

2022 Federal Certification Review summary

The following bullet points summarize the elements of the 2022 federal certification review report that are most relative to the Boston Region MOU update. Most content comes from section 4.1 “MPO Organizational Structure”.

- **Correction:** The process for sharing information to develop the annual list of obligated projects must be documented in an MOU, in accordance with 23 CFR 450.314(a). These provisions must be incorporated by September 30, 2023. (***addressed as of June 2023***)

Recommendations:

- Establish and carry out a realistic review cycle policy (currently states annually, including sharing MOU with all cities and towns)
- Ensure that the MOU sufficiently covers the necessary provisions but allows for details to be developed and updated more regularly in the Operations Plan or bylaws
- Formally establish how the MPO intends to have the interests of the RTAs represented, which the Federal Review Team encourages the MPO to accomplish
- Update text such as number of cities and towns, investment programs (Central Artery/Tunnel project no longer valid), meeting forums (***some already addressed as of June 2023***)
- Add information around sharing of information for financial planning, particularly for FTA funding
- Update description of and understanding of the role of RTAC as part of achieving the MPO’s public engagement and equity goals

Other narrative items of note:

- “There is interest expressed regularly by MPO members as well as stakeholders to better understand how the Boston Region MPO compares to other MPOs in Massachusetts and nationally. CTPS runs “MPO 101” sessions periodically to orient new members (as well as providing a refresher for interested existing members).”

2019 Federal Certification Review summary

The following bullet points summarize the elements of the 2019 federal certification review report that are most relative to the Boston Region MOU update. Most content comes from the section called “MPO Organizational Structure” starting on page 24.

Recommendations:

- Explore updating the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) formula (***this affects the MOU in that the MOU references the MARPA formula's output for the Boston Region - 42.97%***).
- Develop an Operations plan as called for in the MOU (***complete as of July 2023***)
- Review voting procedures for seats to ensure that they effectively engage all communities and result in effective representation (***new voting procedures debated and established in the Operations Plan as of July 2023***)
- Broaden information and training opportunities for board members about best practices (***ongoing***)

Other items of note in section VI.A. MPO Organizational Structure:

- During the 2019 review, Volpe Center support was retained to conduct one-on-one listening sessions. Participation was voluntary and feedback remained anonymous in the report.
 - MPO members other than the chair and vice-chair are not involved in agenda setting.
 - Only one out of 387 non-Massachusetts MPOs nationwide was, in 2019, chaired by a state DOT. This is allowed by federal law.
 - It is unusual for state DOTs to have more than one vote (average of 1.1 per a 2017 study).
 - Many MPOs engage seat rotation and voting weight to balance authority and influence.
 - Members felt that chairing committees gave members the opportunity for more active roles, and noted that the MassDOT chairs one (UPWP)
 - Members did not feel informed regarding how other MPOs are structured and function.
 - Board members used to attend AMPO
- Other narrative notes:
 - “Approximately one-third of CTPS’ annual budget is devoted to non-BRMPO work, mostly for MassDOT by the Office of Transportation Planning (OTP), the MBTA, and others”
 - “The Review Team notes that of the 96 BRMPO municipalities (excluding Boston) only 17 have served in elected seats on the BRMPO Board in the past 21 years. Two communities of these 96 have been on the BRMPO for 21 years, four others for over ten years, and nine for six years or more. All seats were contested in only one year (1999); for 11 years no seats were contested, including a five-year period from 2012 to 2017 when there was no change in membership of the BRMPO. Seven municipalities have run for BRMPO seats and never won. The Review Team notes that in the past 21 years only 17% of the eligible municipalities have held seats on the BRMPO.”