

*January 28, 2010*  
*Suggestions (highlighted)*  
*for Responses to Comments,*  
*March 26, 2010*

## *Draft Amendment*

### *Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Public Participation Program*

#### **Amendments and Administrative Modifications**

The MPO may amend any of the certification documents, including a TIP. The Advisory Council and affected communities and constituencies are notified of pending amendments. Legal notices of amendments are placed in the region's major English-language newspaper, Spanish-language newspaper, and minority-community newspaper, and are posted on the MPO's ~~Web site~~ website. Amendments have a 30-day public comment period in advance of MPO action. There may be exceptions in two types of circumstances. (Staff) In extraordinary circumstances, such as an unforeseen regulatory requirement or funding deadline, (RTAC, CLF) the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee may vote to shorten the public comment period by as much as 15 days. In emergency circumstances, such as an existing or impending severe disruption to the integrity or safety of the transportation system that requires immediate action, or if there is a natural or human-caused hazard or disaster, or a need to take immediate action to take advantage of an extraordinary funding opportunity, ~~In an emergency,~~ in the public interest, it may be waived. (FHWA, RTAC, WalkBoston, Representative Alice Wolf, CLF)

An extended or an additional public comment period will be provided when a proposed amendment is significantly altered mid-way through the (for an extension) or after the close of the (for an additional) original public comment period. The length of an extended public comment period is an additional 15 days from the notification of the extension. An additional public comment period is 30 days from the notification of the additional period. (FHWA)

The Advisory Council is provided an opportunity to develop comments prior to a decision on amendments. The subscribers of the MPOinfo listserve are notified. Municipal and agency representatives and members of the public are invited to attend the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee and MPO meetings at which amendments are discussed, and submit written or oral testimony.

For the Transportation Improvement Program, and c (FHWA) Consistent with Federal guidelines, if a project is valued at \$5 million or less, the threshold for defining an amendment is a change of \$500,000 or more. The threshold for projects valued at greater

than \$5 million is 10 percent or more of the project value. Changes below these thresholds may be considered administrative modifications. The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee acts on administrative modifications, and, although no public review period is required, one may be provided at the Committee's discretion.

Significant changes in funding level are announced through a variety of media, including notice on the MPO ~~Web site~~[website](#) and e-mail notification to the municipalities in the region.

### **Public Review and Comment Periods for Certification Documents**

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee approves draft certification documents for public review. A comment period begins on the date announced in the legal notice for availability of the document. **The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee will make all reasonable efforts to avoid conducting public comment periods and public outreach between December 15 and January 2.** **(Representative Alice Wolf)** Documents **and other relevant materials (RTAC)** must be available on the ~~Web site~~[website](#) on the first business day of the public comment period and shortly afterward in compact disc and printed formats. After the close of the public comment period, the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee votes to recommend action to the MPO. The MPO then meets to act on the recommendation.

Certification documents are circulated for comment during a 30-day public review period prior to their adoption by the MPO and submission to the FHWA and the FTA. Comments are actively solicited in advance of and during review periods for the draft certification documents. Draft documents are distributed to legislators, municipal officials (chief elected officials, highway department directors, planning directors or planning board chairs, and conservation commissions), Regional Transportation Advisory Council members, MAPC representatives, Regional Equity contacts, and public libraries in each community. Notification of the documents' availability for public comment is also sent to all other interested parties and contacts noted above. Documents are provided in print, compact disc formats, and in accessible formats upon request.

Announcements of the availability and public comment periods for the certification documents are made through legal notices in the major regional English-language newspaper, Spanish-language newspaper, and minority community newspaper; press releases are sent to regional and local newspapers; and meeting notices are placed in *TRANSREPORT*, posted on the MPO ~~Web site~~[website](#), sent through MPOinfo, and if possible, in other print and electronic newsletters in the region. MPO meetings are posted with the Secretary of State and the Office of Administration and Finance. Special efforts are made to reach non-English-speaking residents through community organizations. Announcements include an invitation to comment; dates, places, and times of public workshops to discuss the documents; the close of a public comment period; and instructions on where comments may be submitted. **If a public comment period is shortened or waived, the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee will explain the reason in its public comment notice. (RTAC)**

The staff regularly reports to the MPO on all comments received and issues raised in all public forums. Written comments, whether received on paper, through the ~~Web~~ [website](#) and its e-forms, or via e-mail, are presented in full and in summarized form to the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. Summaries of verbal comments at meetings and forums are also prepared. A summary of comments and responses and copies of the original written comments are included as appendices to final documents. Comments and summaries of comments, with the names and addresses of authors, are maintained in MPO records.

The MPO allows adequate time to review and consider public comments, and to make appropriate adjustments. If significant changes to a draft document are made as it is finalized by the MPO or if important new issues are raised in it, an additional public comment period is provided.

The MPO acknowledges receipt of all written comments on certification documents by sending a written reply. If the comment refers to a specific document, a second reply, summarizing the MPO response and providing an explanation, is sent after final adoption of the document.