



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, MassDOT Secretary and CEO and MPO Chair
Tegin L. Teich, Executive Director, MPO Staff

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 16, 2023
TO: Brian Kane, Chair of Administration and Finance Committee
FROM: Tegin Teich, Executive Director of Central Transportation Planning Staff to the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
RE: Progress towards State Fiscal Year 2024 Goals

According to the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Operations Plan,¹ the executive director of Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), the staff to the MPO, is evaluated annually approaching the end of the state fiscal year (SFY). The evaluation is carried out by representatives of the chair and vice chair of the MPO and the chair of the MPO's Administration and Finance (A&F) Committee. The evaluation is expected to be complete by June 15 of each year and establish goals for the next SFY. The executive director is expected to provide quarterly updates on progress towards those goals to the A&F Committee, which may recommend updates if needed to the annual evaluation goals.

The executive director's goals established for SFY 2024 can be grouped in the following categories:

- Enhance employee experience and support retention (policies and procedures)
- Advance board priorities and enhance board experience (procedural, onboarding, information sharing, and development opportunities)
- Achieve fiscal responsibility and advance funding opportunities (surplus/deficit and fiduciary agent agreement)
- Increase CTPS's sector leadership (improved tools and partnerships)
- Implement year three of the agency's strategic plan

The following sections provide updates in each of these categories since the start of SFY2024 (July 1, 2023).

¹ <https://www.ctps.org/data/pdf/about/mpo/2023-MPO-Operations-Plan.pdf>

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

1 EMPLOYEES

CTPS leadership team members engage with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the fiduciary agent, to update agency policies and procedures. The primary focus of these updates is to clarify and modify the policies and procedures to be more competitive in the job market. The revisions currently being considered are related to sick time and Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) policies. The agency expects to implement these revisions within the next few months.

Recruitment continues to be a priority activity for CTPS to be able to fulfill work requirements and advance towards agency goals. Between July 1 and November 13, eight full-time, permanent positions were filled. The onboarding of those employees increases the current staffing level to about 90 percent of the targeted number of positions in SFY 2024.

Various initiatives identified as year three activities of the strategic plan support employee experience and development. These include improving the orientation process; establishing a diversity, equity, and inclusion committee; and supporting more engaged conference attendance and reporting back by establishing internal tools to prioritize participation and track budgets.

2 BOARD

Three important initiatives in support of board priorities have advanced early in SFY 2024:

- The Operations Plan and Communications Norms were approved by the board and have been implemented.
- The MPO's Memorandum of Understanding was updated to address a corrective action identified in the last federal certification review and an ad hoc committee was established and has drafted a recommendation to the full board on how to advance the rest of the elements of the MOU.
- The board launched a new committee in October 2023 called the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee to support the TIP process and explore and identify opportunities for improvement.

In addition, the executive director has engaged the national Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) to increase staff and board member access to national resources regarding best practices and to promote knowledge exchange. This has been accomplished through staff attendance at AMPO's annual meeting, where best practices and resources were shared. Some of those resources, including a report on research into the accruing deobligated (unspent) federal dollars that are allocated to MPOs, have been

shared with MPOs across the state. AMPO has also been invited to present on federal funding legislation and context at the MPO's upcoming Annual Meeting.

The Annual Meeting will be the second in-person meeting opportunity for the board since the beginning of remote work in March 2020, following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff will continue to organize, at minimum, quarterly in-person meeting opportunities to support enhanced board engagement.

The agency's strategic plan also includes activities to support and engage board members. These activities include establishing a more robust onboarding process and ongoing development and learning opportunities for board members.

3 FISCAL

The leadership team's goal is to end each year neutrally or with a small surplus. While most of the last 15 years of operations have seen a surplus, several more recent years ended with an annual deficit. To anticipate and avoid future deficits, CTPS established a fiscal management plan to increase strategies and tools for monitoring and collaboration with the finance staff of our fiduciary agent MAPC. SFY 2023 and the first months of SFY 2024 have each ended with a net surplus. CTPS's Leadership and Finance and Operations team will continue to monitor spending and make strategic adjustments throughout the SFY.

In addition, the deputy executive director and the Finance and Operations team have been working with MAPC's human resource, finance, and legal staff to develop a new fiduciary agent agreement (FAA). The update to the FAA is also a year three activity in the agency's strategic plan. The agreement is supplemented by an administrative appendix defining human resource, finance, and legal roles, responsibilities, and processes. Once complete, it will require Boston Region MPO board deliberation and approval. As of November of 2023, the agreement and majority of the administrative appendix have been drafted.

A notable accomplishment is the MPO's successful application for a significant federal planning grant to develop a regional Vision Zero action plan. The grant has been awarded and work to develop the plan is underway in SFY 2024.

4 SECTOR LEADERSHIP

Similar to other goal areas, sector leadership is associated with several year-three activities in the agency's strategic plan. Two significant advancing activities are as follows:

- *Delivering the travel demand model with a complementary communications strategy:* The TDM23 model represents a significant advancement for the agency. The agency's Communications and Engagement team is supporting the development of and strategy for deploying broader awareness to the public, and this work will be building in Quarter 3 of the SFY (January through March).
- *Advancing the development of project management practices for the agency, including implementing additional project management training:* Leadership staff will relaunch an internal project management working group after an interim period of focusing on implementing the consistent use of project management software (Asana).

The leadership team is also collaborating with the MPO's program managers to advance and expand visions for those programs to extend multiple years. This process will enable strategic investments with limited resources to ensure that programs are also leading in their sectors. For example, the MPO's Climate Resilience Program has grown by including resilience in the MPO's long-range vision, goals, and objectives, assessing existing vulnerabilities in the long-range Needs Assessment, adopting enhanced resilience criteria for project prioritization in the upcoming TIP cycle, and coordinating both within CTPS and with agency partners on climate resilience topics and investments. Staff are currently engaged in a study to explore strategies and opportunities for expanding engagement with regional environmental stakeholders and advocacy groups, improving the MPO's ability to contribute to regional climate action and incorporate local needs into our planning process.

5 STRATEGIC PLAN

The executive director works closely with the deputy executive director to ensure that leadership and resources are allocated to the activities identified in each year of the strategic plan. Other staff, including directors, take the lead over implementing or facilitating the implementation of the initiatives. Each year and throughout the year, the leadership team reviews and updates the timeline of expected activities in the context of staff resources and agency needs. Many of the strategic plan activities are related to the executive director's goals. Examples of those activities have been provided in the prior sections. Another third-year activity not yet included in the other categories is to assess the need for a communications and branding consultant and source for funding web improvements. The executive director is exploring potential funding opportunities to assess and meet the needs of updating and clarifying the agency's identity and branding.

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

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By Telephone:

857.702.3700 (voice)

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