



## ***TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM***

**DATE:** April 18, 2024  
**TO:** Boston Region MPO Board  
**FROM:** Memorandum of Understanding Update Committee  
**RE:** Regional Transportation Authority Representation Recommendations

This memorandum summarizes the recommendations from the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Update Committee on the topic of regional transportation authority (RTA) representation on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) board.

### **1 BACKGROUND**

In their 2022 Federal Certification Review, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration issued the Boston Region MPO a recommendation to make meaningful revisions to the 2011 MOU. The Review Team noted that these revisions would provide an appropriate opportunity to formally address representation of RTAs in the Boston region. Relevant RTAs in the Boston region include the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA) and the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA).<sup>1</sup>

The topic of RTA representation was first mentioned in the 2014 Federal Certification Review, where the federal review team recommended that the MPO work cooperatively with MWRTA and CATA to ensure that they are represented on the Boston Region MPO board in a way that is satisfactory to all parties and satisfies the MAP-21 requirement for transit representation on MPO boards.<sup>2</sup> The recommendation did not express a preference for the form that RTA representation should take and proposed potential solutions such as full or fractional representation on the board for each RTA; a single seat that rotates between the RTAs; a transit or intermodal 'functional subregion' representative similar to the geographical subregion representatives already on the board;

---

<sup>1</sup> CATA's service area includes Gloucester, Rockport, Ipswich, Essex, and Hamilton. MWRTA's service area includes Hudson, Marlborough, Southborough, Framingham, Hopkinton, Milford, Hopedale, Ashland, Holliston, Sudbury, Wayland, Sherborn, Natick, Dover, Weston, Wellesley, and Newton.

<sup>2</sup> Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act

**Civil Rights, nondiscrimination, and accessibility information is on the last page.**

indirect representation through another MPO board member (e.g., MBTA or MassDOT) supplemented by voting membership for both RTAs on the Regional Transportation Advisory Council; or some other form of representation agreed upon by all parties. In 2019, after reviewing and discussing various options for RTA representation on MPO boards, the board opted to pilot and then permanently establish a Transit Working Group that included RTAs and other diverse transit provider representation in the region. The MPO board intended this to be an opportunity for the RTAs to have a voting seat on the board, representing the interests of the transit committee. Ultimately, this structure was not agreed upon by the RTAs as being satisfactory representation.

The 2022 Federal Certification Review noted this outcome and further recommended finding a resolution to RTA representation. At the November 30, 2023, Annual Meeting, the Boston Region MPO board delegated revisions of the MOU in response to recommendations including the RTA representation to an MOU Update Committee. It is in this forum that the recommendation in this memorandum was developed.

## **2 COMMITTEE DELIBERATION**

To begin conversations about the appropriate RTA representation to recommend to the full board, MOU Update Committee members reviewed the federal regulations related to the composition of MPO boards. MPO staff met with CATA and MWRTA to understand their vision for representation on the board and to elaborate on the incentive to join the MPO board. This information was shared with committee members at the February 7 committee meeting. The RTAs proposed a permanent seat on the board that would alternate between the two RTAs on a fixed cycle. The RTAs also later proposed acting as the alternate for one another.

The RTAs were invited to two subsequent committee meetings to address questions posed to them by committee members. Topics addressed in these conversations included their motivation for joining the MPO board, technical expertise, serviced populations, and staff capacity to partake in board activities. In response, RTA staff discussed guidance from the Federal Transit Administration to pursue representation on the board and the impact that MPO planning and investment in roadway and transit networks can have on its service operations. RTA staff also discussed the benefit that their perspective could bring to the board by virtue of their regular, on-the-ground interactions with passengers, including a significant population of riders requiring accessibility accommodations.

Other topics raised during discussions include the capacity of RTAs to participate in activities expected of board members, including regular attendance at meetings and membership in at least one committee, the overall composition of the MPO board, and subregional funding investments over a 15-year period.

**3 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

The MOU Update Committee recommends that the MPO board creates a permanent shared seat between CATA and MWRTA. This seat will rotate between the RTAs every two years. When one RTA holds the seat, the other RTA will be designated the alternate.

Should the recommendation be approved by the MPO board, it would enter into effect following the signing of the updates to the MOU, likely at the November 2024 Annual Meeting. In the event that the MOU is signed after the 2024 Annual Meeting, the seat will be effective in the meeting following the signing of the MOU. The initial rotational term will conclude following the fiscal year 2026 municipal member elections.

## CIVIL RIGHTS NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Welcome. Bem Vinda. Bienvenido. Akeyi. 欢迎. 歡迎



You are invited to participate in our transportation planning process, free from discrimination. The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is committed to nondiscrimination in all activities and complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency). Related federal and state nondiscrimination laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, disability, and additional protected characteristics.

For additional information or to file a civil rights complaint, visit [www.bostonmpo.org/mpo\\_non\\_discrimination](http://www.bostonmpo.org/mpo_non_discrimination).

To request this information in a different language or format, please contact:

**Boston Region MPO Title IV Specialist**

10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150

Boston, MA 02116

Phone: 857.702.3700

Email: [civilrights@ctps.org](mailto:civilrights@ctps.org)

For people with hearing or speaking difficulties, connect through the state MassRelay service, [www.mass.gov/massrelay](http://www.mass.gov/massrelay). Please allow at least five business days for your request to be fulfilled.