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## Public Input on Transportation Needs

### INTRODUCTION

MPO staff relied upon public input to complement its own analyses about existing and future transportation needs in the Boston region. This appendix describes the public outreach MPO staff undertook in 2017 and 2018 for the *Destination 2040* Needs Assessment. It summarizes the public outreach approach and includes the communication and engagement methods used to gather input. Through online and in-person outreach, MPO staff heard about a wide variety of transportation needs and opportunities for improvement.

Commenters provided feedback about experiences when walking, biking, taking transit (including buses, subways, commuter rail, paratransit, Council on Aging vans, Transportation Management Association shuttles, and ferries), driving, carpooling, carsharing, and bikesharing. Some commenters advocated for location-specific interventions, while others shared overarching concerns about the transportation system as relates to accessibility, connectivity, safety, reliability, innovation, affordability, connectivity, legible signage, and maintenance. Others discussed transportation's influence on public health, equity, greenhouse gas emissions, and economic vitality in the Boston region. Finally, some commenters expressed a range of opinions about the availability and management of parking and other interactions between transportation and land use.

Staff organized and summarized all of the input received by goal area in the "Stakeholder/ Public Input" sections of Chapters 4 through 9. Staff incorporated this input in its recommendations to address the region's transportation needs, which are also summarized by goal area in Chapters 4 through 9.



## PUBLIC OUTREACH APPROACH FOR THE DESTINATION 2040 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

### Communication Methods

MPO staff used a variety of methods to provide information for the public to understand, follow, and engage in the MPO's long-range transportation planning (LRTP) process. In-person meetings, webpage content, emails, social media, and other electronic means were used for external communications, as summarized below.

#### Meetings

MPO staff introduced *Destination 2040* to audiences at meetings, conferences, and events. These conversations were aided by posters, timelines, and brochures. The events are described in more detail in the Engagement Methods section.

#### Webpage

MPO staff developed a [webpage](#) for *Destination 2040* for interested parties to follow the LRTP's development. The webpage includes a [timeline](#) of upcoming and past events, a Needs Assessment page with [data visualization applications](#) where needs can be suggested, places to [take surveys](#) and provide comments, and information detailing how to get involved. The webpage is designed to provide everything needed to understand, follow, and participate in the MPO's LRTP in one centralized location.

#### Electronic notifications

Stakeholders were notified of LRTP milestones and participation opportunities through complementary modes of communication provided by MPO staff. The modes of communication are detailed below.

#### Emails

Emails are the MPO staff's primary means of notifying interested parties about opportunities for engagement. Subscribers to the MPO's email list can opt in or opt out of different types of communication, such as general notices, meeting reminders, Advisory Council notices and updates from the MPO's blog, *TRANSREPORT*. The chart below summarizes the various notices sent to MPO subscribers.

**Table D-1**  
**Notices Sent to MPO Subscribers**

Date	Action
September 2017	Subscribers received an email about opportunities to provide input on local and regional transportation needs.
October 2017	Subscribers received an email that announced the development of a new LRTP and shared a timeline of opportunities to participate.
March 2018	Subscribers were <a href="#">invited</a> to attend the <i>Summit on Accessible Transportation</i> , where they could share input on accessible transportation needs and help shape the LRTP.
April 2018	Subscribers received an email encouraging them to explore the <i>Destination 2040</i> website and share their transportation needs.
July 2018	Attendees of the <i>Summit on Accessible Transportation</i> and members of the former Access Advisory Committee of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) received an email with a summary on feedback received about transportation needs and links to the <i>Destination 2040</i> development page.
December 2018	Subscribers received an email announcing that the Draft Needs Assessment Summary and Recommendations was available for review and comment.
October 2018	Advisory Council members received an email with a notice about an upcoming presentation on the Needs Assessment.
October 2018	Subscribers received an email with a notice about an upcoming presentation to the MPO on the draft Needs Assessment.
June 2018-December 2018	Subscribers to MPO meeting reminders received agendas to meetings, including meetings with presentations and discussions about the <i>Destination 2040</i> Needs Assessment.
December 2018	Subscribers to Advisory Council notices received an email with a notice about an upcoming presentation on the draft Needs Assessment. Summary and Recommendations
January 2019	Subscribers to updates from the MPO's blog, <i>TRANSREPORT</i> , received an email notifying them about a new post describing the Draft Needs Assessment Summary and Recommendations.

LRTP= Long-Range Transportation Plan. MBTA= Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. MPO=Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Source: Boston Region MPO.

## Tweets

Tweets complement the use of email communications by MPO staff. The MPO's Twitter account is followed by transportation advocates, community groups, other government agencies, and interested members of the public. MPO staff tweets are outlined below by date.

**Table D-2**  
**Tweets Sent to MPO Subscribers**

Date	Action
August 2016	Staff tweeted about information about upcoming LRTP development.
April 2018	Staff tweeted a link to an email encouraging people to explore the <i>Destination 2040</i> website and to share their transportation needs.
March 2018	Staff tweeted a link to a survey about transportation needs.
December 2018	Staff <a href="#">tweeted</a> that the Draft Needs Assessment Summary and Recommendations document was available for review and also shared a link to the <i>TRANSREPORT</i> blog post on the topic.

LRTP= Long-Range Transportation Plan. MPO=Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Source: Boston Region MPO.

## TRANSREPORT

MPO staff crafted a post in *TRANSREPORT*, the MPO's blog, describing the Draft Needs Assessment Summary and Recommendations and kicked off a series of posts providing information and updates about *Destination 2040*.

## MPO Homepage Banners

A large, inviting banner graphic with a prominent "action button" on the MPO's homepage alerted MPO website visitors to the *Destination 2040* website.

## Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Matters

The MAPC publishes a monthly newsletter, *MAPC Matters*, and MPO staff consistently sends updates on MPO activities to be included in the "MPO Corner" section of the newsletter to reach a broader audience. Subscribers to *MAPC Matters* received notices about the kickoff of the *Destination 2040* website, the availability of the transportation needs survey, discussions about needs occurring at subregional group meetings and other venues (described in more detail below), presentations at MPO meetings about the development of the Needs Assessment, and the release of the Draft Needs Assessment Summary and Recommendations.

## Engagement Methods

MPO staff provided opportunities for members of the public to participate in *Destination 2040*'s development to ensure that feedback could be heard, valued, and considered. A combination of electronic surveys and in-person meetings were used to seek public input and

feedback on transportation needs and opportunities for improving transportation. All of the MPO-sponsored public outreach venues complied with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards and were accessible by public transportation.

## MPO Meetings

MPO staff updated the MPO about developments in the *Destination 2040* Needs Assessment at the following meetings:

**Table D-3**  
**MPO Meeting Developments**

Date	Action
December 1, 2016	Presentation about the work plan for developing <i>Destination 2040</i> and its Needs Assessment
June 15, 2017	Presentation about scenario planning for the LRTP and its Needs Assessment
October 5, 2017	Update about the development of the LRTP Needs Assessment and a presentation about the LRTP's Public Participation Plan
November 16, 2017	Presentation about developing the LRTP's 2040 population and employment projections
June 21, 2018	Update about developing the LRTP's 2040 population and employment projections and the initial results of the 2016 Base Year and 2040 No-Build travel demand model runs
September 20, 2018	Update about developing the LRTP and its Needs Assessment
November 15, 2018	Presentation of the Draft Needs Assessment Summary and Recommendations
December 6, 2018	Presentation of the final population and employment projections for 2040

LRTP= Long-Range Transportation Plan. MPO=Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Source: Boston Region MPO.

As a policy, the MPO welcomes public comments at all meetings, offering stakeholders a chance to offer their input and feedback about MPO decisions. Staff has also provided related materials on the *Destination 2040* website and the MPO meeting calendar.

## Advisory Council Meetings

The chair of the Advisory Council kept the Council abreast of information and updates shared at the MPO meetings described above. MPO staff updated the Council about the development of the LRTP and its Needs Assessment at the Council's October 10, 2018, meeting. MPO staff also presented the Draft Needs Assessment Summary and

Recommendations to the Advisory Council on December 12, 2018. The meeting was open to the public and attendees included representatives from municipalities, public agencies, advocacy groups, and other interested parties. After the presentations to the Council, MPO staff answered members' questions. Staff also solicited feedback in emails sent to members and friends of the Council.

## Subregional Group Meetings

MPO staff visited each of the eight MAPC subregional groups in fall 2017 to gather input on transportation needs and opportunities for improving the transportation system. Staff returned to each MAPC subregional group in fall 2018 to encourage members to review the Draft Needs Assessment Summary and Recommendations and provide feedback. Attendees of these meetings included planners, department directors, and other interested municipal officials (including elected officials). The following table provides the number of attendees at each meeting.

**Table D-4**  
**Attendance Totals at Subregional Group Meetings**

Subregion	2017	2018
Inner Core Committee	19	19
North Shore Task Force	13	7
North Suburban Planning Council	16	9
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination	17	24
MetroWest Regional Collaborative	17	12
SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee	11	12
Three Rivers Interlocal Council	16	11
South Shore Coalition	8	9

Source: Boston Region MPO.

## Meetings with Stakeholder Organizations

MPO staff regularly respond to invitations to attend scheduled meetings of transportation advocacy organizations and other organizations interested in discussing transportation issues and those interested in learning how to shape the transportation system in the region. At

these meetings, staff discussed transportation needs and opportunities for improving the transportation system with the following groups:

- 495/MetroWest Partnership Transportation Committee (25 attendees)
- MBTA's Rider Oversight Committee (approximately five attendees)
- LivableStreet's Advocacy Committee (approximately 14 attendees)

In addition, staff have been proactively building relationships with organizations serving the needs of people who identify as a minority, people with limited English proficiency, people with disabilities, people who are 75 years or older, and people who are members of low-income households or transit-dependent households. Staff reached out to contacts in these organizations to discuss opportunities to communicate and engage with their constituents. This outreach resulted in visits to these organizations:

- Transportation Resources, Information, Planning and Partnership for Seniors (eight attendees)
- Boston North Regional Coordinating Council (14 attendees)

Outreach has also led to collaboration with the Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) and the City of Boston's Disabilities Commission to host a *Summit on Accessible Transportation* in March 2018. More than 100 attendees engaged in discussions about transportation needs related to sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, the subway and commuter rail, buses, paratransit, taxis, transportation network companies, and autonomous vehicles.

## Office Hours

During 2017 and 2018, staff offered monthly *Office Hours* at consistent, designated times for the public to engage in one-on-one conversations with MPO staff. Interested parties either visited the Boston Region MPO office or called staff on the phone. Visitors often shared about transportation needs and opportunities to improve the transportation system. Staff incorporated these concerns and interests into the LRTP Needs Assessment.

## Open Houses

MPO staff hosted two *Open Houses* in spring 2018 to allow the public the opportunity to comment in person on the MPO's draft Transportation Improvement Program and Unified Planning Work Program. At each event, staff provided information about *Destination 2040* via posters and interactive displays. Participant's comments about transportation needs and opportunities for improvement were considered as input into the Needs Assessment.



## Partner Events

Staff sought opportunities to partner with other agencies and organizations to reach broader audiences. In March 2018, MPO staff participated in a panel discussion at the Neponset Valley Transportation Management Association's forum on *Bridging Transportation Gaps in the Neponset Valley*. Staff also appeared in person at the following events:

- Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)'s Moving Together Conference (2017 and 2018)
- MassDOT's Innovation and Mobility Exchange (2018)
- MBTA's Focus40 public events (2016 Kickoff, 2016 Interactive Open House, and 2017 Open House)
- MAPC's Fall Council meetings (2016 and 2017)

## Surveys and Comments

MPO staff distributed an electronic survey asking stakeholders for input about transportation needs and opportunities for improving transportation. Surveys were posted on the *Destination 2040* website, sent out via email and Twitter, and included in a *TRANSREPORT* blog post. Two hundred and fifty individuals responded to the survey and the responses are included in the overall summary of comments in Chapters 4 through 9.

Staff also received comments and questions related to transportation needs throughout the development of the LRTP Needs Assessment and during a review period for the Draft Needs Assessment Summary and Recommendations. Staff responded using the same means of communication through which the comment or inquiry was made and presented all written comments to the MPO for consideration.

## CONCLUSION

MPO staff conducted public outreach for the *Destination 2040* Needs Assessment to help stakeholders and the public understand, follow, and participate in the development of *Destination 2040*. Through online and in-person communications and outreach, staff received over 2,000 ideas about needs and opportunities for improving the transportation system. Staff gathered and summarized this input and incorporated stakeholders' interests into the Needs Assessment Summary and Recommendations. This draft document was returned to the public for review and comment. Staff responded to these comments and concerns and incorporated them into its recommendations for how to address the region's transportation needs in Chapters 4 through 9 of the final Needs Assessment. The public comments are summarized by goal area in the "Stakeholder/Public Input" sections in Chapters 4 through 9.