



## PLAN PURPOSE

JOURNEY to 2030, the Transportation Plan of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (referred to as the Plan), is the long-range, comprehensive transportation planning document for the Boston region. The region encompasses 101 cities and towns from Ipswich to Duxbury, and Boston to Marlborough (see Figure 1-1). This is the area in which transportation planning is the responsibility of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), as explained in this chapter. Covering 1,405 square miles, the Boston region makes up about 18 percent of the state's land area; however, with over three million residents, it has 48 percent of the state's population.

The Plan defines transportation visions for the future of the region, establishes goals and policies that will lead to the achievement of the visions, and allocates projected revenue to transportation programs and projects in order to implement those goals and policies. Fundamentally, the Plan is about making choices for the future of the metropolitan area—choices about local and regional land use, choices about where to allocate limited transportation resources, and choices about the type of future we wish to see for our region and, by extension, the Commonwealth. In accordance with applicable federal planning regulations, the Plan addresses surface transportation issues only.

The Plan Amendment's 20-year scope allows the MPO to consider the transportation network's future from a broad perspective. Only projects designated as regionally significant and major investment projects are specifically listed by name in the Plan. The term "regionally significant" refers to projects required by federal regulations to be included in the travel demand model (a computer model) for air quality conformity purposes—generally, any project that adds capacity to the



regional transportation network. Major investment projects are projects that cost over \$10 million. For a more detailed explanation of the types of projects that must be included in the model, see Chapter 15, Air Quality Conformity Determination.

Most of the transportation projects that will be funded in the next 20 years do not add capacity to the transportation system and are, therefore, not specifically identified in the Plan. The purpose of these projects is primarily to maintain and operate the existing system. Nevertheless, when it comes time to allocate funds for these projects in the Transportation Improvement Program, they will be selected based upon how well they implement the goals and policies adopted in the Plan.

## **THE BOSTON REGION MPO STRUCTURE**

The Boston Region MPO is responsible for the development of the Plan. It conducts transportation planning in its region for a variety of transportation modes and facilities, including highway, transit, and freight. By bringing together representatives from local, regional, state, and federal entities and a public advisory committee, MPO decision-making is sensitive to the diverse range of interests and concerns that exist in the Boston region.

Federal law establishes requirements and guidelines for transportation planning in urbanized areas with populations of more than 200,000. In order to be eligible for federal transportation funding, an area must maintain a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) transportation planning process. The Boston Region MPO is responsible for carrying out the 3C process in its area.

The MPO is a cooperative board of 14 voting members:

- Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works (EOT) - now the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), Office of Planning and Programming<sup>1</sup>
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board
- Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), Highway Division<sup>2</sup>
- Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport)
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
- City of Boston
- Six elected municipalities from the Boston region, currently:
  - City of Somerville
  - City of Newton
  - Town of Braintree (city form of government)
  - Town of Bedford
  - Town of Framingham
  - Town of Hopkinton

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Regional Transportation Advisory Council also participate on the MPO, in a nonvoting capacity.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS/INITIATIVES**

In addition to the Plan, the Boston Region MPO is required to develop other documents and programs as part of the 3C transportation planning process. These include:

- The Congestion Management Process (CMP)

<sup>1</sup> On November 1, 2009, the Commonwealth implemented a reorganization of its transportation agencies. This reorganization integrated transportation agencies and authorities into a new entity, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). As of this date, MassDOT oversees four new divisions: Highway, Rail and Transit, Aeronautics and Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV). All references throughout JOURNEY to 2030 of future activities by the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT), the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway), and the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (MassPike) will now refer to the new agency – MassDOT. Specific references to the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) will now refer to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Highway Division.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

- The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP and the CMP are sources of information used in the development of the Plan. Along with the TIP, they help to implement the visions and objectives of the Plan. Other documents or initiatives considered in the development of the Plan are:

- The MBTA Program for Mass Transportation
- Legal commitments of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Brief descriptions of all of the above and their relationship to the Plan are provided below.

### **Unified Planning Work Program**

The annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) describes transportation planning studies to be undertaken by the MPO and other entities in the Boston region during a given federal fiscal year. The UPWP is intended to serve two purposes. The first is to provide information to government officials, local communities, and the general public about all of the transportation planning studies that are expected to occur in the region. The second is to provide complete budget information to federal and state officials about the expenditure of federal funds for planning studies that will be carried out by the MPO.

The planning studies in the UPWP are an important source of ideas that may evolve into projects that will eventually be included in the Plan. Likewise, ideas received during the public outreach process for the Plan may lead to studies included in the UPWP.

### **The Congestion Management Process**

The MPO's Congestion Management Process (CMP), formerly known as the Mobility Management System (MMS), is an ongoing program for monitoring mobility in the region, providing the MPO and transportation planners with timely

information about transportation system performance, and making recommendations in the areas where mobility deficiencies are found. The CMP program includes the systematic measurement and analysis of mobility problems in the region so that they may be mitigated. The staff then provides decision-makers with information about transportation system performance and with strategies and recommendations for improving mobility. Information from the CMP and associated planning studies funded through the UPWP is used in the selection of projects for the Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program.

### **Transportation Improvement Program**

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a multimodal program that sets forth a detailed list of transportation projects that is consistent with the policies and goals of the Plan. The TIP describes the transportation projects that are expected to be implemented during a four-year period and provides information about how they've been prioritized. It also includes a financial plan showing the revenue source or sources, current or proposed, for each project. In order to be eligible to receive federal funds, a project must be programmed in the current federal fiscal year's TIP. In addition to the federally funded projects, most highway projects funded with state transportation money are also included in the TIP in the Boston region. In order for any regionally significant project to be included in the TIP, it must be included in the Plan. One function of the TIP is to serve as a tool for monitoring progress in implementing the Plan.

### **MBTA Program for Mass Transportation**

The MBTA Program for Mass Transportation (PMT) is the long-range, 25-year capital program of the MBTA. The objective of the PMT is to identify and prioritize projects that will result in a cost-effective mass transit system that serves the greatest number of passengers while furthering

environmental, economic development, and environmental justice goals. The MBTA adopted the current PMT in May 2003. The MPO used it to prioritize transit projects for inclusion in the Plan. The MBTA has begun updating the PMT; however, it will not be completed in time for updated PMT information to be included in this Plan.

## Legal Commitments

Several transportation projects are legal requirements that EOT or other transportation agencies in Massachusetts must complete within a certain time frame. The legal commitments that have the greatest impact on planning in the Boston region are those pertaining to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) and the Central Artery/Tunnel project.

The federal Clean Air Act requires states with one or more regions that do not meet federal air quality standards, such as Massachusetts, to produce a SIP. A SIP describes the efforts that a state has made, or proposes to make, to reduce levels of pollutants, such as ozone and carbon monoxide. Massachusetts is required to produce a SIP, and EOT and other transportation agencies, including MassHighway, the MBTA, and Massport, are required to implement the transportation projects and policies that are included in the SIP.

In the current SIP, the Central Artery/Tunnel (CA/T) project commitments are the result of an agreement entered into by the state's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and EOT during the approval process for the CA/T project. This agreement was updated, with revised implementation schedules, in an Administrative Consent Order between DEP and EOT in 2000. In 2004, EOT and DEP began a process of reevaluating the projects in the original SIP commitments that was completed in July 2008. This process was undertaken to ensure that any further investments fund the best regionally significant projects that meet air quality goals and requirements.

As a matter of policy, the MPO includes all legal commitments related to the SIP and the Consent Order in the Plan.