



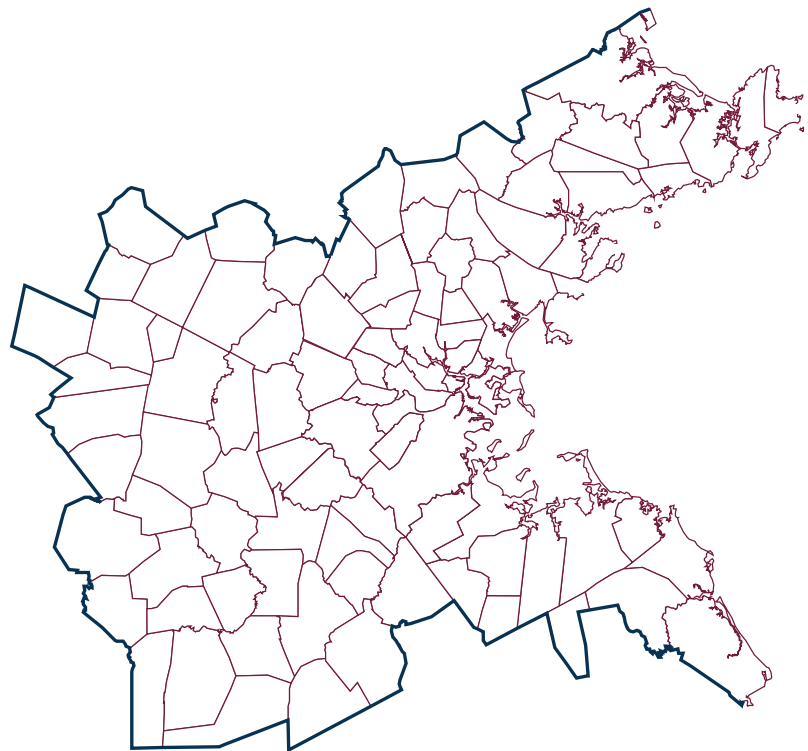
A Guide to Participating in Transportation Planning and Decision-Making in the Boston Region

Meaningful public participation is essential to the Boston Region MPO's transportation planning work.

Public engagement improves planning and decision-making by highlighting community needs, priorities, and concerns. The MPO strives to create continuous, inclusive, and meaningful opportunities for all community members to participate in the transportation planning process, and to ensure that transportation planning and policy decisions made by the MPO board—which includes representatives from the region's cities, towns, and agencies—are shaped by input from communities who are impacted by those decisions. There are many ways to get involved in the MPO's work and advocate for your community's transportation priorities and needs. The best place to start is by considering your top transportation concerns and what you are most interested in. Do you want to get an infrastructure project funded in your community? Are there challenges for people walking or rolling safely on a nearby street that you want to address? Do you have ideas about improving public transit access and mobility? Are you interested in how the transportation system can be resilient to climate change, or other things we need to do to plan for the future?

This guide offers examples of different MPO work that you can learn more about and get involved in, and you can always contact MPO staff to discuss participation opportunities. Engaging with the MPO is a two-way street, and staff are eager to help you access data, connect with other regional transportation stakeholders and decision-makers, and forge partnerships to support your community's priorities.

About the Boston Region MPO



The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) brings together 97 cities and towns in Eastern Massachusetts, along with state and regional agencies and transit providers, to create collaborative plans for addressing the region's transportation needs. This includes deciding how to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in federal and state funds each year into local transportation improvement projects and studies.



MPOs were created by the federal government to improve coordination in transportation planning and decision-making and ensure that decisions reflect local needs and priorities. This was partly in response to the highway-building era of the 1950s and '60s when federal funding was used to build roads and highways through a top-down process that did not consider the harmful effects on communities. In the Boston region, as in many urban areas, this resulted in highways cutting through and dividing communities, displacing residents, and creating barriers to access and mobility that continue to this day.

The Boston Region MPO is committed to improving safe, equitable access and mobility for all people who live, work, or travel through the region by making planning, policy, and project funding decisions that are collaborative, transparent, and shaped by public input.

Long-range planning

Help shape the vision for the future of transportation in the Boston region and the planning we do to get there.

An essential part of the MPO's work is creating a long-range plan that guides the investment of more than \$5 billion over a 20-year period by examining existing transportation needs and inequities, setting a vision and goals, and measuring progress. We know that the big problems facing our region, such as climate change, investment in mass transit, and traffic congestion, require coordinated long-term thinking and substantive policy and investment goals. You can help the MPO better understand local challenges and their impacts and encourage our plans to reflect your priorities for a transportation system that addresses the challenges facing our region today and into the future.

bostonregionmpo.mysocialpinpoint.com/lrtp



Get involved

Project funding

Help the MPO prioritize local transportation improvement projects.

As the agency responsible for allocating federal transportation funding to projects in the region, the MPO must carefully consider each year which projects best align with and advance regional goals, such as safety, equity, and climate resilience. These decisions are made through the MPO's rolling five-year capital investment plan, the Transportation Improvement Program. Public input helps the MPO determine which projects to prioritize for funding each year in the capital investment plan. You can advocate for your community's project priorities, weigh in on new projects being proposed for funding, and connect with local planners and advocates to coordinate on project design and development discussions.

bostonmpo.org/tip



Safety planning

Help develop the roadmap for improving transportation safety and reducing serious crashes.

The MPO works to improve safety and eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on our region's roadways by developing data-informed strategies, policies, and infrastructure improvements through a comprehensive planning process. Public input and awareness are critical to this work. You can share your transportation safety concerns and ideas for improvement, help the MPO identify dangerous or poorly designed intersections and corridors, and build awareness in your community for roadway safety improvement strategies.

bostonmpo.org/visionzero



Get involved

Multimodal planning

Get involved in regional planning, projects, and studies about specific modes of transportation and ways to connect them.

People and goods move through the Boston region in many ways. The MPO works to understand the connections and gaps between transportation modes and explores ways to improve safe and equitable mobility and connectivity for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, public transit, freight, and passenger vehicle traffic. You can share thoughts and ideas about how to improve connections between modes—ways to improve access and comfort at bus stops or bicycle path connections to transit stations, for example—or help the MPO identify gaps in mobility across the transportation system. You can suggest technical or policy issues for the MPO to study and learn more about ways to support our data collection efforts. We can also help you access data and connect with existing research projects and discussion forums.

bostonmpo.org/active-transportation-planning



Engagement programs



Community Advisory Council

The Boston Region MPO supports a public forum, the Community Advisory Council, to advance public engagement and participation throughout the planning process and guide MPO decision-making. The Community Advisory Council includes and elevates diverse perspectives from stakeholders representing areas and interests throughout the region and holds a voting seat on the MPO board and committees. The Community Advisory Council's mission is to create space for knowledge building and productive discussions about a broad range of regional transportation issues, and to advise the development of MPO programs and projects to ensure they are responsive to public priorities. Community Advisory Council members are selected on a rolling basis for two-year terms. Anyone is welcome to apply to join the Community Advisory Council and attend public Advisory Council events.

bostonmpo.org/advisory-council

Engagement programs

Community Planning Lab

The Community Planning Lab is an educational program for building knowledge and capacity for people and communities with diverse perspectives that are currently underrepresented in the transportation planning process or who have historically lacked access to decision-making. The Community Planning Lab incorporates interactive and hands-on learning modules that connect to participants' lived experiences and interests and emphasize the power of intentional advocacy. Participants receive a stipend for their time and expertise. Reach out to MPO staff to learn more about the Community Planning Lab.

Events and partnerships

The Boston Region MPO is excited to connect with you and your organization. If you are hosting a meeting or event, consider inviting us to participate, listen, and engage with your community. MPO staff have participated in many community meetings and events, and have created a range of interactive activities, from street design games to pop-up polling, which we can bring to any in-person or virtual event along with informational material to present or share. We are always interested in learning more about your priorities and needs, and discussing how we can collaborate to create a regional transportation system that serves the needs of all people and communities. The MPO can also be a partner and resource for organizing events and activities in your community. If you have an engagement idea you'd like to test out or a transportation project that you'd like to get more people involved in, the MPO can help you make plans and connections, or partner directly with community-based organizations on local projects and engagement work.

You are also welcome to join MPO events. The MPO Board, which makes planning and policy decisions about MPO work, typically meets every two weeks, and encourages members of the public to attend and participate. You can also submit comments to MPO staff to be shared at an upcoming Board meeting. All Boston Region MPO meetings and events open to the public are posted on the MPO meeting calendar. Meeting agendas and materials are posted at least 48 hours in advance. Recordings and summaries of past meetings are available on the meeting calendar for reference. Contact MPO staff if you have a question about a past or upcoming event, or an idea for a future one.

bostonmpo.org/calendar/month



Accessibility

Everyone is invited to participate in the MPO's transportation planning process. If you require translations or interpretations for meetings or in-person events, please contact us by email at publicinfo@ctps.org or by phone at 857.702.3700. People with hearing or speaking difficulties may connect with us through the state MassRelay service (mass.gov/massrelay). Please make requests at least five business days in advance of the date of the event, although requests made with shorter notice will be accommodated if possible.

You can access more information about civil rights, accessibility, and language assistance at the MPO at bostonmpo.org/mpo-non-discrimination.

