



Executive Summary

The Boston Region MPO

Metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) are responsible for providing forums for coordination on regional transportation goals and decision-making about how to allocate federal transportation funds for capital projects and planning studies through a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3C) planning process. Each metropolitan area in the United States with a population of 50,000 or more—also known as an urbanized area—is required by federal legislation to establish an MPO and conduct a 3C planning process.

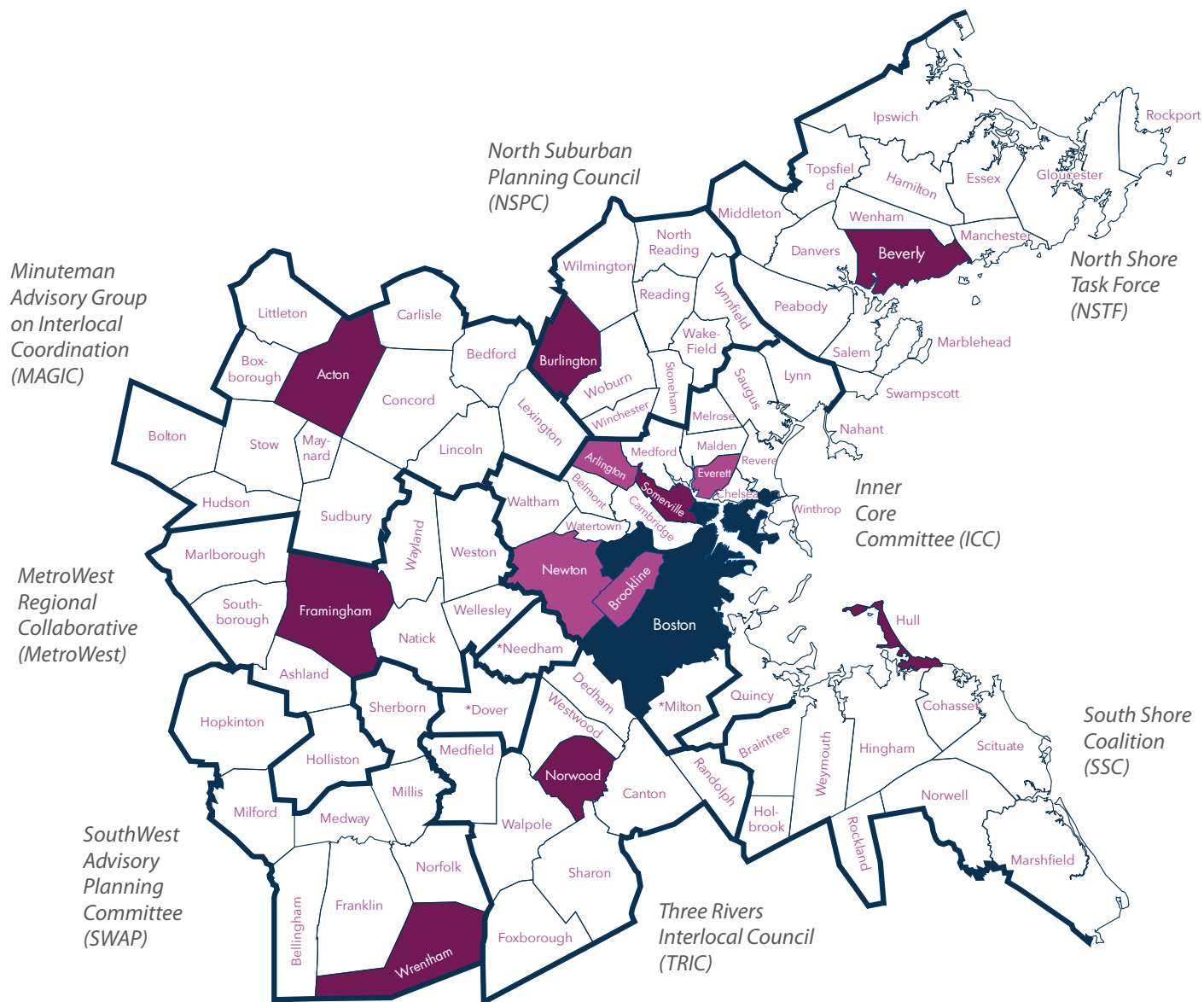
The Boston Region MPO's planning area encompasses 97 cities and towns, stretching from Boston north to Ipswich, south to Marshfield, and west to Interstate 495. Figure ES-1 shows the map of the Boston Region MPO's member municipalities.

The MPO's board has 23 voting members. Several state and regional agencies, advisory organizations, and the City of Boston are permanent voting members, while 12 municipalities are elected as voting members for three-year terms. Eight of these municipal members represent

each of the eight subregions of the Boston region, and four represent at-large municipal seats. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) participate on the MPO board as advisory, nonvoting members. The MPO board makes transparent and collaborative decisions about transportation planning and funding in the Boston region, informed by data, analysis, and public input.

The MPO is supported by a staff of planners, data analysts, engineers, and other professionals.

Figure ES-1
Municipalities in the Boston Region



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

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The MPO's work is guided by a 20-year vision for a modern, safe, reliable, robust, and well-connected multimodal transportation system for the region. This vision is described in the MPO's current Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Destination 2050*. The transportation planning work funded through the UPWP is integral to achieving this regional vision.

The UPWP is a one-year planning document and financial plan that outlines how the Boston region will allocate its federal transportation planning funds for a given federal fiscal year (FFY) in alignment with its long-term vision, goals, and objectives.

The development of the UPWP involves the prioritization of federal funding for transportation planning work, including MPO programs, studies, and technical analyses, to be implemented in a given year to support the region's goals. The scopes and budgets of the prioritized work are documented in the UPWP.

In addition to MPO-funded work, staff carry out work funded by external grant programs and conduct planning analyses and studies funded by state transportation agencies, such as the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA).

UPWP Programs and Studies

The total amount of funding (inclusive of federal funding and matching funds) programmed in this UPWP is \$7,729,915. These funds are provided by both the FHWA and FTA, with MassDOT supplying the required matching funds. Federal funds originating from FHWA, known as FHWA 3C Planning (PL) funds, are distributed across MPO regions using a formula developed by the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies. All federal funds programmed in the UPWP are allocated to the Boston Region MPO by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) as FHWA 3C PL funds. Federal funds originating from the FTA are known as FTA 3C Planning (Section 5303) funds. Both FHWA 3C PL funds and FTA 3C Planning funds programmed in this UPWP include a state match. Since 2019, MassDOT has transferred Section 5303 funds from the FTA to the FHWA for administration as a Consolidated Planning Grant.

The MPO uses this funding to conduct the following programs and plans:

Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The LRTP guides decision-making on transportation investments in the Boston region over the next two decades. It serves as the MPO's guiding document, establishing the regional transportation vision, goals, objectives, and investment approaches under which the MPO operates. The MPO adopted the current LRTP, *Destination 2050*, in 2023 and anticipates adopting the next LRTP in 2027.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a financially constrained program of planned multimodal investments in the region's transportation system over a five-year period. The TIP is guided by the goals and objectives established in the LRTP and is updated annually.

Unified Planning Work Program

The UPWP is developed annually and includes descriptions and budgets for work that MPO staff will conduct to support the MPO's goals and objectives during the upcoming FFY.

Public Engagement Program

The MPO engages the public in the transportation planning process to enhance decision-making by highlighting the transportation needs and priorities of communities throughout the region, as well as the local impacts of transportation planning decisions. The Public Engagement Program ensures that the MPO's planning and decision-making processes are transparent and responsive to public input, providing members of the public with meaningful opportunities to participate.

Performance-Based Planning and Programming (PBPP)

The MPO's PBPP work involves using data to develop and evaluate progress toward performance targets for roadway and transit safety, highway and transit assets, congestion management, travel time reliability, and air quality and emissions, in annual, two-year, and four-year horizons for the region's transportation system. PBPP helps ensure that the MPO's planning and investments are yielding progress toward the MPO's goals.

Community Transportation Access Program (CTA)

The CTA Program supports the MPO's investment in a transportation system that meets the needs of the Boston region's residents by assessing the impacts of MPO investments on their economic well-being and quality of life. The CTA Program also ensures that the MPO complies with Title VI and other existing federal and state civil rights regulations throughout its work.

Congestion Management Process Program (CMP)

The CMP program is responsible for monitoring and making recommendations to address congestion, mobility, and safety needs within the region's transportation system.

Transportation Impact Mitigation Program (TIM)

The TIM program assesses potential threats from natural hazards to the region and addresses risks to transportation assets posed by severe weather. This program also ensures that the MPO complies with the Clean Air Act and the Environmental Protection Agency's transportation conformity regulations.

Freight Planning Program

The freight program plans for the policies and infrastructure that enable the movement of freight and goods by road, rail, water, and air.

Regional Model Enhancement

This program supports the research and development of improvements to the regional travel demand model maintained by the MPO.

Data Program

The data program leads strategic efforts to improve how data are used, developed, and shared in support of the MPO and its stakeholders.

Active Transportation Planning Program

This program uses data collection, analysis, and technical assistance to improve safety and comfort for people walking, bicycling, and rolling in the Boston region.

Multimodal Mobility Infrastructure Program

This program conducts studies of roadways, corridors, and intersections to address regional and community transportation needs.

Support to the MPO and its 3C Process

Under this program, staff implement MPO policies, plan and coordinate the delivery of information for MPO decision-making, and support the operation of the MPO and its committees. It also involves providing support for MPO meeting management.

Comprehensive Safety Action Plan

The MPO is creating a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan for the 97 cities and towns in the Boston region. This work is funded by a Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) planning grant from the United States Department of Transportation. The Action Plan will include analysis of crash data to identify trends and high-risk corridors, engagement with communities disproportionately impacted by roadway safety issues, and the formulation of evidence-based, data-driven policy and project recommendations.

Technical Assistance

In addition to the above programs and studies, the MPO funds and conducts technical assistance work through the Road Safety Audits and Community Transportation Technical Assistance programs. The Road Safety Audits program funds staff's participation in road safety audits led by MassDOT at high-risk crash locations. Through the Community Transportation Technical Assistance Program, staff provide municipalities with advice on addressing multimodal concerns in their communities.

FFY 2026 Discrete Studies

Pedestrian-Scale Lighting Guide for Communities

Street lighting significantly improves safety; yet, most lighting designs for existing streets focus primarily on vehicles, neglecting pedestrians who experience high fatality rates in low-light conditions. This discrete study aims to provide communities with practical resources for designing and implementing pedestrian-friendly lighting solutions, enhancing safety, and encouraging walking and biking after dark. MPO staff will research best practices, interview communities and advocacy groups about challenges and opportunities, and collaborate with Vision Zero stakeholders. The final product will be a comprehensive guide detailing lighting specifications, such as intensity, LED usage, and dark sky compliance, for safer pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure.

Representing the Experience of Limited Mobility Individuals

Transportation planners currently lack sufficient quantitative methods to reflect the experiences of people with limited mobility in planning initiatives. This study aims to incorporate inclusive perspectives into regional transportation planning and analysis. MPO staff will conduct a literature review to identify existing best practices and strategies, and engage directly with community organizations to gather insights on mobility challenges. Through these efforts, staff will produce a technical memo that summarizes key findings and outlines recommendations. Recommendations will highlight data gaps, propose new analytical methods, and suggest next steps to better integrate perspectives on limited mobility into MPO planning efforts.

Roadway Pricing: Stakeholder Analysis

Implementing roadway pricing strategies requires careful consideration of stakeholder impacts and perceptions, which can greatly influence successful adoption. Building on earlier MPO studies, this research will conduct a stakeholder analysis of potential roadway pricing scenarios, assessing attitudes, identifying effective messaging, and reviewing best practices from successful implementations in other regions. The study approach includes interviews with key local agencies (MBTA, MassDOT) and public officials, a comprehensive literature review, and case studies from US and international experiences. The final report will provide insights into stakeholder concerns and effective messaging tactics, facilitating future planning and implementation of roadway pricing in the Boston region.

Table ES-1 contains the budget allocated for the MPO's 3C planning activities in FFY 2026. The table reflects the FHWA PL funds and FTA Section 5303 funds, which the Boston Region MPO and Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) expect to spend in FFY 2026. The new studies chosen for funding in FFY 2026 are summarized in Table ES-2.

Table ES-1
Unified Planning Work Program Budget for FFY 2026

3C Studies and Programs by Budget Categories	Proposed FFY 2026 Boston Region MPO Budget
Resource Management and Support Activities	\$356,000
MPO Certification Requirements	\$5,079,820
Ongoing MPO-Funded Technical Analyses	\$145,000
New MPO-Funded Discrete Studies	\$150,000
Direct Support	\$583,000
Total FFY 2025 CTPS Budget	\$6,313,820

3C Studies and Programs by MAPC Budget Categories	Proposed FFY 2026 MAPC Budget
MAPC Planning Studies and Technical Analyses	\$834,095
MAPC Administration, Resource Management, and Support Activities	\$582,000
Total MAPC FFY 2026 UPWP Programmed Funds	\$1,416,095

Agency Supporting MPO/3C Work	Proposed FFY 2026 Budget
Boston Region MPO	\$6,313,820
MAPC	\$1,416,095
3C Budget Subtotal	\$7,729,915
FFY 2026 UPWP Budget	\$7,729,915

Note: This budget includes salary, overhead, and direct support costs.

Table ES-2
New Discrete Funded Studies in FFY 2026

Universe ID	Study or Program	Proposed FFY 2026 Budget
A-1	Pedestrian-Scale Lighting Guide for Communities	\$50,000
E-1	Representing the Experience of Limited Mobility Individuals	\$50,000
P-9	Roadway Pricing: Stakeholder Analysis	\$50,000
Total for New Discrete Studies		\$150,000

Developing the UPWP

The annual process of creating the UPWP includes updating the scopes and anticipated deliverables for ongoing programs, technical analysis activities, certification requirements, and administrative support activities, as well as generating and evaluating ideas for discrete studies.

Ideas for ongoing program activities, technical analysis activities, and studies come from the following sources:

- Input gathered through public engagement
- Input gathered from surveys that were shared with members of the public and the MPO Board
- Existing planning documents, such as the LRTP Needs Assessment and MAPC's long-range plan for smart growth in the Boston region
- MPO staff-identified needs that emerge from continual interactions between the MPO staff, state and local agencies, organizations, and community groups
- Input gathered from the MPO's UPWP Committee, which oversees the development of the UPWP document
- Guidance issued by FHWA and FTA

Public Engagement

MPO staff conduct public engagement throughout the development of the UPWP. Engagement includes meetings with MAPC subregional groups, community-based organizations, and other interested stakeholders, as well as attendance at community meetings and events. Staff also solicit ideas for programmatic work and discrete studies each year through a public survey. Input from members of the public and other stakeholders is summarized in the UPWP document and used by staff to inform future scoping, planning, and engagement work.

Toward the end of the document development process, the MPO board votes to release a draft UPWP for public review. MPO staff posts the document on the MPO's website (bostonmpo.org) and publicizes its release via an email distribution list that includes municipal contacts, interested members of the public, and other regional stakeholders, as well as through social media. MPO staff also solicit public input during office hours, meetings with stakeholders, and at public events. MPO staff compile comments received during the public review period and present them to the MPO board. The public review period for the FFY 2026 UPWP began on June 6 and ended on June 27.

Measuring Progress

The MPO monitors the progress of programs and studies by performing the following tasks:

- Approving detailed work programs and scopes
- Reviewing monthly progress reports
- Tracking program and study budgets and spending via quarterly reports
- Approving the release of deliverables based on whether the objectives stated in the work program or scope were met and whether the stated deliverables were produced