.

General Information Sessions

The MPO staff regularly conducts informational meetings at its offices in the State Transportation Building in Boston, which is a central location for the region. The Program's practice is to hold these quarterly.

Session topics include current MPO activities, such as development of the certification documents and updates on other MPO ongoing programs, but also may include detailed presentations and discussions about the results of MPO studies and reports. The format generally consists of presentations by program and project managers, followed by questions and answers. Staff is available after the presentations for individual follow-up discussion with meeting participants.

TIP and UPWP Information Sessions

MPO staff conducts some public meetings (still open to all) whose topics are geared to persons who prepare their municipality's or other entity's official inputs to the TIP and UPWP development processes. Staff makes presentations on the current year's certification document process and discusses any changes from previous years, followed by questions and answers. After the presentations, staff is available for a roll-up-the-sleeves style working session with individual participants.

The MPO hosts various events throughout the year. Information about these is posted on the MPO website and distributed via email.

Forums

MPO staff collaborates with other entities to convene regional forums on important topics. Forums are focused on issues of interest to particular constituencies and generally feature a panel of expert speakers with time for questions and answers; sometimes followed by breakout sessions in which small groups of participants may have more intimate discussions. The purpose is to foster communication and cooperation among disparate entities that deal with the

issue under discussion, and to look for new solutions to existing problems. These meetings usually are held at the State Transportation Building.

Special Topic Discussions

The MPO occasionally brings together agencies and other entities to seek their input on specialized aspects of important topics in the metropolitan transportation planning process. Past special topic discussions dealt with transportation-equity and environmental issues.

Other Opportunities for Public Participation

In addition to the meeting opportunities discussed above, the MPO provides a number of other ways for the public to be involved in the planning process:

Surveys

From time to time, the MPO conducts surveys to learn the views of members of the public on targeted topics. Respondents submit their ideas via survey tools on the MPO website. Staff presents the survey results to the MPO.

Public Information Email

Members of the public can submit questions, comments, and ideas to the MPO and its staff via this email address. Staff replies to these queries and use information provided, as applicable. This email address is listed on meeting flyers and other MPO outreach materials.

Website Comments

The MPO website houses a general comment section that viewers can reach from any page on the site. Using this function, members of the public are invited to submit a comment on any topic. Comments are directed to the appropriate staff-level program manager, who will respond to the comments and use this input, as appropriate. Comments submitted during a formal comment period for a document under review, and their associated staff responses, are summarized and reported to the MPO.

MAPC Subregion Meetings and Coordinated Activities

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council has divided the municipalities in its area (which coincides exactly with the Boston Region MPO area) into eight subregions. The subregions convene their member municipalities regularly to discuss topics related to land use, urban and community planning, issues of general interest to local and regional planners, and transportation. MAPC and MPO staff attends meetings as needed to discuss pertinent MPO activities, schedules, and issues and to gather the subregions' and their municipalities' views and priorities.

In order to provide additional opportunities for public engagement, MPO staff will look for ways to collaborate with MAPC on specially targeted public outreach activities.

MPO “Invite Us Over”

MPO staff asks transportation advocacy groups, professional organizations, transportation-equity organizations, and other such groups to invite staff to attend their regularly scheduled meetings to discuss transportation issues that are important to them. MPO staff makes presentations, answers questions, and gathers comments at these meetings. Staff will work to increase the number of “Invite-Us-Over” speaker events in order to bolster the MPO’s visibility and heighten the effectiveness of such events as an outreach strategy.

Figure 6 summarizes the various ways that members of the public can receive MPO information and be involved in MPO activities and decision making.

3.4c Notice of MPO Activities

The MPO provides notification of meetings through the calendar on its website. MPO, MPO Committee, and Regional Transportation Advisory Council meeting agendas and materials are posted on the MPO’s website a week in advance of the meeting, except in cases of emergency or other constrained circumstances.

MPO-sponsored meetings and sessions also are posted on the website calendar, and usually include a flyer announcing the day, time, and location of the gathering and the topics to be discussed. These flyers are translated into the three most commonly spoken languages other than English in the MPO region: Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese. Links to related documents may be included under the meeting’s entry.

Figure 6
Ways to be Informed and Involved



Meeting notifications also are provided in the *TRANSREPORT* calendar section. Flyers (as described above) are sent via the MPOinfo, Transportation Equity, and AACT email lists, as well as to Advisory Council members and contact lists of other interested parties.

3.4d Access to MPO and MPO-Sponsored Meetings

The MPO works to make all meetings accessible to all members of the public, regardless of their transportation alternatives, mobility limitations, or language skills. The *CTPS Nondiscrimination Handbook* described earlier also contains protocols to ensure physical access to meeting venues.

The MPO strives to make its meetings accessible to everyone, and is attentive to transportation, physical, and language access needs.

Transportation and Physical Access

All MPO-sponsored meetings are held in locations that are accessible to people with disabilities and are 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 uses an accessibility checklist with a list of physical characteristics that are necessary to accommodate individuals with a variety of mobility limitations.

Language Access

When selecting meeting venues, staff consults the MPO's Language Assistance Plan (LAP), which was developed as part of the Title VI program. The LAP identifies location of LEP populations; provides information regarding languages into which materials may need to be translated, based on the meeting location; and describes the language services that will be provided.

3.4e Recent Opportunities for Public Involvement

In keeping with FTA Title VI requirements, the MPO has prepared a summary of all public-involvement meetings since the last triennial Title VI Program submission. This summary, found in Appendix D, includes MPO-sponsored public meetings and forums that were held specifically for the purpose of public participation, and MPO meetings that were held outside of Boston, as of August 2014.

Not listed are the regularly scheduled Boston meetings of the MPO, the three MPO standing committees, the Advisory Council, and AACT (which is funded and staffed by the MPO). All of these meetings are open to the public and provide opportunities for public input, as discussed above.

3.4f Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Public Hearing Requirements

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



Chapter 4—Public Participation Schedule and the Transportation Planning Process

Sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3a of this chapter were amended on March 30, 2017 to change the duration of public review and comment periods from 30 days to 21 days. This amendment (Amendment 1) is temporary, and expires on September 30, 2017. Each instance of this change is noted in the text below.

Work for the metropolitan transportation planning process is underway all year. This includes developing the certification documents and the other programs and studies conducted as part of the process. Development of the certification documents follows established cycles as depicted in Figure 7. Public outreach to support this work follows the same cycles. The MPO makes the public aware of the details of each year's public participation timeframes at the beginning of the federal fiscal year to assure predictability for those who wish to participate in the transportation planning process. Public participation opportunities for other MPO programs, such as Transportation Equity, and some studies occur throughout the year, as needed.

4.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE FOR THE TIP AND UPWP

At the beginning of each federal fiscal year, the MPO develops and posts its schedule of certification activities, laying out its plans for developing the certification documents due in that year and for conducting the other planning work scheduled to be accomplished.

The development of the TIP and UPWP typically move forward in tandem on the following schedule:

October:

- MPO staff reviews and updates evaluation criteria for TIP projects and the emphasis areas used to help evaluate new UPWP studies. The development program for the documents—the approach to data collection, analyses to be conducted, and steps and activities to inform and involve the public—also is formulated.

November–January:

- MPO staff discusses the upcoming document development activities and schedules and any changes to the selection criteria with members of the public through various activities:

- Briefing the Regional Transportation Advisory Council
- Attending Metropolitan Area Planning Council subregional meetings
- Conducting information sessions on the TIP, UPWP, and other topics

February:

- MPO staff receives information on new TIP projects and develops ideas for possible studies to be included in the UPWP universe of study proposals.
- Staff begins the process of evaluating TIP projects against selection criteria and UPWP study proposals against emphasis areas
- The MPO's UPWP Committee begins to discuss UPWP study proposals

The MPO follows an annual schedule for development of the TIP and UPWP.

March:

- Staff completes evaluations of TIP projects and UPWP study proposals
- Feedback from project proponents is collected and considered
- MassDOT specifies the amount of federal funding that will be available for projects in the TIP for the next four federal fiscal years and for studies in the UPWP in the next year:
 - Staff prepares a first-tier list of TIP highway projects as a resource for preferred projects for programming considerations
 - Staff prepares a recommendation about how to allocate the TIP target highway program dollars (the money available to the MPO for funding projects)
 - Staff develops a UPWP budget and recommendation for new studies
 - Staff generally conducts two information sessions in March to discuss the TIP and UPWP proposals and schedule for development of the final documents

April:

- Staff presents its recommendations for programming UPWP funds to the UPWP Committee
- Staff presents its recommendations for programming TIP funds to the MPO

April through Mid-May:

- The UPWP Committee reviews the staff recommendation and the budget and makes its own recommendation to the MPO
- The MPO discusses the staff recommendations and comments on both the TIP and the UPWP and releases draft documents for a 30-day public

review and comment period (*Amendment 1 changes this 30-day period to 21 days for the period of March 30 through September 30, 2017*)

Mid-May to Mid-June:

- The public review for the draft documents is conducted; the MPO holds several workshops and information sessions to discuss the draft TIP and UPWP documents with members of the public; and gathers feedback and input
- All comments are reviewed and considered by the MPO and necessary changes are made to the documents.

End of June:

- The MPO endorses a final version of both documents; after they are finalized, documents are submitted to the federal agencies for their review and approval

October 1:

- The approved documents go into effect at the beginning of the federal fiscal year

Figure 7 displays the MPO's annual process for producing the TIP and the UPWP, and the related public participation opportunities.

4.2 THE LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Long-Range Transportation Plan is updated every four years, although some LRTP work is underway all year, every year. A specific public participation plan is developed for each LRTP update. The most significant public participation takes place during the fourth year, leading up to endorsement of the LRTP update. Although the public participation schedule is different for the LRTP, it follows the same general sequence and set of outreach tools used for the TIP and UPWP, and if possible public participation activities for the LRTP are coordinated with TIP and UPWP outreach. (*Amendment 1 adds the following sentence at the end of this paragraph: "The MPO releases the draft LRTP for a public review and comment period that is, at minimum, 21 days long." This amendment applies to the period of March 30 through September 30, 2017.*)

4.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE FOR CHANGES TO CERTIFICATION DOCUMENTS

The certification documents are dynamic—they can be modified or amended to reflect changes made throughout the course of a typical federal fiscal year, for example: revisions to project scopes; changes in cost; new project schedules;

new projects added or programmed projects removed. These changes are made through the processes of administrative modification or amendment.

For the TIP, consistent with federal guidelines, if a project is valued at \$5 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 at greater than \$5 million is 10 percent or more of the project value. Changes below these thresholds may be considered administrative modifications. Any changes to the LRTP generally are considered amendments. Changes to the UPWP are infrequent; however, the addition or deletion of an MPO-funded study or program may trigger an amendment.

Amendments to any of the three certification documents—LRTP, TIP, and UPWP—follow the same public process, as described below.

4.3a Amendments to Certification Documents

When the MPO considers amending one of its certification documents it votes to do so at an MPO meeting. The proposed draft amendment then is posted on the MPO's website and a 30-day public comment period begins. *(Amendment 1 changes this 30-day period to 21 days for the period of March 30 through September 30, 2017.)*

The Advisory Council and affected municipalities and constituencies are notified 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 informs members of the public by posting notices of pending amendments on the MPO website and distributes the notices through its email lists. The MPO also informs TIP Contacts and proponents of affected projects.

The MPO invites public input when considering amendments to the TIP, UPWP, LRTP, and Public Participation Plan.

In extraordinary circumstances, such as an unforeseen regulatory requirement or funding deadline, the MPO may vote to shorten the 30-day public comment period by as much as 15 days. *(Amendment 1 changes this 30-day period to 21 days; it also changes "as much as 15 days" to "to a minimum of 15 days" for the period of March 30 through September 30, 2017.)* In emergency circumstances, such as the need to take immediate action to protect

public safety or take advantage of an extraordinary funding opportunity, the comment period may be waived.

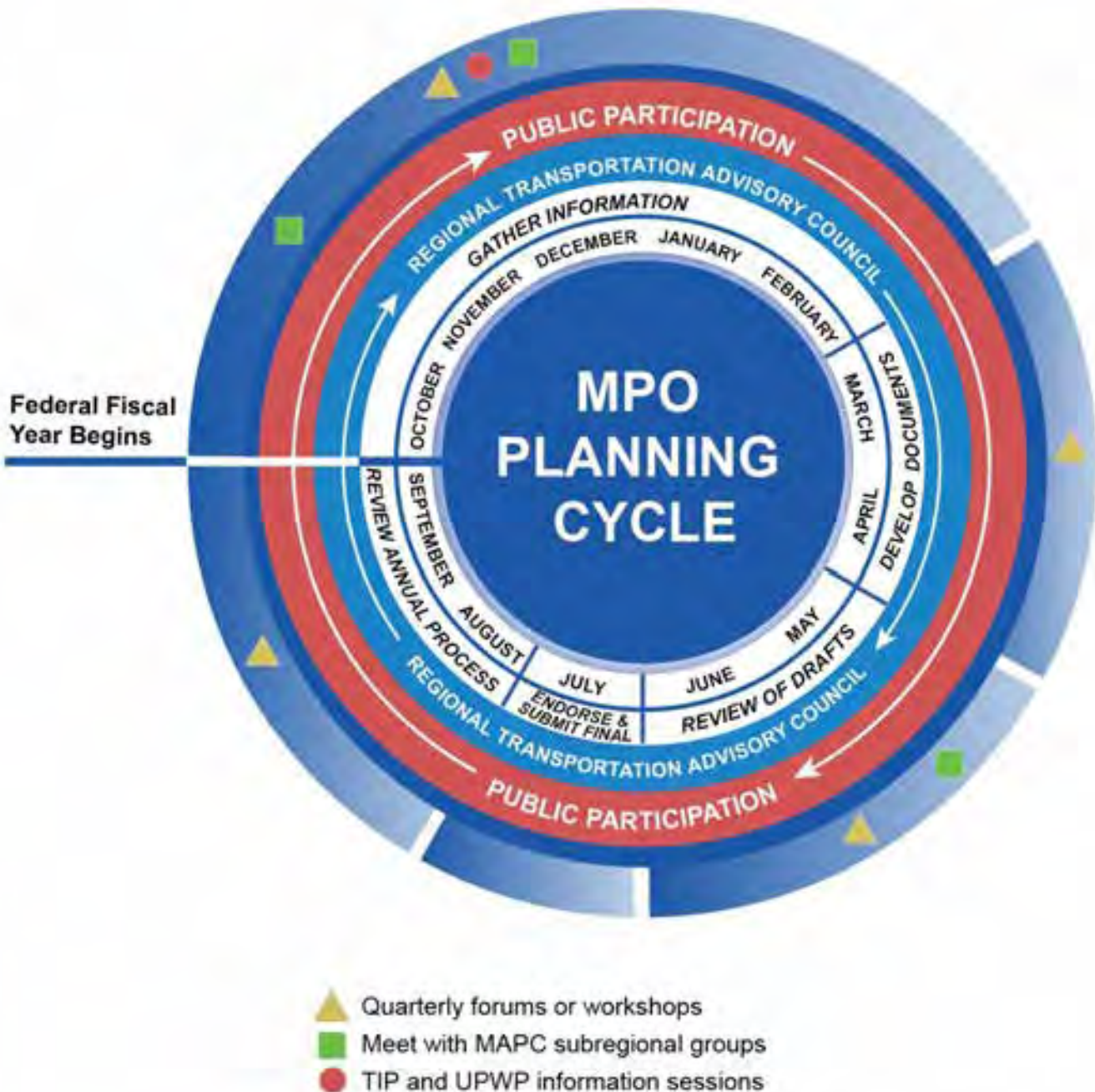
A public comment period will be extended an additional 15 days if a proposed amendment is significantly altered during the initial public comment period. An additional comment period of 30 days will be scheduled if a significant alteration occurs after the close of the initial public comment period. *(Amendment 1 changes this 30-day period to 21 days for the period of March 30 through September 30, 2017.)*

Public comments are collected by MPO staff, and relayed to the MPO in both a summary form and in full text, as submitted. MPO members consider these comments as they decide what action to take regarding the proposed amendment.

4.3b Administrative Modification of Certification Documents

Changes to a 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, though one may be scheduled, at the MPO's discretion. If one is scheduled, public notification follows the same process that is used for amendments.

Figure 7
Annual MPO Planning Cycle for Development of Transportation Improvement Program and Unified Planning Work Program, and Public Participation



4.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE FOR LONGER-TIME-HORIZON PLANNING ACTIVITIES

There are many activities at the MPO that have longer or less predictable time horizons. The public participation schedules for these events are, therefore, tailored to the specific event and its timing.

4.4a Federal Recertification Reviews

Federal recertification reviews also are conducted every four years. At this time, the federal transportation agencies evaluate the programs and activities of the MPO to determine whether they are in keeping with the required 3C process. If so, 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, in a series of public sessions. Members of the public are invited to attend and participate. They also are invited to submit written 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 participation. The material prepared for the recertification review and the report of the federal agencies is posted on the MPO's website. The most recent recertification review was conducted in July 2010. The next is scheduled for December 2014.

4.4b The Transportation Equity Program

The MPO's Transportation Equity program is ongoing all year long. This program is the MPO's method of consulting with low-income and minority residents, and with groups representing their interests, and those of the elderly, youth, and persons with limited English proficiency in order to identify the transportation needs of these populations and promote their involvement in the planning process.

The program focuses on outreach to organizations serving environmental-justice areas in the region and their umbrella organizations. These organizations and other community contacts are involved in, and knowledgeable about, the transportation issues and needs of their areas.

Contacts include social-service organizations, community-development corporations, regional employment boards, civic groups, business and labor organizations, transportation advocates, environmental groups, and environmental-justice and civil-rights groups.

The MPO also has begun communicating with the Statewide Mobility Management Program

The MPO works to gather input from low-income and minority residents and the elderly, youth, and those with limited English proficiency.

and its Regional Coordinating Council. The MPO's process for working with these organizations consists of conducting surveys, holding forums to facilitate inter-organizational communication and problem solving, holding regional and local meetings, and sharing information.

Transportation equity is also a frequent topic at MPO workshops and information sessions. In addition to soliciting public feedback at these events, staff conducts surveys to seek input from persons living in environmental-justice neighborhoods and from the transportation-equity contacts.

4.4c Development of the Public Participation Program and Plan

The MPO reviews the Program's progress and effectiveness on an ongoing basis, and updates both the Program and Plan accordingly. Updates are performed as needed to reflect changes in federal guidance, requirements and regional needs, and improvements in the state of the practice, and occur in consultation with members of the public and other interested parties.

Outreach for this update of the Plan began in the spring of 2013 in tandem with MPO outreach of the draft TIP and UPWP; discussions were held at two public workshops and two "Be Informed, Be Involved Sessions" in 2013. In addition, in 2013, the MPO conducted surveys through its MPOinfo email list, *TRANSREPORT*, public workshops, and the website. Public input gathered through this process and from the MPO was incorporated into a draft Plan that was circulated for a 45-day public review process in August, 2014.

During the public review process, the draft Plan was posted on the MPO website and discussed with the Advisory Council. In addition, four MPO public workshops were held to provide information and solicit feedback, and information was made available at the Fall Forum for the long-range transportation Plan. The public was notified about the public review process via *TRANSREPORT*, MPOinfo emails, website News Flashes, a press release, and an MPO Tweet. As discussed elsewhere in this document, information from the public outreach process helped guide the changes that are reflected in this final document, which was approved by the MPO on October 16, 2014.

Appendix A—Federal Public Participation Mandates

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

A.1a §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). These regulations require that public-involvement processes be proactive and provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and opportunities for early and continuing involvement; they leave the choice of methods for facilitating participation to the discretion of each MPO. The regulations specify that public participation processes must provide:

- Adequate notice of involvement opportunities and time for review and comment at key decision points
- Early and continuing opportunities for public involvement
- Timely information on transportation issues and decision-making processes
- Visualization techniques to describe the proposed plans and studies
- Reasonable access to technical and policy information
- Electronically accessible public information on the Web
- Public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and convenient times
- Procedures for demonstrating explicit consideration of and responses to public input
- A process for soliciting and considering the needs of traditionally underserved populations
- Periodic review and evaluation of the participation process

- A public-review period of 45 calendar days, which includes written comment on public participation procedures in the development of the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) before new procedures and any major revisions to existing procedures are adopted
- Coordination with the statewide transportation-planning public-involvement and consultation processes

A.1b §450.318

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

A.1c §450.322

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

A.1d §450.324

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

A.1e §450.334

This section specifies that 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.4a 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.4b 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.4c 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.



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Appendix B—MPO Memorandum of Understanding

Insert PDF – 17 pages

**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 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

Boston Region MPO Memorandum of Understanding

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

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 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

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
 - 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 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 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
- 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 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.

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.

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 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-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.

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 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.

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;
- 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.

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

EXECUTED on the third day of November 2011, by member-entity representatives or designees.

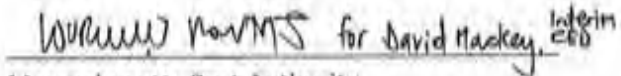

Massachusetts Department of Transportation

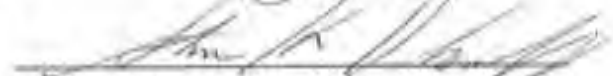

Metropolitan Area Planning Council


Advisory Board to the MBTA


City of Boston

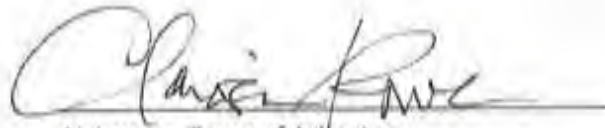

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

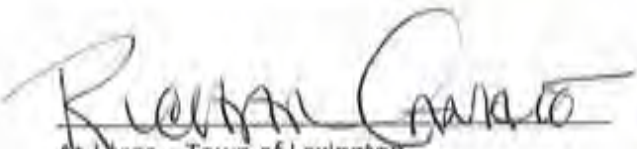

Massachusetts Port Authority


Regional Transportation Advisory Council


At-Large - City of Everett

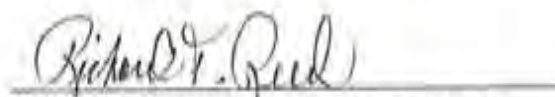

At-Large - City of Newton


At-Large - Town of Arlington


At-Large - Town of Lexington


Inner Core - City of Somerville


MetroWest Growth Management Committee -
Town of Framingham


Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal
Coordination - Town of Bedford



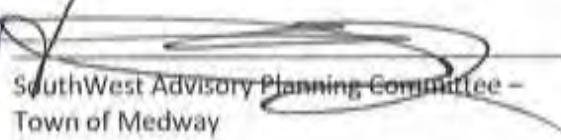
North Shore Task Force – Town of Beverly



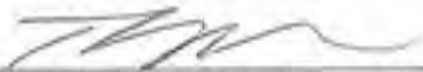
North Suburban Planning Council – City of Woburn



South Shore Coalition – Town of Braintree



SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee – Town of Medway



Three Rivers Interlocal Council – Town of Norwood

Appendix C—Research Conducted by MPO Staff

This appendix contains information about public-participation research conducted by MPO staff, and ideas for potential changes to the MPO's Public Participation Program (the Program) and Public Participation Plan (the Plan), which stemmed from that research. Also included is a discussion of the MPO's current public-participation practices, along with the full set of possible changes that were considered for the update to the Plan.

C.1 RESEARCH ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NEEDS AND PRACTICES

MPO staff recently completed two types of research to gain a more in-depth understanding of the public's needs regarding its involvement in the transportation-planning process, and to uncover interesting ideas that the MPO could consider incorporating into its Plan in the future.

C.2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SURVEY

Staff designed a survey to gather information from the public about the effectiveness of the MPO's current outreach program, and collect ideas about how it might be improved. The survey comprised both multiple-choice and open-ended questions.

C.2a Survey Questions

Below are the questions that were included in the survey:

What are your preferred methods for receiving MPO news? (Check all that apply.)

- MPO website
- Email from MPO Info
- TRANSREPORT* E-Newsletter
- Newspaper legal notice
- Public meeting
- Other (please specify)

What are your preferred methods of providing input to the MPO? (Check all that apply.)

- Public meeting
- Website
- Email
- Printed comment card

- Letter to MPO Chair
- Other (please specify)

If you have provided comments to the MPO in the past, do you feel that your voice has been heard?

- Not Applicable
- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

Why do you feel that way?

What aspects of the MPO would you like more information about? (Check all that apply.)

- MPO membership
- MPO visions and policies
- Project/study selection process
- How to be involved
- Funding sources
- Civil rights provisions
- Other (please specify)

What can the MPO do to raise awareness and improve its outreach program?

How did you learn about this survey?

- MPO website
- Email from MPOinfo
- TRANSREPORT E-Newsletter
- Public meeting
- Other (please specify)

The survey was available online and in print format; it was distributed via MPOinfo, the MPO's email list, and in print at Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) subregion meetings and MPO outreach events during May and June 2013. MPO staff organized and analyzed the 74 surveys received.

C.2b Survey Responses

Below is a summary of the survey responses, with the number of replies in parentheses. For the multiple-choice questions (numbers 1 through 4 and 6), there were several choices that respondents selected repeatedly. For the one open-ended question (number 5), we present the most often-stated responses, as well as some other interesting suggestions.

- 1) Respondents' top-three preferred methods of getting MPO news: through MPOinfo (58), *TRANSreport* (27), and the website (21). The next highest answer was "public meeting" (9).
- 2) The top-three preferred methods of providing input to the MPO: email (52), and public meeting (32) or through the website (32). The next highest answer was "letter to MPO chair" (11).
- 3) About one-third of respondents who had made prior comments to the MPO felt that their voices were heard. Approximately 60 percent of respondents felt heard "sometimes." Nearly 10 percent believed that their voices were not heard.
- 4) The top-four topics about which respondents would like more information: project/study selection process (46), MPO visions and policies (33), funding sources (24), and how to be involved (21). The next highest answer was "civil rights provisions" (6).
- 5) The top-two suggestions for ways the MPO could raise awareness and improve its outreach program: A) getting more media exposure (8), and B) having a presence through social media (8). The next most frequently mentioned methods were MPO website improvements (4) and informational packets/emails (4).
- 6) Other interesting and feasible ideas suggested by respondents to this question include:
 - Work or partner with other organizations to disseminate information and solicit involvement
 - Increase and target outreach to community groups and community leaders
 - Share interagency mailing lists
 - Make information and notices more timely and interesting
 - Conduct more surveys
 - Provide short education pieces and executive summaries of the long reports
 - Use more graphics to communicate ideas
 - Learn from successful public-participation models, such as MAPC
 - Provide clear and easy ways to give input from the website's home page
 - Make the website more interactive and easy to navigate

- 7) The primary way that respondents learned about the survey was through email from the MPO (42). The second-largest number of respondents (20) checked “other,” indicating that they learned about the survey through various means not specified in the survey question, such as a forwarded email or through news from another organization.

These results emphasize the importance of email and the website in public involvement. They also indicate preferences for information in succinct formats and for quick, interactive ways to exchange information (such as surveys).

C.3 RESEARCH OF OTHER MPO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PRACTICES

C.3a Research Approach

In July and August 2013, MPO staff conducted research on the public-participation programs and plans of five MPOs that are somewhat comparable to the Boston Region MPO in size and characteristics, including:

- Miami-Dade MPO
- Metropolitan Transportation Commission, which serves the San Francisco Bay area
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, which serves the Greater Philadelphia region
- New York Metropolitan Transportation Council
- Puget Sound Regional Council, which serves the Puget Sound region, including the city of Seattle

The purpose of the research was to learn what public-participation methods these MPOs use, and to examine the kinds of information they include in their plans and how they present it.

C.3b Public-Involvement Methods and Techniques

This research identified some interesting ways that the selected MPOs communicate and consult with agencies, officials, and all other interested parties. Below are listed some of those methods, some of which the Boston Region MPO currently uses or may wish to use in its updated Program. We include notes on these practices, their characteristics, and functions in parentheses.

Gatherings for Discussion

- In-person, traditional-style gatherings, such as meetings and workshops (timely topics for discussion with members of the general public; public education and input gathering)

- Special forums (topic specific, on timely issues or topics of regional or MPO interest; public education and input gathering)
- Citizens' Advisory Committees, which may be regional or subregional (long-term, consistent and informed involvement on many issues; input gathering)
- Working Groups (topic/task-specific, to provide on-going, expert or informed views on particular topics; input gathering)
- Special Topic Discussions (topic specific single event with targeted invited participants, to gauge the views of target participants; public education and input gathering)
- Speakers' Bureau (MPO members and staff available to speak at meetings of outside entities; education and input gathering)

Media Used for Information and Notices

- Press releases and public notices; coordination with the media (topic specific information; public education and requests for action)
- Flyers on transit vehicles (information nuggets; requests for action)
- Informational kiosk at transit station (general and topic-specific information; public education)
- Social media: Facebook (information nuggets; requests for action)
- YouTube (general and topic-specific information and information nuggets)
- Twitter (information nuggets; requests for action)
- Rich Site Summary or "RSS" Feeds (information nuggets)
- Cable TV coverage of meetings (general information)

Media Used for Interaction

- MPO website with special pages to give information, gather comments, take surveys (general and topic-specific information; public education, input gathering, requests for action)

- Various instruments for taking surveys and gathering input, such as “MindMixer” (web-based tool designed to engage the public through the use of technology rather than physical meetings)
- Agenda item pre-meeting comment tool (allows members of the public to submit written comments on specific agenda items with a web-based tool; input gathering)

Miscellaneous

- Collaborating with other agencies’ public-participation staffs
- Reaching out to newspaper editorial boards
- Briefing reporters
- Ongoing use of process-evaluation tools

Outreach to Protected Populations

Through its research on other MPOs, staff also found interesting approaches to reaching protected populations that the Boston MPO could incorporate into its own Plan:

- Preparing summaries of important documents that can be easily translated into the major languages spoken in the region
- Translating the Plan into the major languages spoken
- Using audio recording devices to collect oral comments at public meetings
- Translating a glossary of transportation terms
- Posting on the MPO website an already-translated notification of the availability of translation services

Structure and Content of Public-Participation Plans

The MPOs studied utilize various types of information in their public-participation plans, including the topics below.

- The CMP, Air Quality processes, Transportation Enhancements, and other MPO programs
- Procedures and schedules for providing input into the certification documents
- Federal and state regulations and guidance for public-involvement activities
- Processes for developing their plan, including meetings and public-comment periods

- Lists of public-involvement techniques that would be applied in various situations
- Information about how to find MPO-provided data resources
- Information about how the MPO coordinates with other agencies
- Descriptions of MPO committees and their responsibilities
- Links to the MPOs' Title VI, Environmental Justice, and Language Access plans
- Appendices
 - Glossaries of transportation terms, including acronyms
 - Contact information for MPO staff
 - MPO policies on using social media
 - Details about outreach activities that coincide with specific MPO activities
 - MPO policies about documenting and responding to public comments or requests for public records
 - Results of consultations with other agencies

MPOs also sometimes prepare companion documents to their public-participation plans. One example is a citizen guide that explains topics of general importance, such as background on the MPO, and information about funding sources and document-development processes. Also, some MPOs prepare annual reports highlighting MPO achievements.

Graphics and Styles of Public-Participation Plans

An MPO's public-participation plan is itself a tool that can encourage transportation stakeholders to learn about and interact with the MPO; therefore, the plan content should be informative, clear, and visually appealing. MPO staff analyzed public-participation plan designs along with their content, and found that plans were made more communicative through the use of the following graphics and styles:

- Text boxes to highlight important information succinctly
- Tables to organize and present information clearly and with minimal wording
- Figures showing relationships (such as between transportation stakeholders), steps in decision-making processes, and schedules

C.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UPDATING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM AND PLAN

The MPO's current Plan, *Be Informed, Be Involved*, includes:

- General information on the Boston Region MPO Area, including demographics, geography, and the regional transportation system
- Background information on the MPO, including a description of its regulatory foundations and membership
- An explanation of the metropolitan transportation-planning process and certification documents
- Details on the Program, including:
 - A discussion of its objectives
 - Specified participants
 - Ways to be informed and involved
 - MPO processes for conducting public outreach
 - Specific steps for document development
 - Specific steps for amending and modifying documents
 - Information about how the MPO evaluates its Program

Staff has analyzed all aspects of the current Plan to identify areas that need improvement. Below, we present the identified areas and ideas for updating both the Program and Plan. These ideas have come from the research discussed above, as well as through observations of current practice, and recommendations from the federal agencies and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT).

C.5 ISSUES RELATED TO THE CURRENT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

The MPO's current Program utilizes a mix of outreach practices and techniques, which have proved effective with all of the interested parties the MPO consults with, listens to, and strives to keep informed. Using results of the research discussed above, awareness of changing practices, and in-house problem solving, staff identified areas where changes in the MPO's Program would be beneficial

Accordingly, staff recommended that the MPO consider changes to its Program that would:

- Respond to the most contemporary thinking in Title VI accommodations and accessibility for persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency
- Make participating easier and more satisfying for the public and more useful for the MPO
- Continue activities that broaden the community of participants in the MPO's planning processes
- Provide clear and concise information about the Program and MPO activities; make information readily understood
- Make information easily available
- Keep information about the MPO current
- Keep the Plan up to date
- Use more graphics to communicate
- Continue to connect with persons who do not use or have ready access to computers
- Maximize effectiveness through coordinating with partner agencies and their outreach activities
- Continue to actively explore innovative venues for reaching people, providing information, and gathering input

C.5a Practices and Techniques for Public Outreach

Current Practices and Techniques

The MPO's current public-outreach practices include:

- Web-based communication (web pages on 3C documents and programs; TRANSreport; the MPO meeting calendar; comment button on the MPO main page; comment links from document pages; News Flashes; surveys; interactive data bases, data resources, and applications)
- Meeting-based discussions (MPO and committee meetings; the Regional Transportation Advisory Council; general information sessions; TIP and UPWP information sessions; workshops; coordination with MAPC)

subregions; special forums; special topic discussions; interagency consultations; Invite-Us-Over program)

- Email-based notices (MPOinfo; MPOmedia; TRANSreport mailing list; TEcontacts; TIPcontacts; publicinformation@ctps; public libraries)

Ideas for Improving Practices and Techniques

Through the update to its Program, the MPO sees opportunities to allow or encourage the public to engage with MPO documents, information, and decision-making processes in an interactive way. Based on the survey results, staff's research, and considering MPO resources, there are a number of ways the MPO could enhance its Program:

- Request the Advisory Council to co-sponsor programs and forums on timely MPO topics: solicit the council's views and ideas on specific, MPO-defined topics, and support the Advisory Council's membership outreach to low-income, minority, and LEP populations and persons with disabilities
- Develop a more frequent and rigorous process for gathering data to evaluate the effectiveness of the MPO's Program
- Research the possibility and feasibility of creating create a mechanism for the public to submit comments on MPO agenda items in advance of meetings
- Make resources and information for people with limited English proficiency more prominent on the website
- Conduct more Web-based surveys throughout the year
- Develop a "user group" list of individuals/entities/organizations that will forward MPOinfo notices to their email lists and press releases to transportation bloggers
- Use more graphics, including text boxes, relationship and flow charts, and other visuals within documents, presentations, and on the website
- Build short press releases from the News Flashes to increase the amount of news sent to MPOmedia and MPOinfo
- Explore the possibility of using tools to track media usage (publication) of MPO press releases

- Coordinate with MassDOT's media office to seek help in increasing the publication rate of MPO press releases
- Increase the frequency and scope of the News Flashes:
 - Present more information about how the MPO functions
 - Focus more on the MPO-funded work underway or recently completed
 - Include news about topics to be discussed at upcoming MPO meetings and Regional Transportation Advisory Council meetings
 - Provide more information on projects' and studies' selection process, MPO goals and objectives, funding, and how to be involved
- Ask MAPC to collaborate on specially targeted public outreach activities, and explore possibilities for working in teams
- Increase the visibility of MPO's "Invite-Us-Over" speaker events through which organizations can invite a representative from the MPO to attend and speak at one of their meetings
- Reach out to public libraries to improve active cooperation for posting and distributing MPO information
- Explore the possibility of an RSS feed to notify interested parties of updated content on the MPO website

C.5b Outreach to Protected Populations

Current Outreach to Protected Populations

Since the current Plan was written, the MPO has adopted many outreach practices related to: Title VI, ADA, and other civil rights executive orders, regulations, and guidance that prohibits discrimination and facilitates the full participation of all, particularly populations that are considered to be "traditionally underserved" by former public outreach practices. Although these processes are now a part of the Program, they have not been documented in the Plan.

C.5c Improving Outreach to Protected Populations

MPO practices are, for the most part, consistent with those recommended by MassDOT, whose public-participation plan was recently approved (and commended) by the Federal Highway Administration; however, there are several additional practices that staff have explored that could enhance the ability of the MPO to reach populations that have traditionally been hard to engage, such as

people with limited English proficiency. As a result, staff recommends the MPO add the following practices to its Program:

For all MPO and MPO-sponsored meetings:

- Increase the number of languages into which meeting notices—and any other vital materials associated with meetings—are translated from two to three (Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese) as a matter of policy, and post them on the website
- Translate materials for specific public outreach efforts into language(s) spoken in the geographic area of the meeting location, as identified through analysis or consultation with local community leader(s)
- Consult with local community leader(s) to learn about cultural issues in the vicinity of a meeting venue and respond to these with sensitivity
- Make an effort to provide at least two weeks' notice for MPO-sponsored meetings or events

As a matter of general practice:

- Regularly update the MPO's Title VI Four Factor Analysis (an analysis of language needs in the area) and reevaluate whether other languages should be added to those into which vital documents are regularly translated.
- Reevaluate annually whether additional MPO documents should be identified as vital documents, for translation into the languages of policy. Vital documents currently include:
 - MPO Notice to Title VI Beneficiaries (posted on website, made into a board to be displayed at MPO meetings, and posted visibly near the MPO front desk)
 - MPO-compliant procedures and form
 - Summaries of key materials: a description of the MPO transportation-planning process and the certification documents, LRTP, TIP, and UPWP
 - Meeting notices (generally prepared for out-of-Boston MPO meetings, and all MPO-sponsored meetings, workshops, forums, and other similar input-sessions)
- Update annually the internal list of staff who speak languages other than English and who could assist limited English proficient individuals who may be seeking information at the MPO office

- Increase the number of large-print versions of key meeting materials (such as the agenda, project summaries, TIP Tables) that staff currently bring to meetings from two to three
- Continue to expand the MPO's Transportation Equity database to reach more minority, low-income, and other traditionally underserved populations and organizations
- Post an already-translated notification of the availability of translation services on the MPO website
- Use an audio recording device to collect oral comments from persons with low literacy, or no or low vision

C.6 ISSUES RELATED TO THE CURRENT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

The format and structure of the current MPO Plan has become outdated, as communication styles and methods of obtaining information have changed. Today, many people prefer visiting a website and reading on their computers, smart phones, or other mobile devices. If they want some section of the material in hard copy, they print it themselves. Because good graphics communicate information effectively and quickly, they value information presented in graphical form.

C.6a Format and Function of the Plan

Current Drawbacks

The MPO's current Plan, *Be Informed, Be Involved*, was intended to be read as a printed booklet that would provide the reader with all the information necessary to understand the MPO Program, along with ways to be informed and be involved. Although primarily text based, the current Plan utilizes photographs, maps, and other graphics as visualization tools to help understand the Program and its activities.

The Plan is posted in PDF and HTML on the MPO website, and staff prepares a small number of printed copies of this document to take to outreach sessions.

Several aspects of the current Plan are outdated or underperforming; for example, the current Plan is:

- A large booklet: Today's trend is to rely on Web-based information, and avoid printing or archiving hard-copy documents
- Text-heavy, which can make it hard to find information
- Static and vulnerable to becoming out of date

Ideas for Improvements

Most agencies and organizations use their websites as their primary method of communication. At the Boston Region MPO, the website already houses information about almost every aspect of the MPO and serves as an interactive, multi-dimensional communications vehicle with constantly growing and evolving capabilities for gathering, housing, and distributing information. The website is a powerful tool, which the MPO should use to maximum advantage to accomplish public-participation goals.

Staff suggests two main ideas for improving the format and function of the Plan:

- First: In addition to a printed document (which will be posted as a PDF), create a web-based format for the Plan. The public participation page on the website would provide a portal through which the public could link to other web pages to get information about the Program in an easy-to-use format.
- The public participation web page would include the major public participation topic areas with links to further information about public involvement, as well as to topics found on other parts of the website. Viewers could go to the public participation page to learn how to be 'informed and involved,' and from there go directly to the MPO planning document or program that interests them. This approach would fully embed the Program in all MPO activities and products.
- Second: Present much more public participation related information in graphical form to facilitate quick and easy access to (at times) complex information and processes.

These two concepts would address the current Plan drawbacks listed above and inform the public in a way that:

- Reflects contemporary standards and preferences for presenting and accessing information
- Provides links anywhere in the MPO website, interactively directing readers to greater detail on topics that interest them
- Offers an organizational framework for those seeking information specifically about public participation; and reduces redundancy by linking to Program information already on the website rather than repeating it in a static publication-participation plan

- Presents more up-to-date material, as individual web pages may be easily amended
- Ensures accessibility for people with no or low vision, because text on the MPO's web pages is in a format that can be read by screen readers, and all graphics are accompanied by alternative text

In addition, staff suggests these visual improvements, which would enhance web-based Plan content:

- Briefer text
- Text boxes for highlighting important information
- Tables for organizing and presenting material with few words
- Greater use of graphics to explain the MPO and its processes

Plan information and graphics presented on the web could be transformed into modular marketing materials to replace the current booklet format. In this form, topics could be updated individually to stay current, without reproducing the entire booklet.

C.7 SUMMARY OF SUGGESTIONS FOR PUBLIC-PARTICIPATION PROGRAM AND PLAN UPDATE

The following table summarizes the suggestions presented above. Items in the table are coded by suggestion type:

- A = Activity
- F = Format and function
- T = Title VI or other civil rights practices

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Table C.1
Summary of Suggestions for the Public-Participation Program and Plan Update

Key: A = Activity; F = Format and function; T = Title VI or other civil rights practices.				
Type/ Number	Suggestion	Explanation; Purpose	Implementation	Frequency
A. 1	Seek to partner with the Advisory Council to sponsor forums on MPO/ RTAC defined topics and questions	The Advisory Council is a primary arm of public involvement for the MPO; to generate useful public input to the MPO for its decision making	Plan special Advisory Council/ MPO forums in collaboration with MPO; seek involvement of a broad set of Advisory Council and MPO-related participants	At least one a year
A. 2	Collaborate with MAPC on specially targeted public outreach events	Invite MAPC to partner with the MPO in one or two major outreach events per year; to reach a broader set of participants; improve effectiveness of MPO outreach; incorporate new techniques	Work with MAPC (and possibly other partners) to plan one or two forums or special topic discussions	One or two events per year
A. 3	Conduct more evaluations of public-participation program effectiveness	Important to know how well the Program is performing and where improvements are needed	Implement a more rigorous program of data collection and a regular schedule for evaluations	Data collection, ongoing; evaluations, annually
A. 4	Post more News Flashes; cover more topics	Use the website and News Flashes as the initial media for MPO news and convert them to other media for broad distribution; to interest and inform the public	Prepare News Flashes related to major actions at MPO, Advisory Council and AACT meetings; invite participation; feature MPO-funded products	Ongoing
A. 5	Send more press releases on MPO activities	Use the MPO's News Flashes as the basis for short press releases; to increase opportunities for media coverage and public participation	Expand News Flash text into press release format and distribute through MPOmedia	Ongoing
A. 6	Encourage forwarding of email notices and News Flash postings	Sensitize recipients to importance of forwarding MPO notices and updates; to expand distribution of MPO notices to involve new parties	Incorporate text into all MPOinfo messages that encourages recipients to forward notices	Ongoing
A. 7	Track publication of MPO news	Explore which organizations are publishing MPO news; to gauge effectiveness and know where there are gaps in outreach	Research cost of tracking publication of MPO news; if feasible, plan and implement a program	Ongoing

Key: A = Activity; F = Format and function; T = Title VI or other civil rights practices.

Type/ Number	Suggestion	Explanation; Purpose	Implementation	Frequency
A. 8	Seek help from MassDOT media office	MassDOT is in frequent contact with the media and may have useful ideas for MPO communications; to improve publication of MPO news	Meet with MassDOT media office	Early each fiscal year, coinciding with MPO public outreach for new documents
A. 9	Work with public libraries to encourage them to make MPO information available	The MPO no longer mails printed materials unless specifically requested; to elicit public library support in printing and posting notices and <i>TRANSREPORT</i>	Conduct outreach to regional consortiums of public libraries, explaining the work of the MPO and the role libraries could play in the public-information and participation process	One-time initial outreach to libraries; Ongoing communication
A. 10	Use an RSS feed	Research using an RSS feed to alert parties of new News Flash postings; attract more interest; share more information	Staff will research using RSS feed	Initial research, and if promising, a trial period before implementation
A. 11	Facilitate and accept public comment before MPO meetings	Solicit comment (possibly through links on the calendar page for each MPO meeting) in advance of meetings; to use the website to collect input and bring it directly into MPO meetings	Collect comments prior to MPO meeting and submit to Chair for reading into the record during public-comment time	With every MPO meeting (bi-monthly, usually)
A. 12	Create more surveys on the MPO website	Use surveys more frequently to gather public input; to increase website use as a tool for public input	Identify survey topics based on upcoming MPO planning and decision making	Approximately four per year
A. 13	Update website for improved LEP accessibility	Post MPO vital documents and accessibility statement more prominently; to facilitate LEP and other Title-VI-related persons' access to MPO information and processes	Review and implement	One update
A. 14	Use more graphics	Improve communication through graphical representation of processes and information; to communicate more clearly and facilitate translation	Convert narratives in Plan to graphics	For initial Program and Plan updates and as future practice

Key: A = Activity; F = Format and function; T = Title VI or other civil rights practices.

Type/ Number	Suggestion	Explanation; Purpose	Implementation	Frequency
A. 15	Increase use of MPO's "Invite Us Over" speaker program	Promote work of the MPO and offer Staff's participation at an organization's meeting; to provide a participant-convenient venue and format and reach new and members of the public	Consider creating a spot on the MPO's website listing topics and personnel to be contacted to schedule a presentation/discussion at a regularly scheduled meeting of an organization	Ongoing
F. 1.	Have the website function as an online alternative to the printed public participation plan and an easy point of access to other MPO content on the website	Break the information in the Plan into basic components and use the Public Involvement webpage as a portal to access each; to give the public more direct access to information, to better keep the Plan current and dynamic, and use contemporary methods	Prepare topic modules for revised Public Involvement webpage	Reorganization and to post material will be one-time project; updating will be ongoing
F. 2.	Prepare topic modules as meeting handouts and easily updated informational materials	Create individual topic pieces for each of the major Program components; these will be easy to update and use individually, as needed	Prepare topic materials	Creating materials will be a one-time project; updating will be ongoing
F. 3	Present most key information in graphical form	Graphical depictions of MPO processes and other information will be created to post on the website and use at MPO-sponsored meetings; to support clarity and simplicity of information, facilitate communication with LEP populations	Prepare graphics and tables to explain MPO processes and other information; these can be translated for LEP populations	Design will be one-time project; updating will be ongoing
T. 1	Translate the vital MPO documents	Regulations require vital documents be identified and translated into the languages indicated by the Four Factor Analysis	Translate vital documents into the languages of policy for posting on the website; use the Four Factor Analysis to determine other languages, based on the location for MPO or MPO-sponsored meetings	Initial translation of vital documents will be one-time project; annual update of documents and translations will be conducted each September; translation of meeting notices and document summaries will be done as needed
T. 2	Conduct a triennial Four-Factor Analysis and apply results to MPO ongoing meeting and outreach planning	See above	Develop a protocol for using the Four Factor Analysis for ongoing operations	Reviews for translations will be conducted in planning for each meeting

Key: A = Activity; F = Format and function; T = Title VI or other civil rights practices.

Type/ Number	Suggestion	Explanation; Purpose	Implementation	Frequency
T. 3	Consult with local leaders on language needs and cultural issues for each MPO-sponsored meeting outside of the State Transportation Building	Conversations with local leader(s) in vicinity of a planned meeting can provide insights on particular needs that would facilitate public participation; to encourage and facilitate participation by all members of the public	Ask a local leader when planning a meeting outside of the STB	Ongoing, for each meeting outside of STB
T. 4	Use audio recording devices to collect oral comments	People with low or no vision or low literacy may be encouraged to make comments if they could be submitted orally; to facilitate public participation	Provide this capability at each MPO and MPO-sponsored meeting	Ongoing, for each meeting
T. 5	Post translations of meeting and other notifications on website	Posting translated versions of notices would eliminate a step for an LEP person seeking opportunities to participate; to facilitate participation by LEP persons	Standardly post translations of meeting notifications (in the three primary languages other than English) on the website	Ongoing, for each meeting outside of STB
T. 6	Make large-format versions of key meeting materials available	Support accessibility of information provided at public meetings; to facilitate participation	Implement a standard practice of bringing three copies of large-format documents to meetings	Ongoing

AACT Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA. LEP limited English [language] proficiency. MAPC Metropolitan Area Planning Council. MassDOT Massachusetts Department of Transportation. MPO Metropolitan Planning Organization. P3 Public-Participation Program and Plan. RSS Rich Site Summary [feeds]. RTAC Regional Transportation Advisory Council. STB State Transportation Building.

Appendix D—MPO-Sponsored Meetings and MPO Meetings Outside of Boston

Date	Location	EJ and/or LEP Community	Type of Meeting	Topics Discussed
8-Feb-11	Peabody	No	TIP-Building Workshop	TIP development
10-Feb-11	Saugus	No	Regional Transportation Needs Assessment Workshop	MPO's draft needs assessment, Transportation needs
15-Feb-11	Needham	No	Regional Transportation Needs Assessment Workshop	MPO's draft needs assessment, Transportation needs
15-Feb-11	Framingham	Yes	TIP-Building Workshop	TIP development
16-Feb-11	Boston (2/ Park Plaza)	Yes	TIP-Building Workshop	TIP development
16-Feb-11	Boston (2/ Park Plaza)	Yes	Regional Transportation Needs Assessment Workshop	MPO's draft needs assessment, Transportation needs
22-Feb-11	Hingham	No	TIP-Building Workshop	TIP development
23-Feb-11	Boston	Yes	Transportation Equity Special Topic Discussion	Transportation needs of low income and minority residents in the region
21-Apr-11	Boston	Yes	MPO Structure Workshop	MPO's MOU, MPO membership
27-Apr-11	Lynn	Yes	MPO Structure Workshop	MPO's MOU, MPO membership
2-May-11	Framingham	Yes	MPO Structure Workshop	MPO's MOU, MPO membership
15-Jun-11	Boston (2/ Park Plaza)	Yes	MPO Structure Workshop	MPO's MOU, MPO membership
21-Jun-11	Waltham	Yes	MPO Structure Workshop	MPO's MOU, MPO membership
22-Jun-11	Braintree	No	MPO Structure Workshop	MPO's MOU, MPO membership
26-Jul-11	Boston	Yes	Environmental Special Topic Discussion on LRTP	Consultation among MPO and state and federal environmental agencies on LRTP

Date	Location	EJ and/or LEP Community	Type of Meeting	Topics Discussed
3-Aug-11	Boston (2/ Park Plaza)	Yes	MPO Open House	Draft LRTP, Draft FFYs 2012-15 TIP, Draft FFY 2012 UPWP, Livability Program
24-Aug-11	Boston	Yes	General Workshop	Draft LRTP, Draft FFYs 2012-15 TIP
31-Aug-11	Bedford	No	General Workshop	Draft LRTP, Draft FFYs 2012-15 TIP
7-Sep-11	Norwood	No	General Workshop	Draft LRTP, Draft FFYs 2012-15 TIP
12-Oct-11	Boston	Yes	Candidates Forum	Meet candidates for MPO municipal members election
12-Jan-12	Winchester	No	TIP-Building Workshop	TIP development
18-Jan-12	Canton	No	TIP-Building Workshop	TIP development
25-Jan-12	Boston (2/ Park Plaza)	Yes	MPO Open House	Introduction to MPO, TIP development, UPWP development
1-Mar-12	Beverly	No	Regular MPO Meeting (Outside Boston)	MPO topics typical of regular meetings
15-May-12	Melrose	No	General Workshop	Draft FFYs 2013-16 TIP and FFY 2013 UPWP
22-May-12	Randolph	Yes	General Workshop	Draft FFYs 2013-16 TIP and FFY 2013 UPWP
23-May-12	Boston (2/ Park Plaza)	Yes	General Workshop	Draft FFYs 2013-16 TIP and FFY 2013 UPWP
6-Jun-12	Woburn	No	General Workshop	Draft Amendment to LRTP
7-Jun-12	Lexington	No	Regular MPO Meeting (outside Boston)	MPO topics typical of regular meetings
12-Jun-12	Boston (2/ Park Plaza)	Yes	General Workshop	Draft Amendment to LRTP
20-Sep-12	Newton	No	Regular MPO Meeting (Outside Boston)	MPO topics typical of regular meetings
6-Dec-12	Norwood	No	Regular MPO Meeting (Outside Boston)	MPO topics typical of regular meetings
11-Dec-12	Quincy	Yes	TIP and UPWP Building Workshop	TIP and UPWP development

Date	Location	EJ and/or LEP Community	Type of Meeting	Topics Discussed
13-Dec-12	Everett	Yes	TIP and UPWP Building Workshop	TIP and UPWP development
16-Jan-13	Boston (2/ Park Plaza)	Yes	Be Informed, Be Involved	Planning Schedule, Needs around Region, UPWP and TIP Development
7-Mar-13	Braintree	No	Regular MPO Meeting (outside Boston)	MPO topics typical of regular meetings
29-May-13	Lynn	Yes	General Workshop	Draft FFYs 2014-17 TIP and FFY 2014 UPWP, Transportation needs of EJ residents, Public Participation Plan
30-May-13	Framingham	Yes	General Workshop	Draft FFYs 2014-17 TIP and FFY 2014 UPWP, Transportation needs of EJ residents, Public Participation Plan
5-Jun-13	Boston (2/ Park Plaza)	Yes	General Workshop	Draft FFYs 2014-17 TIP and FFY 2014 UPWP, Transportation needs of EJ residents, Public Participation Plan
6-Jun-13	Woburn	No	Regular MPO Meeting (outside Boston)	MPO topics typical of regular meetings
16-Jul-13	Norwood	No	General Workshop	Proposed Canton Interchange Project, Amendment Two of LRTP
17-Oct-13	Framingham	Yes	Regular MPO Meeting (outside Boston)	MPO topics typical of regular meetings
3-Dec-13	Dedham	No	TIP and UPWP Development, Be Informed/Be Involved	TIP and UPWP development, Transportation needs
5-Dec-13	Franklin	No	Regular MPO Meeting (outside Boston)	MPO topics typical of regular meetings
11-Dec-13	Chelsea	Yes	TIP and UPWP Development, Be Informed/Be Involved	TIP and UPWP development, Transportation needs
7-Jan-14	Boston (2/ Park Plaza)	Yes	Be Informed, Be Involved	TIP and UPWP development, Transportation priorities

Date	Location	EJ and/or LEP Community	Type of Meeting	Topics Discussed
14-Jan-14	Boston	Yes	Human Services and Equity in Transportation Forum	Human Services and Equity in Transportation
6-Mar-14	Melrose	No	Regular MPO Meeting (outside Boston)	MPO topics typical of regular meetings
5-Jun-14	Salem	Yes	Regular MPO Meeting (outside Boston)	MPO topics typical of regular meetings
12-Jun-14	Reading	No	TIP and UPWP Workshop	Draft FFYs 2015-2018 TIP and FFY 2015 UPWP, Transportation needs
17-Jun-14	Boston (2/ Park Plaza)	Yes	TIP and UPWP Workshop	Draft FFYs 2015-2018 TIP and FFY 2015 UPWP, Transportation needs
18-Jun-14	Randolph	Yes	TIP and UPWP Workshop	Draft FFYs 2015-2018 TIP and FFY 2015 UPWP, Transportation needs

Appendix E—List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

3C process = continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process

A&F = Administration and Finance

AACT = Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act

Advisory Council = Regional Transportation Advisory Council

CFR = Code of Federal Regulations

CIP = Capital Investment Program

CMAQ = Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program

CMP = Congestion Management Process

CTPS = Central Transportation Planning Staff

EJ = Environmental Justice

FHWA = Federal Highway Administration

FTA = Federal Transit Administration

HTML = Hypertext Markup Language

ICC = Inner Core Committee

LAP = Language Assistance Plan

LEP = Limited English Proficiency

LRTP = Long-Range Transportation Plan

MAGIC = Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination

MAP-21 = Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act

MAPC = Metropolitan Area Planning Council

MARPA = Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies

MassDOT = Massachusetts Department of Transportation

MBTA = Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

MetroWest = MetroWest Regional Collaborative

MOU = Memorandum of Understanding

MPO = Metropolitan Planning Organization

NSPC = North Suburban Planning Council

NSTF = North Shore Task Force

PDF = Portable Document Format

PMT = The MBTA's Program for Mass Transportation

RSS = Rich Site Summary

SAFETEA-LU = The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users

SSC = South Shore Coalition

STIP = State Transportation Improvement Program

SWAP = Southwest Advisory Planning Committee

TE = Transportation Equity

TIP = Transportation Improvement Program

TRIC = Three Rivers Interlocal Council

UPWP = Unified Planning Work Program

USC = United States Code

USDOT = United States Department of Transportation