

Public Engagement Plan Executive Summary

Introduction

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for conducting the federally required metropolitan transportation planning process for 97 cities and towns in eastern Massachusetts. This Public Engagement Plan establishes the policies and procedures through which the MPO engages the public in its work. The policies and procedures in this Plan apply to the development of the MPO's certification documents, including the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), in addition to other plans, programs, and projects.

Engagement Framework and Goals

The MPO's engagement program is organized around four goals:

- transparency;
- broad and continuous involvement;
- accessibility and reach; and
- adaptability, evaluation, and improvement.

The MPO's engagement framework draws on the Spectrum for Public Participation developed by the International Association for Public Participation.

The MPO's Public Engagement Program provides opportunities for involvement to all interested parties and includes targeted outreach to populations traditionally underserved by the transportation system.

Engagement Channels, Standing Programs, and Policies

Public engagement at the MPO occurs through multiple channels. The MPO conducts public engagement throughout the development of its certification documents, holds formal public review periods on draft documents prior to board endorsement, and provides ongoing opportunities for input through twice-monthly MPO board meetings, committee meetings, the Community Advisory Council, the Community Planning Lab, and direct contact with staff. Staff also conduct proactive outreach in community settings, including events, and partnerships with

community-based organizations to reach people who may not engage through traditional MPO channels.

The Community Advisory Council is the MPO's permanent advisory body, comprising representatives from community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders. The Advisory Council holds a voting seat on the MPO board and its committees and provides ongoing public and stakeholder input into the MPO's work.

The Community Planning Lab is a civic education program that builds capacity for participation among representatives from community-based organizations who have had limited prior engagement with transportation planning.

The MPO addresses financial barriers to participation by providing an honorarium, including gift cards, stipends, transit passes, food and beverages at events, and signed arrangements with community-based organizations that contribute substantively to engagement work.

Accessible and Inclusive Engagement

The MPO maintains policies to ensure that engagement opportunities are accessible to all members of the public. These policies address physical accessibility of meeting locations, digital accessibility of materials and platforms, virtual meeting accessibility, and language access through translated documents, website translation functionality, and interpretation services.

Public Review Periods

Formal public review periods are conducted for certification documents. Minimum review periods range from 21 days for TIP and UPWP amendments to 45 days for the Public Engagement Plan itself. The Public Engagement Plan defines circumstances under which the MPO may modify standard review periods and establishes documentation requirements for any such modifications. MPO staff document and summarize public input received during review periods, present summaries to the MPO board for consideration before endorsement, respond to public comments, and incorporate input summaries into final plan documents.

Measurement and Evaluation

The MPO regularly reviews the effectiveness of its engagement strategies. Staff track metrics across reach and geographic and demographic representation and evaluate engagement around three questions: who is participating; is participation changing over time; and is public input reaching decision-makers. Evaluation

findings are reported throughout the year via an Engagement Dashboard and through Engagement Updates presented to the MPO board.

The Public Engagement Plan is available on the Boston Region MPO website, along with an Engagement Guidebook containing additional information about how to engage with the MPO's planning processes. For questions or comments, contact the Public Engagement Program Manager at publicinfo@ctps.org or 857.702.3700.

More Information

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

Boston Region MPO Title VI Specialist

10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150

Boston, MA 02116 Phone: 857.702.3700

Email: civilrights@ctps.org

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

Contact MPO Staff

By mail:

Boston Region MPO

Ten Park Plaza, Suite 2150

Boston, Massachusetts 02116

By telephone:

857.702.3700

By email:

publicinfo@ctps.org