

**Contact form at Boston Region
MPO <drupaluser@ctps.org>**
to publicinfo

Aug 23, 2021, 2:50 PM

Christopher Cassa (ccassa@gmail.com) sent a message using the contact form at <https://www.bostonmpo.org/contact>.

I support the updated public outreach plan, and in particular very much support the use of webinars/virtual sessions going forward, even when in-person sessions resume. It is often challenging to get feedback from a broad set of residents who have different obligations or challenges (whether family, work, or medical). Offering the ability to join virtually in addition to future in-person meetings is critical to reduce the barriers that often keep people from participating.

ZIP code: 02141

**Contact form at Boston Region
MPO <drupaluser@ctps.org>**
to publicinfo

Fri, Oct 1, 1:51 PM

Stephanie Groll (sgroll@cambridgema.gov) sent a message using the contact form at <https://www.bostonmpo.org/contact>.

Hi, here are my comments on the Outreach Plan.

Quantitative section 2.4 should include not just number of participants, but also basic demographics to make sure you're not hearing from all white, male, cis, wealthy, able-bodied people.

The word "outreach" feels one-directional to me, like the MPO will be pushing info out to the public and not doing much listening. I would call it "engagement," which you do use a lot throughout the document. Maybe you should just change the title?

Also, the POP is really really long and that doesn't bode well for holding people's attention. I wonder if you could express this all in a more streamlined way to increase accessibility?

One the demographic survey questions: American-born Black people experience life differently from more recent Black immigrants. While all people of color share experiences and effects of racism in present day culture, the experiences and needs of people whose ancestors were enslaved in the U.S. have a distinctly different inheritance. So I would add an answer selection that's something like, "Black, immigrated to U.S. in the last two generations."

ZIP code: 02139

October 6, 2021

Certification Activities and MPO Support
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

RE: Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's Draft Public Outreach Plan

On behalf of the 495/MetroWest Partnership, please accept the following as our official comments to the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (Boston MPO) regarding the draft *Public Outreach Plan*.

The 495/MetroWest Partnership is a unique alliance among businesses, municipalities, and other stakeholders leading the advancement of the 495/MetroWest region as an exceptional location for people, businesses, and communities. Our vision is one in which the 495/MetroWest region enjoys sustainable economic growth, well-stewarded natural and built resources, and diverse transportation and housing choices across our 36 cities and towns. The Partnership accomplishes this by providing coordination, education, and advocacy for solutions to regional constraints.

Given the unprecedented and protracted nature of the economic and social challenges facing the Commonwealth and our region as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognize the diligence of the Boston MPO and your continued efforts in both cultivating a resilient regional transportation network and facilitating public engagement through virtual means.

The 495/MetroWest Partnership recognizes that the federally reviewed Public Outreach Plan (the Plan) effectively lists the principals, guidelines, and measures that steer the Public Outreach Program (POP), the comprehensive public engagement component of the Boston MPO's transportation planning process, which spans all virtual and in-person activities including meetings, forums, digital communications and programs, and outreach events. While the scope and purpose of the two products are carefully delineated in "the Plan", the two distinct products are seemingly conflated on the MPO's webpage - https://www.ctps.org/public_involvement, which reads "*August 23, 2021-October 6, 2021: Public Outreach Plan (POP) Comment Period.*" Furthermore, the invitation to the Public Outreach Plan - Open House, which took place on September 27th, refers to "the Plan" as "POP" in the subject header. Using the "POP" acronym interchangeably to describe two distinct products that are connected, but sound rather indistinguishable, was confusing. The Partnership supports the continued usage of *Public Participation Plan* (PPP) or a different document title to differentiate the plan from the *Public Outreach Program* (POP) to avoid such confusion in the future.

The Public Outreach Plan lays out a comprehensive set of principles, guidelines, and organizational performance metrics that are easy to understand, and summarizes opportunities for public engagement, outreach schedules for annual programs, and available resources. We

found the “Annual Planning Cycle for the TIP, UPWP, and Public Outreach” graphic to be visually compelling and informative. We also appreciate the MPO’s continuous efforts in making past MPO board meetings and subcommittee meetings accessible in video format on the MPO’s YouTube channel. We believe the YouTube platform could also serve to convey brief informational videos designed to simplify complex planning processes, such as breaking down differences between the TIP and STIP, or visually accentuating principals outlined in the POP Guidebook.

The 495/MetroWest Partnership believes that the Public Engagement Schedule for the TIP should include greater transparency and engagement involving infrastructure projects that have been removed from the TIP entirely, and for projects that have disappeared from the universe of projects without explanation. As a regional entity, the Partnership monitors all projects in our service area that have moved up or down the TIP, been removed from the TIP, and those that disappeared entirely from the universe of projects from year-to-year. While the Partnership undertakes this work to identify regionally significant transportation projects and to promote regionally shared infrastructure goals, other stakeholders, including the public, deserve the opportunity to better understand decision-making outcomes surrounding how Regional Target Funds are programmed.

We thank you for your consideration of these comments. Should you have any questions or require any additional information, please contact our Manager of Policy & Planning, Jeremy Thompson by phone at (774)-760-0495 x 101 or via email at jeremy@495partnership.org

Sincerely,

Jason Palitsch
Executive Director
The 495/MetroWest Partnership