



# BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, MPO Chair | Secretary and CEO, Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
Tegin Leigh Teich, Executive Director, MPO Staff

**DATE: February 29, 2024**  
**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,<sup>1</sup> the executive director of the 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 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 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 between November 13, 2023, and February 5, 2024 (roughly the second quarter of the current federal fiscal year).

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

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## 1 EMPLOYEES

CTPS leadership team members engage with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the fiduciary agent, to update agency policies and procedures. During the last quarter, CTPS and MAPC staff have worked together to define the classification of employees and reclassify some employees as appropriate. Long-term temps were reclassified to per diem and part-time status, and are receiving the associated benefits.

Recruitment continues to be a priority activity for CTPS to be able to fulfill work requirements and advance toward agency goals. One additional permanent, full-time position has been filled since November 13, 2023, resulting in a total of nine full-time positions filled since the start of the SFY. The agency now has 53 full-time staff positions filled, relative to the goal established at the beginning of the year of 61. This goal is re-evaluated throughout the year in terms of available resources, agency needs, and other departures and changes to the status of staff.

In other efforts to support employee experience and development within the framework of the strategic plan, leadership initiated a practice of establishing new hire cohorts as a way to create a sense of community within the agency. The roll-out of Asana for use by staff was paired with work to create a series of training videos for internal training purposes to support skill-building across staff.

## 2 BOARD

The Annual Meeting in November 2023 was 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. The Secretary of Transportation chaired a portion of the meeting and made remarks during the Chair's Report section of the agenda. There was increased board member engagement at this meeting by chief executive officers, including elected officials, and their designees and alternates. CTPS staff worked with MassDOT staff to amplify some of the Secretary of Transportation's remarks on social media. Staff is planning two additional hybrid meetings in the spring during scenario development for the Transportation Improvement Program.

At the Annual Meeting, the board considered the ad hoc Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Committee's recommendation and voted to establish a temporary MOU Update Committee, with the task of recommending a full slate of updates to the MOU to the board. The anticipated timeline of the committee is roughly nine months. The committee began meeting in January and, so far, has agreed upon a work plan, discussed staff presentations on practices of other peer MPOs in the areas that the committee is tasked with considering updates to,

and discussed the role of regional transit authorities' representation on the Boston Region MPO board.

Staff have also developed an updated orientation presentation for new members, including updated information on core MPO functions, MPO programs, board member roles, and staff roles. This new format for orienting members is expected to be implemented in the spring.

### **3 FISCAL**

The leadership team's goal is to end each year neutrally or with a small surplus. The first two quarters 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.

The Boston Region MPO, alongside other MPOs in the state, requested access to previous years' obligated but unused PL funds to use primarily toward additional direct costs. The Boston Region MPO will allocate those funds to perform an accessibility review for document production, carry out information technology (IT) planning and obtain additional IT support, and develop a plan for the update to the travel demand model network. To date, these requests have been made and considered on an ad hoc basis, and so become amended into the current year's contract with MassDOT. Due to the timing of this process, the Boston Region MPO could only commit to using \$140,000 (inclusive of MassDOT's match) of an accumulating amount of de-obligated funds. To improve access to all funds available to MPOs, MPOs across the state advocated for establishing a documented process for requesting access to de-obligated funds in future Unified Planning Work Program cycles. MassDOT staff produced guidance that was shared at the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA).

CTPS continues to be housed within the State Transportation Building but has not been able to secure a new lease or plan for renovating the office space to be better equipped for hybrid work. To seek out ways to better shape the work environment and have more security and predictability, the agency has engaged in a procurement process to explore opportunities for alternative office spaces.

### **4 SECTOR LEADERSHIP**

The agency recently received national recognition for its use of the StoryMaps product for the "Unlocking the Blue Hills" study. The study was selected as a finalist in the 2023 ArcGIS StoryMaps Competition. This study is one successful example of the ways that staff are exploring new approaches to engage with

regional stakeholders as well as new ways to communicate the outcomes of MPO work.

The leadership team held the planned workshops with program managers to advance and expand visions for those programs to extend multiple years. In addition, the leadership team scheduled a second round of workshops on agency-wide themes in February and March. Themes are emphasis areas to ensure that annual work and multiyear work programs advance the MPO's long-range goals. Current themes are safety, equity, climate resilience, and uncertainty. The aligned processes will enable strategic investments with limited resources to maximize the efficiency and impact of programmatic work.

## **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. The general areas of focus include continuing to follow a roadmap of building a suite of new modeling tools, exposing staff to development opportunities, creating more of a hiring pipeline for the agency, exploring an expansion of technical assistance activities, continuing the project management working group, and funding web improvements, examples of which have been provided in the prior sections.

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

Title VI Specialist  
Boston Region MPO  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150  
Boston, MA 02116  
[civilrights@ctps.org](mailto:civilrights@ctps.org)

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