



TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 15, 2025

TO: Boston Region MPO

FROM: Annette Demchur, Director of Policy and Planning

RE: Public Review Period Policy for MPO Certification Documents

This memorandum outlines policies and requirements for conducting public review periods for the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) certification documents and amendments to these documents. These policies are described in [Chapter 4](#) and [Appendix A](#) of the MPO's Public Engagement Plan (PEP). The MPO's public review policies are derived from Title 23, Section 450 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) ([§450.316](#)).

1 PUBLIC REVIEW PERIODS FOR CERTIFICATION DOCUMENTS

Public review periods and policies for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) are set by the PEP as an interpretation of federal public participation regulations. CFR 23§450.316 states that the PEP must include public review policies for the LRTP and TIP that provide “adequate time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed [plans].”

Development of a new PEP or amendments to the existing PEP require (under CFR 23§450.316) a minimum of 45 days for public review, and Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Authority approval.

The current PEP seeks to meet the above CFR requirements by requiring multiweek public review periods for certification documents prior to their endorsement. For amendments to certification documents (which are changes that are deemed substantial, in comparison to smaller administrative modifications), the PEP also requires multiweek public review periods, excepting the UPWP.

1.1 Public Review Period Modifications

The PEP makes provisions for a reduction in the length of amendment public review periods or waiving the review period altogether for the TIP and LRTP

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under special circumstances. The intention of these provisions is to prevent regular circumventing of public review periods, which are essential to maintaining the transparency, public accessibility, and accountability of the transportation planning decision-making process. The review periods provide unique space for members of the public to share their perspectives directly with decision-makers on issues that might otherwise have limited public participation opportunities. The PEP provisions for modified review periods are explicitly designed to allow for flexibility *under extreme or emergency circumstances*. Per the PEP, *extreme circumstances would include circumstances “such as an unforeseen regulatory requirement,” and emergency circumstances would include “a need to take immediate action to protect public safety or take advantage of an extraordinary funding opportunity.”*

Although not explicitly stated in the PEP, a 15-day minimum public review period, reduced for extreme circumstances, is intended to ensure adequate time for public review and comment submission. These comments should ideally be posted for review and shared with board members for at least one week, but at a minimum 48 hours, before the meeting where the document is to be endorsed. If a document is released for public comment at one MPO meeting and voted for endorsement at the next (two weeks later), this allows for a maximum public comment period of only six calendar days to meet our goal to post the materials one week prior to the next MPO meeting, or a maximum of 11 days to meet Open Meeting Law's 48-hour advance posting requirement. These periods would be even shorter if the board requests modifications to the documents before posting or if a large number of comments requires processing before posting.

Table 1 outlines the review schedule and minimum requirements for public review periods for certification documents. The table also includes the policies and regulations from which these schedules are derived.

Table 1
Public Review Schedule for Certification Documents

	TIP	UPWP	LRTP	PEP
Full document review period	21 days minimum	21 days minimum	30 days minimum	45 days minimum
Mandate	PEP/MPO	PEP/MPO	PEP/MPO	Federal

LRTP = Long-Range Transportation Plan. MPO = Metropolitan Planning Organization. PEP = Public Engagement Plan. TIP = Transportation Improvement Program. UPWP = Unified Planning Work Program.
Source: MPO Public Engagement Plan and Code of Federal Regulations

Table 2 outlines the review schedule and minimum requirements for public review periods for amendments to certification documents. The table also includes the policies and regulations from which these schedules are derived.

Table 2
Public Review Schedule for Amendments to Certification Documents

	TIP	UPWP	L RTP	PEP
Amendment review period	21 days minimum	Not required	30 days minimum	45 days minimum
Mandate	PEP/MPO	PEP/MPO	PEP/MPO	Federal
Reduce or waive?	Extreme circumstances: 15 days minimum Emergency circumstances: waive	At committee recommendation and board discretion	Extreme circumstances: 15 days minimum Emergency circumstances: waive	Not allowed per federal regulation

L RTP = Long-Range Transportation Plan. MPO = Metropolitan Planning Organization. PEP = Public Engagement Plan. TIP = Transportation Improvement Program. UPWP = Unified Planning Work Program.
Source: MPO Public Engagement Plan and Code of Federal Regulations

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For additional information or to file a civil rights complaint, visit www.bostonmpo.org/mpo_non_discrimination.

To request this information in a different language or format, please contact:

Boston Region MPO Title VI Specialist

10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150

Boston, MA 02116

Phone: 857.702.3700

Email: civilrights@ctps.org

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