

4. Current Regional Practices

a. MetroFuture

Adopted by the MAPC in 2008, [MetroFuture](#) is the regional plan for growth and development for the people living and working in the 101 communities of Metro Boston. It includes a detailed smart growth plan for development and preservation in the region, an implementation strategy to achieve the plan's goals, and a constituency of 'plan builders' who are committed to implementing the plan. MetroFuture is a transformative and sustainable plan that will improve equity among residents, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and improve quality of life.

Thirteen implementation strategies represent a comprehensive approach to achieving the MetroFuture vision. The recommendations include short-and long-term action steps for planning, policy and spending changes at every level of government, along with steps that can be taken by the private sector and even by individual households across the region.

One of MetroFuture's 65 specific goals is for people to choose to walk for short trips. To meet that goal, the implementation strategies include many recommendations around building communities where more homes, shops, and jobs are accessible by walking, as well as some recommendations specifically targeted at pedestrian infrastructure. Most of these recommendations are contained in the MetroFuture strategy to Coordinate Transportation Alternatives. The following six MetroFuture recommendations promote pedestrian access:

- Create dedicated lane capacity for transit and alternative modes
Bus, pedestrian, and bicycle service need dedicated corridors and networks if they are to compete with the single occupancy vehicle.
- Incorporate "Complete Street" best practices in roadway development and design efforts
The region needs to implement roadway design best practices that will foster walking, improve safety, and enhance community character.
- Stabilize and coordinate funding sources for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and programs
The region needs to bolster support for pedestrian and bicycle programs, both to create physical facilities and to create the "professional infrastructure"⁶ necessary to develop high quality projects.
- Maintain and manage bicycle and pedestrian facilities and traffic as full-fledged transportation linkages
Like all other transportation infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle facilities must be maintained and managed so that they operate safely and efficiently. In addition, pedestrian concerns are addressed in the strategy to Improve City Life and School Quality, as part of a set of recommendations designed to improve urban quality of life.

⁶ "Professional infrastructure" refers to the capacity of the region's engineering and construction community (private firms, public agencies, and individuals) to design, bid, and construct pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

The Boston Region's Pedestrian Transportation Plan

- Increase bicycle, pedestrian, and transit accessibility and safety
Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure must be safe and well-maintained, particularly in denser urban areas.

Building healthy habits in children is one of the goals of the MetroFuture strategy to Support Healthy Families. This includes educating them about pedestrian safety in schools, and improving pedestrian infrastructure so more children can safely walk or bicycle to schools, as detailed in the following recommendation:

- Expand programs designed to foster walking and biking to school
This includes expanded funding for the Safe Routes to Schools program, as well as continued study of the factors that influence mode choice by children and their parents.

b. MPO Policies

The Boston MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) has defined policies to guide its planning and programming processes. The following MPO policies pertain to improving the pedestrian realm:

- Assist agencies and communities in planning and implementing projects that provide bicycle and pedestrian routes, networks, and facilities.
- Encourage, through planning and programming, transportation choices that promote a healthy lifestyle, such as walking and bicycling.
- Support designs and fund projects and programs that address safety problems and enhance safe travel for all system users. This includes designs and projects that encourage motorists, public transportation riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians to share the transportation network safely.
- Make transportation investments where existing or planned development will encourage public transportation use, walking, and bicycling.

c. TIP/MPO Process

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is an intermodal program of transportation improvements produced annually by the Boston MPO. The TIP serves as the implementation arm of the long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) by incrementally programming funds for improvements over a four-year period. It programs federal-aid funds for transit projects, and state and federal-aid funds for roadway projects, which include bicycle and pedestrian projects. The MPO is responsible for the development and approval processes of the TIP.

Once endorsed by the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the TIP is incorporated into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which is distributed to the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and Environmental Protection Agency for certification before the end of each federal fiscal year (September 30).

There are six types of roadway projects that can be funded in the TIP, one of which is Bicycle/Pedestrian. Walkways, paths, and trails are examples of Pedestrian projects.

The Boston Region's Pedestrian Transportation Plan

Pedestrian projects are categorized as new construction, an improvement, or other. The evaluation of all roadway projects is based on seven categories: Condition, Safety, Mobility and Operations, Environmental Justice, Environment, Land Use, and Economic Development. The evaluation of each roadway project is based on information assembled by the MPO in its Project Information Form (PIF).

For all projects, not just pedestrian, the proponent is expected to identify pedestrian needs that are being addressed and how the project is expected to benefit pedestrians. Pedestrian needs are specifically addressed in five of the seven criteria:

- Condition
The extent to which pedestrian provisions are included in the project; specifically, whether sidewalks are present on one side or on both sides of the roadway. If the project is a bridge project, determining whether pedestrian accommodations currently exist.
- Safety
The number of total crashes involving pedestrians.
- Mobility and Operations
How the proposed project provides multimodal elements, such as access to pedestrian connections or pedestrian access to transit.
- Environment
How the project relates to community character. For example, is the project located in a pedestrian-oriented area?
- Land Use
Describe what improvements are in the project for improving pedestrian access.
- Although they should, the Environmental Justice and Economic Development criteria currently do not specifically address pedestrian issues.

Each criterion is numerically evaluated and scored by MPO staff and the relative scores are presented to the MPO when determining TIP projects. The report, [Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\) Process at the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization – An Instructional Handbook for Roadway Project Proponents](#), (January 2009) describes this process in more detail.

d. Massachusetts Department of Transportation Project Development & Design Guidebook

Released in 2006, the Project Development and Design Guidebook takes a flexible and accommodating approach to the construction and design of roadways in Massachusetts. By integrating multi-modal planning and design into every chapter, the Guidebook strives to support a transportation system providing seamless, functional and safe access for all users. In addition, this Guidebook provides direction to the design of Complete Streets.

The Guidebook mainstreams non-motorized planning into the project development process and ensures that the needs of non-motorized users remain integral to project planning and design. The needs of, and the methods to accommodate non-motorized modes of transportation are not segregated into their own sections but are addressed in every chapter of the Guidebook. For example, pedestrian accommodation and design are specifically included in intersection and geometric design, interchanges,

bridges and work zones. Chapter 3, Basic Design Controls, and Chapter 5, Cross-Section and Roadside Elements, have sections which specifically address pedestrian design. Chapter 11, Shared Use Path and Greenways, and Chapter 16, Traffic Calming and Traffic Management, address trails and traffic calming respectively.

e. Roadway and Bridge Design

As part of the process for designing, constructing and implementing state funded roadway and bridge projects, a public hearing is held when 25% design plans have been submitted. Comments received at the hearing are reviewed and considered for incorporation in the 75% design plans. Questions and concerns regarding pedestrian access, such as the inclusion of sidewalks, are required to be addressed at the 25 percent design stage.

f. Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)

The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) requires that proponents of projects meet certain size and/or impact thresholds. The intent of MEPA review is to inform project proponents and state agencies of potential adverse environmental impacts while a proposal is still in the planning stages. MEPA is a uniform system of environmental impact review to reduce the potential for harm to the environment from certain development, construction or other projects. MAPC is responsible for reviewing and providing feedback on proposed projects that are submitted as part of the MEPA process. MAPC strongly advocates for the inclusion of sidewalks and pedestrian connections, signage, and an overall pedestrian-friendly environment as part of their MEPA review.

g. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an environmental analysis for any major Federal action. The NEPA project development process includes balanced transportation decision making by taking into account the potential impacts on the human and natural environment and the public's need for safe and efficient transportation. Federal-aid highway projects require a NEPA analysis.