



# BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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## ***TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM***

**DATE:** December 15, 2022  
**TO:** Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization  
**FROM:** Michelle Scott, Boston Region MPO Staff  
**RE:** Initial Ideas for the *Destination 2050* Planning Framework

This memorandum discusses the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff's initial ideas for a planning framework for *Destination 2050*, the MPO's next Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). This draft planning framework—which is made up of a vision, goals, and objectives—reflects ideas and feedback from a variety of sources, such as MPO and Regional Transportation Advisory Council workshop sessions, staff research, and past and current public input. MPO staff are sharing this draft framework for MPO member discussion on December 15, 2022, to gather ideas and feedback that will shape future versions.

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

During each LRTP development cycle, the MPO updates its planning framework, which in past years has been made up of a vision statement, a set of goals, and a series of objectives associated with each goal. This planning framework serves as a foundational guide for MPO decision-making. The content of this framework—particularly the MPO goals—informs staff proposals and MPO decisions related to creating investment programs for the LRTP and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Candidate discrete study ideas for the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) have been compared to the MPO goals during the UPWP study selection process. Staff have translated many of the objectives in the MPO's planning framework into criteria for use in the TIP project selection process. Also, the MPO's framework, including its vision, helps communicate the MPO's values to partners, stakeholders, and people in the region overall.

The MPO's [current planning framework](#) was adopted in 2019 as part of the *Destination 2040* development process (see Attachment 2). While developing *Destination 2050*, MPO staff began exploring ways to refresh the MPO's planning framework. To date, staff activities to support this update have included the following:

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- A July 2022 MPO member workshop and an October 2022 Regional Transportation Advisory Council workshop to collect feedback about updating the MPO's planning framework. MPO staff released surveys to these groups following these events to gather additional comments.
- A review of plans and policies from partner agencies, and the visions, goals, and factors that these documents describe.
- A review of recent MPO studies and preliminary analysis products from the *Destination 2050* Needs Assessment process, as well as staff's impressions.
- A review of past public input and feedback from recent MPO studies and certification document development processes.
- Collection of new input through MPO engagement activities, including participation in MAPC subregional meetings and stakeholder organization events. MPO staff have surveyed attendees at some of these recent events and are currently collecting input on a vision for transportation and MPO priorities through a [public survey](#), which is scheduled to be open through January 13, 2023.

## 2 INITIAL IDEAS FOR A *DESTINATION 2050* PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Attachment 1 displays an initial draft of a planning framework for *Destination 2050*. Like the framework for *Destination 2040*, this draft framework includes a vision statement and a set of goals, with several objectives related to each goal.

While drafting this framework, MPO staff considered several guiding principles, which include the following:

- The framework should clearly communicate what the MPO values.
- The framework elements should be able to be measured or monitored.
- The framework should facilitate MPO decision-making.
- The elements of the framework should build on one another.
- The framework should balance aspirations and reality.
- The elements of the framework should be broad enough to allow for MPO staff to make some adaptations to processes between LRTP development cycles.

MPO staff will continue to refer to these principles while revising this draft planning framework.

The vision statement in this framework offers a succinct picture of the MPO's hopes for the Boston region's transportation system and for life in the region overall. The goal areas and statements provide more detail about what the MPO aspires to achieve for different aspects of the region's transportation system. The objectives reflect specific actions the MPO can take—through its investments, research, and policies—to improve the transportation system in the relevant goal areas. Some objectives reflect outcomes, while others reflect where the MPO will focus attention and/or resources. Staff attempted to craft these objectives so that they can be monitored using quantitative or qualitative information, although neither the goals nor the objectives are time-bound or include specific targets. These elements can be addressed as part of the MPO's performance-based planning and programming activities.

This draft *Destination 2050* planning framework retains a number of elements from the *Destination 2040* framework, though there have been many modifications and changes as well.

- The draft *Destination 2050* framework still includes a separate Equity goal and related objectives, but it also includes equity-oriented objectives in the other goal areas.
- The Equity goal now includes an objective specifically related to public and stakeholder engagement.
- MPO staff have worded the Safety goal statement so that it has a Vision Zero orientation.
- Many themes covered in the *Destination 2040* Capacity Management/Mobility goal areas have been reorganized into two new goal areas: (1) Mobility and Reliability and (2) Access and Connectivity.
- Many themes covered in the *Destination 2040* Economic Vitality goal areas have been incorporated into the proposed Access and Connectivity goal area.
- Infrastructure and state-of-good repair themes that appeared in the *Destination 2040* System Preservation and Modernization goal area have been incorporated into the proposed Mobility and Reliability goal area.
- The draft framework features a Resiliency goal area, which is focused on responding and adaptation to climate change.
- The *Destination 2040* Clean Air and Sustainable Communities goal area has been updated to Clean Air and Healthy Communities in the draft framework for *Destination 2050*. This goal area includes draft objectives related to vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) reduction and encouraging people

to shift trips from single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel to other travel options.

MPO staff seek MPO members' feedback at this stage to determine whether and how to build on this proposed draft planning framework for *Destination 2050*. Staff welcomes suggestions about the general structure of the framework or specific elements of the vision, goals, and objectives. In particular, MPO staff seek responses to the following questions:

- Do you support MPO staff's proposal to integrate equity throughout MPO goal areas, in addition to having a specific Equity goal? Should MPO staff incorporate equity into its planning framework in a different way?
- Do you support a Vision Zero-oriented statement for the Safety goal?
- Does the way that MPO staff have organized objectives in the Mobility and Reliability and Access and Connectivity goal areas make sense? Should these elements be reorganized?
- Are there ways we should simplify this framework?
- Should the MPO include objectives related to reducing VMT or encouraging mode shift in its planning framework? Should the MPO include one or the other, or both?
- What key elements are missing from the proposed vision, goals, or objectives?
- Are there changes MPO staff could make to the framework to better fulfill the previously mentioned guiding principles?
- Should the elements of the planning framework be rearranged or modified to convey a sense of priority?

### 3 NEXT STEPS

Following MPO members' discussion of this draft *Destination 2050* planning framework on December 15, 2022, MPO staff will update the framework to incorporate members' feedback. Staff will also continue to review public input related to the MPO's transportation vision and priorities, including input gathered through the MPO's public survey. Staff plan to share an updated version of this planning framework in early 2023 to support further development of *Destination 2050*.

Attachments: Draft *Destination 2050* planning framework  
*Destination 2040* planning framework

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Boston, MA 02116  
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## VISION STATEMENT

The Boston Region MPO envisions an equitable, pollution-free, and modern regional transportation system that enables people to safely and reliably reach where they need and want to go. This system supports an inclusive Boston region that is healthy, resilient, and economically vibrant.



### GOALS

### OBJECTIVES

#### EQUITY

Maintain an inclusive transportation planning process and make investments that address and redress past transportation-related burdens and disparities that disadvantaged communities have experienced.

- Maintain an inclusive engagement process that helps people meaningfully share their needs, preferences, concerns, and priorities to inform MPO decision-making, and that focuses on engaging disadvantaged communities.\*
- Reduce potential harmful effects from the transportation system on the environment, health, and safety of disadvantaged communities.
- Improve transportation outcomes in disadvantaged communities.

\* Disadvantaged communities are those communities where a significant portion of the populations identifies as an MPO equity population: people who identify as minority, have limited English proficiency, are 75 years old or older or 17 years old or younger, or have a disability; or have low incomes.

#### SAFETY

Achieve zero transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries.

- Reduce fatalities, injuries, and safety incidents for all modes.
- Eliminate disparities in safety outcomes for disadvantaged communities; areas overburdened by transportation-related fatalities, injuries, and safety incidents; and vulnerable roadway users.

#### MOBILITY AND RELIABILITY

Support excellent and reliable mobility for people and freight.

- Improve travel reliability on the region's transit systems and roadway network, including by improving responses to nonrecurring sources of congestion.
- Prioritize investments that address disparities in transit reliability and frequency for disadvantaged communities.
- Reduce avoidable delay on the region's roadway network, emphasizing solutions that reduce single-occupancy-vehicle trips such as travel demand management.
- Support reliable, safe travel by keeping roadways, bridges, transit assets, and other infrastructure in a state of good repair, and prioritize these investments in disadvantaged communities.
- Modernize transit systems and roadway facilities, including by incorporating new technology, such as communications and electric-vehicle technologies, that support the MPO's goals.

#### ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY

Provide transportation options and improve access to key destinations for people and goods.

- Improve access to jobs, housing, essential services, education, logistics sites, open space, and other key destinations.
- Expand the availability of and people's access to transit, active, and non-single-occupancy-vehicle transportation options.
- Improve access to high quality, frequent transportation options that serve disadvantaged communities and the places residents want to go.
- Close network gaps and address barriers affecting regional bicycle, pedestrian, and transit travel.

#### RESILIENCY

Provide transportation that enables people to respond and adapt to climate change and other changing conditions.

- Prioritize investments to make the region's infrastructure more resilient and responsive to current and future climate hazards, particularly within areas vulnerable to increased heat and precipitation, extreme storms, winter weather, and sea level rise.
- Prioritize resiliency investments in disadvantaged communities and in areas that bear disproportionate climate and environmental burdens.
- Prioritize investments in transportation resiliency that improve emergency access and protect evacuation routes.

#### CLEAN AIR AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Provide transportation free of greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants, and transportation that supports sustainable environments and good health.

- Encourage people to shift trips from single-occupancy-vehicle travel to transit, active, or other non-single-occupancy-vehicle modes, and explore alternatives for moving goods by rail or water.
- Reduce regional vehicle-miles traveled, particularly from single-occupancy vehicles.
- Reduce transportation-related greenhouse gases and other pollutants.
- Prioritize investments that address air pollution and environmental burdens experienced by disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.
- Support public health through investments in transit and active transportation, and improve access to outdoor space and healthcare.
- Make transportation investments that reduce negative impacts to the natural environment and support low-impact, nature-based design.

## VISION STATEMENT

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization envisions a modern, well-maintained transportation system that supports a sustainable, healthy, livable, and economically vibrant region. To achieve this vision, the transportation system must be safe and resilient; incorporate emerging technologies; and provide equitable access, excellent mobility, and varied transportation options.



### GOALS

### OBJECTIVES

#### SAFETY

Transportation by all modes will be safe

- Reduce the number and severity of crashes and safety incidents for all modes
- Reduce serious injuries and fatalities from transportation
- Make investments and support initiatives that help protect transportation customers, employees, and the public from safety and security threats

#### SYSTEM PRESERVATION

Maintain and modernize the transportation system and plan for its resiliency

- Maintain the transportation system, including roadway, transit, and active transportation infrastructure, in a state-of-good repair
- Modernize transportation infrastructure across all modes
- Prioritize projects that support planned response capability to existing or future extreme conditions (sea level rise, flooding, and other natural and security-related man-made impacts)

#### CAPACITY MANAGEMENT AND MOBILITY

Use existing facility capacity more efficiently and increase transportation options

- Improve access to and accessibility of all modes, especially transit and active transportation
- Support implementation of roadway management and operations strategies to improve travel reliability, mitigate congestion, and support non-single-occupant vehicle travel options
- Emphasize capacity management through low-cost investments; prioritize projects that focus on lower-cost operations/management-type improvements such as intersection improvements, transit priority, and Complete Streets solutions
- Improve reliability of transit
- Increase percentage of population and employment within one-quarter mile of transit stations and stops
- Support community-based and private-initiative services and programs to meet first- and last-mile, reverse commute, and other non-traditional transit/transportation needs, including those of people 75 years old or older and people with a disability
- Support strategies to better manage automobile and bicycle parking capacity and usage at transit stations
- Fund improvements to bicycle/pedestrian networks aimed at creating a connected network of bicycle and accessible sidewalk facilities (both regionally and in neighborhoods) by expanding existing facilities and closing gaps
- Increase percentage of population and places of employment with access to facilities on the bicycle network
- Eliminate bottlenecks on freight network; improve freight reliability
- Enhance freight intermodal connections

#### TRANSPORTATION EQUITY

Ensure that all people receive comparable benefits from, and are not disproportionately burdened by, MPO investments, regardless of race, color, national origin, age, income, ability, or sex

- Prioritize MPO investments that benefit equity populations\*
- Minimize potential harmful environmental, health, and safety effects of MPO-funded projects for all equity populations\*
- Promote investments that support transportation for all ages (age-friendly communities)
- Promote investments that are accessible to all people regardless of ability

\*Equity populations include people who identify as minority, have limited English proficiency, are 75 years old or older or 17 years old or younger, or have a disability; or are members of low-income households.

#### CLEAN AIR/SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Create an environmentally friendly transportation system

- Reduce greenhouse gases generated in Boston region by all transportation modes
- Reduce other transportation-related pollutants
- Minimize negative environmental impacts of the transportation system
- Support land use policies consistent with smart, healthy, and resilient growth

#### ECONOMIC VITALITY

Ensure our transportation network provides a strong foundation for economic vitality

- Respond to mobility needs of the workforce population
- Minimize burden of housing/transportation costs for residents in the region
- Prioritize transportation investments that serve residential, commercial, and logistics targeted development sites and "Priority Places" identified in MBTA's Focus 40 plan
- Prioritize transportation investments consistent with compact-growth strategies of the regional land-use plan