

Boston Region MPO Administration & Finance Committee
Operations Plan Development
Agency Information Sharing – April 13, 2023

Operation Plan Memo - Relevant Sections from Operations Plan Memo

MassDOT information updates

- Further clarify the process for agency information sharing as described in the MOU
- Further clarify process and expectations for sharing federal funding assumptions (PL, 5303 & Regional Target) each year

2011 MOU - Relevant Sections pertaining to Information Sharing

- TIP Project Information and Dissemination
 - The implementing agencies shall keep the Boston Region MPO informed of project status on a regular basis to support MPO planning and programming and to enable the Boston Region MPO to notify project sponsors of the outstanding issues that could cause the project to be deferred to a subsequent fiscal year. At least quarterly and on request, the implementing agencies shall submit this information to the Boston Region MPO Chair and staff for coordination and for distribution to the MPO members. This information shall include project status and other issues of interest to the MPO members and shall be compiled from all available resources, including municipalities, regional entities, state transportation agencies, and other sources. Boston Region MPO members shall provide needed and relevant information to Boston Region MPO staff for dissemination to the full Boston Region MPO. Staff shall utilize appropriate and up-to-date information systems for maintaining, processing, analyzing, and reporting information.
 - Boston Region MPO staff shall have primary responsibility for informing local governments regarding transportation funding and for collecting local input to the Boston Region MPO. All members of the Boston Region MPO, however, shall have a role in informing local governments about transportation aid and the programming process and in considering local input to the Boston Region MPO.
- TIP Overview
 - The Boston Region MPO shall maintain two lists of unfunded projects: a First Tier Projects list and a Universe of Projects list. These lists shall be compiled by the Boston Region MPO for information purposes and shall be included annually in an appendix to the TIP.

Considerations from the [2019 Certification Review](#)

- “The BRMPO should develop an operations plan, as called for in its MOU. An operations plan should clarify roles and responsibilities among BRMPO members and staff, **particularly among CTPS, MAPC, and MassDOT, pertaining to collaboration, communication**, work assignments, and products.”
- “The Review Team recommends that the BRMPO, MassDOT, and providers of public transportation evaluate existing planning agreements for any necessary updates regarding the roles and responsibilities for performance data, information sharing, target selection, and performance reporting.”

Questions for Discussion

- Who are the implementing agencies, and are there different requirements or processes?
 - MassDOT, the MBTA, MWRTA, and CATA
- Are the current forums for sharing information adequate?
 - E.g., MassDOT holds Priority of Project (PoP) meetings for MassDOT and municipality-sponsored projects on the second Tuesday of each month.
 - Note: The MOU calls for quarterly information updates and the text below mimics the quarterly schedule for updates at MARPA meetings even though that is not current practice.
- What should quarterly project updates look like? A presentation at the board meeting? Staff attending PoP meetings and sharing any relevant information with board members?

Draft Text

General Information Sharing

- The implementing agencies shall keep the Boston Region MPO staff informed of project status on a regular basis to support MPO planning and programming and to enable the Boston Region MPO to notify project sponsors of issues that could cause a project to be deferred or extended into a subsequent fiscal year. At least quarterly and on request, the implementing agencies shall submit this information to the Boston Region MPO Chair and staff for coordination and for distribution to the MPO members.
- MPO staff shall work with the implementing and other agencies to gather and proactively provide MPO board members with relevant financial information pertaining to the primary 3C-planning documents – the Unified Planning Work

Program, TIP, and Long-Range Transportation Plan – to assist MPO board members in the 3C planning process.

- Board members shall not vote on items if relevant information about the topic of the vote is not shared by relevant agencies, either directly or through MPO staff, at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting where the vote takes place. MPO staff shall ensure that such relevant information is shared with Board members. If information is not adequate for Board members to make a well-informed vote, as determined by a majority vote of the Board members, the vote may be postponed until such information is provided.

TIP Project Information Sharing

- MPO staff shall attend or review notes from MassDOT Highway Division’s weekly Priority of Projects (PoP) meeting to receive project readiness updates related to TIP projects advertising in the current fiscal year. MPO staff shall coordinate with project stakeholders and share relevant project information with related municipalities and stakeholders with the goal of preventing projects from being deferred to a subsequent fiscal year if not necessary.
- MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (OTP) and Boston Region MPO TIP Program Manager and Capital Programming Planner (or other relevant staff) shall meet at least monthly to exchange financial and project readiness updates.
 - As necessary, MassDOT OTP and Boston MPO staff shall coordinate to produce TIP Adjustments and Amendments for MPO member review and approval.
- The TIP Manager, in coordination with the MPO Activities Group and the Executive Team of staff to the Boston Region MPO, shall share relevant project and financial information with the MPO board on an as-needed basis.
- As referenced in the “**Board Member Responsibilities**” section of this document, the following will also apply to MPO members regarding information sharing and using this information to:
 - ensure the MPO 3C process is maintained
 - recommend, participate in, review and approve plans, projects, and studies
 - prioritize and select projects to be included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- The TIP Screening and Readiness Committee will also play a role in reviewing and discussing additional information needed for the TIP as described earlier in this document.

Federal Funding Assumptions

- MPO staff shall attend quarterly financial update meetings held by the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) and MassDOT to obtain updates on federal funding assumptions.
- MPO staff shall share federal funding assumptions, including but not limited to narrative guidance and financial program targets, to MPO members on an annual and as-requested basis.
- MPO staff shall annually share federal funding assumptions to MPO members regarding financial outlooks for the primary 3C-planning documents. This information should include, but is not limited to:
 - expected future federal highway funding for Massachusetts
 - planned debt repayments
 - state matches for remaining federal highway funds
 - funding for statewide highway, planning, and pass-through items
 - formula for distributing remaining funds to regional planning agencies
 - federal discretionary grant opportunities