



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Gina Fiandaca, MassDOT Secretary and CEO and MPO Chair
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WORK PROGRAM

TRANSIT TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM

JULY 20, 2023

Proposed Motion

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) votes to approve this work program.

Project Identification

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Classification

Boston Region MPO Planning Studies and Technical Analyses

Project Number 13805

Client

Boston Region MPO

Project Supervisors

Principal: Annette Demchur

Managers: Ethan Lapointe and Logan Casey

Funding Source

MPO Combined PL and 5303 #118967

Schedule and Budget

Schedule: 8 weeks after work commences

Budget: \$34,246

Schedule and budget details are shown in Exhibits 1 and 2, respectively.

Relationship to MPO Goals

The Boston Region MPO elected to fund this study with its federally allocated metropolitan planning funds during federal fiscal year (FFY) 2023. The work completed through this study will address the following goal areas established in the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan: safety, system preservation, capacity management and mobility, clean air and clean communities, transportation equity, and economic vitality.

Background

As part of the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) *Destination 2040*, the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) established the Transit Modernization program, which would direct MPO discretionary funding to transit maintenance and modernization projects identified through coordination with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA), Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA), and municipalities. By investing in transit modernization and maintenance projects, the MPO would help improve the quality of transit service and encourage ridership, which could help achieve the mobility, air quality, and other goals established in the LRTP.

The MPO established annual set-asides of \$6.5 million per year for this program starting in FFY 2025. During the development of the FFYs 2024–28 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the MPO board voted to reduce the FFY 2025 set-aside to \$2 million in order to fund investments on the MBTA Orange Line and commuter rail. Set asides in FFYs 2026–28 remain at \$6.5 million per year, amounting to \$21.5 million between FFYs 2025–28.

During the development of the new LRTP *Destination 2050*, MPO board members expressed interest in using the program to fund transformative transit investments in concert with state-of-good-repair work. The Transit Modernization program was renamed as the Transit Transformation program to reflect this interest. The program was envisioned as supporting projects that

- enhance amenities for transit customers;
- improve accessibility on the transit system;
- increase capacity of transit stations and improve multimodal connections;
- make state-of-good-repair improvements to transit assets, including tracks, signals, and power systems;
- modernize transit fleets through the purchase of vehicles and upgrades to maintenance facilities; and
- make investments in climate resiliency to support the future security of transit infrastructure, including system electrification.

The MPO staff gathered feedback about the program from MPO members through an investment program workshop, held on January 19, 2023, and an investment program survey. Several themes were identified, including the idea of incorporating the needs of transit agencies and communities in the Boston region and the goals of the MPO, transit agencies, and the Commonwealth to inform the types of projects that are brought before the MPO for consideration. MPO members further stated that investments should improve accessibility for people with disabilities as well as overall access to transit services. Additionally, several members expressed a desire for investments to be

transformative through system expansion, system electrification, or new assets for multimodal connections, in addition to state-of-good-repair work. Additional support was expressed for bus-related infrastructure investments, such as bus lanes, bus shelters, customer service and wayfinding improvements, and transit signal priority systems, which are investments currently included in the MPO's Community Connections program but may be incorporated into the Transit Transformation program.

When developing the Transit Transformation program, MPO staff also considered feedback from other stakeholders, including the LRTP Vision and Priorities survey and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's subregional meetings.¹

Objectives

The purpose of this work is to establish an ongoing process for identifying and selecting the most promising project candidates to fund in future TIPs under the Transit Transformation investment program by meeting the following objectives:

1. Review best practices in place at other MPOs and solicit feedback from stakeholders to identify projects that could be considered for funding through the Transit Transformation program.
2. Define the process for determining needs and evaluating projects.
3. Recommend project types for funding by the Transit Transformation program in future TIPs.

Work Description

This work will be completed in the four tasks described below.

Task 1 Conduct Literature Review and Engage Stakeholders

Subtask 1.1 Literature Review

MPO staff will conduct a review of recent transportation planning literature to identify projects that may serve as case studies to support the development of the Transit Transformation program. Staff will look to organizations within Massachusetts and throughout the nation to learn best practices and identify effective and financially sound transit improvements. Staff will use the findings from the literature review to inform conversations with the stakeholders identified in subsequent subtasks about the types of projects that could be considered eligible for funding under the Transit Transformation program. The findings will be summarized in a memorandum.

¹ Feedback can be found in Appendix C of the *Destination 2050* Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Subtask 1.2 Conduct Meetings with Transit Authorities

MPO staff will schedule and conduct workshops with representatives from the MBTA, MWRTA, and CATA to gather feedback on the types of projects that could be included in the Transit Transformation program and to discuss the eligibility of projects currently in the organizations' project universes.

Subtask 1.3 Conduct a Workshop with the Regional Transportation Advisory Council

MPO staff will schedule and conduct a workshop meeting with representatives from the Regional Transportation Advisory Council and the public to gather feedback on the types of projects that could be included in the Transit Transformation program and potential program scoring criteria. Additionally, MPO staff may discuss the eligibility of current projects within the existing MPO project universe.

Subtask 1.4 Conduct a Workshop with MPO Board Members

MPO staff will schedule and conduct a workshop meeting with members of the MPO board to gather feedback on the types of projects that could be included in the Transit Transformation program and potential program scoring criteria. Additionally, MPO staff may discuss the eligibility of current projects within the existing MPO project universe.

Task 2 Develop Transit Transformation Program

Based on the findings from the literature review and feedback received through the various engagement events during the initial development process in Task 1, MPO staff will develop a plan for the Transit Transformation program that includes a set of proposed methodologies to administer, identify, evaluate, and select projects in the investment program.

Subtask 2.1 Develop a Model for Program Administration

MPO staff will develop a model for administering the Transit Transformation program, including the following components:

- Definition of eligible projects
- Entities eligible for project funding and partnership models
- Plan for developing project universe
- Application process and related materials

Subtask 2.2 Develop Project Evaluation Criteria and Process

MPO staff will establish a project evaluation process, including eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, and a rubric for evaluating projects that incorporates *Destination 2050's* Equity, Safety, Mobility and Reliability, Access and Connectivity, Resiliency, and Clean Air and Healthy Communities goals.

Additionally, program guidance for the administration of program funds will be developed in coordination with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

Products of Task 2

Memorandum about the proposed Transit Transformation program

Task 3 Present Proposed Program to the MPO

Subtask 3.1 Present Draft Program to the MPO Board

MPO staff will present the proposed Transit Transformation investment program to the MPO board. This presentation will include the recommended model for program administration, including project evaluation criteria and process for this program. MPO staff will lead a discussion with the board to gather feedback and to further define the direction of the investment program.

Subtask 3.2 Refine Draft Transit Transformation Program

MPO staff will refine the Transit Transformation investment program, incorporating the board's feedback.

Subtask 3.3 Present Final Program to the MPO Board

MPO staff will present a summary of the final Transit Transformation investment program to the MPO board. This presentation will include the refined project intake, strategies for program outreach, project assessment, and partnership models for this program.

Given the schedule for this study (see Exhibit 1), during February and March 2024, MPO staff will use the refined methodology developed in Task 3 to recommend projects for funding in the Transit Transformation investment program in the FFYs 2025–29 TIP.

Products of Task 3

Two presentations to MPO board

Exhibit 2
ESTIMATED COST
Transit Transformation Program

Direct Salary and Overhead **\$34,246**

Task	Person-Weeks by Pay Grade							Direct Salary	Overhead (119.34%)	Total Cost
	M-1	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2	P-1	Total			
1. Literature Review and Stakeholder Engagement	0.1	0.3	0.0	1.4	2.6	0.9	5.3	\$7,249	\$8,651	\$15,900
2. Develop Transit Transformation Program	0.2	0.3	0.5	1.4	2.6	0.3	5.4	\$7,718	\$9,211	\$16,929
3. Present Proposed Program to the MPO	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.5	\$646	\$771	\$1,417
Total	0.4	0.6	0.5	3.0	5.4	1.1	11.1	\$15,613	\$18,633	\$34,246

Other Direct Costs **\$0**

TOTAL COST **\$34,246**

Funding
MPO Combined PL and 5303 #118967

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) operates its programs, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency), be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives federal assistance. Related federal nondiscrimination laws administered by the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, or both, prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, and disability. The Boston Region MPO considers these protected populations in its Title VI Programs, consistent with federal interpretation and administration. In addition, the Boston Region MPO provides meaningful access to its programs, services, and activities to individuals with limited English proficiency, in compliance with U.S. Department of Transportation policy and guidance on federal Executive Order 13166.

The Boston Region MPO also complies with the Massachusetts Public Accommodation Law, M.G.L. c 272 sections 92a, 98, 98a, which prohibits making any distinction, discrimination, or restriction in admission to, or treatment in a place of public accommodation based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or ancestry. Likewise, the Boston Region MPO complies with the Governor's Executive Order 526, section 4, which requires that all programs, activities, and services provided, performed, licensed, chartered, funded, regulated, or contracted for by the state shall be conducted without unlawful discrimination based on race, color, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, disability, veteran's status (including Vietnam-era veterans), or background.

A complaint form and additional information can be obtained by contacting the MPO or at http://www.bostonmpo.org/mpo_non_discrimination. 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

By Telephone:

857.702.3700 (voice)

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- **Relay Using TTY or Hearing Carry-over:** 800.439.2370
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