



**ARUP**  
**Marina Bay Sands Resort**  
**Singapore**



**Tetra Tech**  
**The 93 Fast 14 Design Team**  
**Medford, MA**



**TranSystems Corporation**  
**Route 24 Interchange 8B**  
**Fall River/Freetown, MA**



**Weidlinger Associates, Inc.**  
**Museum of Fine Arts, Art of**  
**the Americas Wing**  
**Boston, MA**



**Weston & Sampson**  
**Boston Police Department:**  
**Roxbury Neighborhood Sta-**  
**tion**  
**Boston Redevelopment Au-**  
**thority and Public Facilities**  
**Department**  
**Boston, MA**

**2012 ACECMA**  
**Engineering Excellence Awards Winners**

# Strategic Plan

## Fiscal Year 2013 to 2016



American Council of Engineering Companies  
of Massachusetts

**American Council of Engineering  
Companies/Massachusetts**

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**ACEC/MA Strategic Plan  
Fiscal Year 2013 to 2016**

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# ACEC/MA STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015

APPROVED BY BOARD NOVEMBER XX, 2012

## INTRODUCTION A FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION

On June 8, 2012 the American Council of Engineering Companies of Massachusetts (ACEC/MA) Leadership Team (Directors, Committee Chairs, interested parties and The Engineering Center (TEC) staff) convened to plot a course for the next 12 to 36 months that are consistent with our Core Purpose, Core Values, and Vision. This Strategic Plan is the culmination of seven years of strategic planning efforts, continued alignment with ACEC National and was approved by the ACEC/MA Board of Directors on November XX, 2012.

ACEC/MA represents members firms and their employees in the states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Thus, the use of ACEC/MA throughout this plan is intended to refer to members in both states.

This ACEC/MA Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015 was developed to be consistent with ACEC/MA's mission to be the “**voice of the consulting engineering industry and the advocate for the promotion and protection of our business interests.**” Specifically, the three Strategic Goals outlined in this plan support ACEC/MA's Vision Statement and Core Ideology by focusing on three overarching objectives:

- **ADVOCACY** – including promoting qualifications based selection (QBS), single point of audit, and eliminating salary and overhead caps; maximizing contracting out of designer services; participating on commissions, committees, task forces, and working groups that affect all client sectors (transportation, buildings and facilities, environmental affairs, and private development); taking legislative action in support of the engineering community; and initiating a pro-active marketing and public relations program to promote ACEC/MA and the engineering profession.
- **FINANCIAL STRENGTH** – continuing to build financial strength by budgeting over the next three to five years a budget value of at-least 3% of dues revenues to be added to our financial reserves with the ultimate goal to build up to one year's operating expenses (approximately \$400,000) in our reserve fund.
- **MEMBERSHIP** – demonstrating value each year to our ACEC/MA member firms through advocacy, programs, events, training, business forums, and committee opportunities in support of all client sectors.

From the outset of ACEC/MA's strategic planning effort there has been consensus that financial sustainability of the organization is paramount. Financial stability, financial predictability, and a solid financial foundation provides ACEC/MA with the strength required to truly be the voice of the engineering community and demonstrate value to all ACEC/MA member firms. However, financial strength is best achieved by demonstrating value to our member firms.

The ACEC/MA Strategic Plan 2012-2015 provides the framework and foundation for implementation that can be built upon in the future. The Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document, in which committee goals developed as part of their yearly Work Plans are reviewed annually and tied to the three strategic goals and action items outlined in the Strategic Plan. Action items should be reviewed annually and revised, as needed, as part of the annual strategic planning conference tradition, giving the leadership team the necessary flexibility to respond to new conditions while remaining focused on the strategic goals. This combination of a clear focus and flexible execution is the essence of the Strategic Plan.



# **ACEC/MA STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015**

## **WHAT WE DO OUR CORE PURPOSE**

To promote the business environment by providing advocacy and resources that enhance and advise the engineering industry.

## **WHAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO OUR CORE VALUES**

Creating a sustainable world through:

- Applying science and technology to societal challenges,
- Protecting the health, safety and welfare of the public,
- Conducting ethical business practices, and
- Stewarding sustainability in the natural and built environments.

## **WHERE WE ARE GOING OUR VISION**

To lead with our knowledge and expertise and to be the voice of the engineering industry for the benefit of society and the natural and built environment.

## **WHO WE ARE**

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Massachusetts (ACEC/MA) is the business trade association of the Massachusetts and Rhode Island engineering community. Our members include over 100 firms, representing more than 6,000 employees.

ACEC/MA member firms design the building, environmental, transportation, educational, and recreation infrastructure, which allows the residents of Massachusetts and Rhode Island to be able to drink clean water, take advantage of new technologies, and travel safely and efficiently. Founded in 1960, ACEC/MA is dedicated to assisting its member firms in achieving higher professional, ethical, business, and economic standards to provide quality consulting engineering services for their clients and the public.

ACEC/MA member firms are the leading engineering firms in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Our member firms range in size from single employee entrepreneurs to the corporate headquarters of international firms. About sixty percent of our members have 30 or fewer local employees.

At the June 2012 planning session the leadership team reviewed the three strategic goals from the previously adopted plan and felt they still reflected the appropriate direction for ACEC/MA to pursue. Several aspects of those goals had been achieved, were in process or still need to be developed. Some of them required minor modifications to reflect events that have occurred over time. Those changes are reflected in this updated Strategic Plan.



# ACEC/MA STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015

## STRATEGIC GOAL #1

(Champion: President Elect/Executive Director)

### MAINTAIN RECOGNITION BY ALL ACEC/MA MEMBERS AS THE ADVOCATE FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THEIR BUSINESS INTERESTS

**DESCRIPTION:** ACEC/MA serves as the primary business advocate for the engineering profession in the arenas of government, public and private sector clients, affiliated professional organizations, and the general public. Advocacy occurs in many forms; the enhancement of the business interests of ACEC/MA member firms; the enhancement and improvement of the public image of engineering firms and the profession; and the enhancement of partnering relationships through participation on commissions, boards, and appointed positions. By committing to broad, strategic participation in the public and private sectors, ACEC/MA can achieve a high level of recognition and influence.

**DESIRED OUTCOMES:** ACEC/MA should be considered as the voice of the engineering industry, advocating for its' member firms and society; and providing leadership in improving the quality of life for the public good while protecting the business interests of its' members.

#### ACTION PLAN:

##### Action Item 1 – Strengthen Internal Advocacy

###### **Key Steps:**

1. Track and report on the achievements of all of our committees at the Board meetings; Board liaisons responsible for updating respective committees.
2. Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs, Board Liaisons and Group Directors communicate and coordinate their activities with the Programs Committee.
3. Communicate and share the information with other committees by posting timely information on the website, promoting more participation in regular Group Director meeting/conference calls, and copying the appropriate Committee Chairs/Board Liaisons/Group Directors on emails.
4. Continue quarterly “*What have we done for you lately?*” one page summary list of accomplishments, distributed to member firms via *Insights*, posted on website and available at programs/events. Input by Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs.
5. Continue a “Seat at the Table” in *Insights* highlighting one committee in each issue.
6. Publish ACEC/MAttters, our on-line newsletter, consistently on the first Tuesday of the month.
7. Develop a specialized strategy for each group/committee and document it in an annual Work Plan. Define how each Committee/Forum adds values to membership in an annual Work Plan.
8. Meet with firm representatives to present ACEC values and to request more involvement from them and their employees.
9. Streamline email correspondences to a combined email which will be sent on a consistent schedule.



## **ACEC/MA STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015**

10. Consider an event for Committee/Forum chairs getting together to better understand what other Committees/Forum chairs are doing.

**Lead:**

1. Committee Chairs through the Group Directors and Board Liaisons.
2. President in secondary role.

**Results/Outcome:**

1. Active participation at Committee meetings and Group Director conference calls/meetings by Board Liaisons.
2. More effective, consistent, and efficient Group Director meetings and email distributions with participation by Board Liaisons.
3. Member firms support participation of their employees in participating on groups/ committees.
4. Quarterly communications via *Insights* articles.
5. Committee members more aware of ACEC/MA activities.
6. More streamlined regular email communication.

**Time Frame:**

1. Regular meetings with groups/committees.
2. Quarterly meetings and communications with Group Directors and Committee Chairs.
3. Ongoing with annual updates.

### **Action Item 2 – Create a Public Relations Campaign based on our Vision and Communicate the Vision**

**Key Steps:**

1. Evaluate the role and responsibilities of the Communications Committee by creating a Work Plan that supports the Action Item.
2. Network with New England Member Organizations to assess if similar needs/topics for public relations campaign.
3. Actively pursue stories/issues and respond to the Press.
4. Prepare and issue one press release each year (can be integrated with *Insights*).
5. Investigate use of social media such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Continue Twitter presence.

**Lead:**

1. Communications Committee.



## **ACEC/MA STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015**

2. Committee Chair/Co-Chair, Board Liaisons and Group Directors.

***Results/Outcome:***

1. Improved external communication with public articles and brochures, etc.
2. Improved public perception of ACEC/MA and engineers and land surveyors.
3. Increased involvement of younger generation in ACEC/MA programs and committees.

***Time Frame:***

1. FY13

### **Action Item 3 – Broaden Interactions with Non-transportation State Agencies**

***Key Steps:***

1. Hold a partnering workshop with partnering co-chairs to learn from the successes of TALC and MassDOT partnering.
2. Develop a targeted program to interact with the Executive Branch specifically Secretary and Commissioner level appointees. Client Sector Groups should develop this list, which may include:
  - Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
  - Department of Environmental Protection
  - Division of Capital Asset Management
  - Department of Conservation and Recreation
  - Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
  - Massachusetts Historical Commission

***Lead:***

1. Environmental Affairs Committee (EAC), Partnering Chairs (non-transportation groups).

***Results/Outcome:***

1. Executive Branch seeks out ACEC/MA for advice and opinions.
2. Trusted advisor to public officials and business leaders.
3. Free and easy communication with the Executive Branch.
4. Develop a core group of state environmental agencies that meets with ACEC/MA on a quarterly basis.

***Time Frame:***

1. FY13



## **ACEC/MA STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015**

### **Action Item 4 – Establish, Expand and Strengthen Partnerships with other Professional Organizations**

#### ***Key Steps:***

1. Identify key partners in each public policy area including other TEC members (additional associations for coordination: NEWWA, NEWEA, WTS, AIA and BSA, CIM, BSLA, USGBC, NSPE, MMA etc.).
2. Cosponsor events with key partners and broadly advertise events.
3. Enhance ACEC/MA members' participation and/or presence at each event. Outside groups seek input from ACEC/MA.
4. Communicate to membership.
5. More organized involvement in MMA by discussing more municipal regulatory concerns.

#### ***Lead:***

1. Executive Committee

#### ***Results/Outcome:***

1. Increased recognition of ACEC/MA to the business and engineering industry.
2. Increased ACEC/MA membership and participation in events.
3. Strength in numbers.
4. Leverage net revenues by joining financial forces with other organization.

#### ***Time Frame:***

1. FY13

### **Action Item 5-Be recognized as the engineering communities legislative advocate for the promotion and protection of their business interests.**

#### ***Key Steps:***

1. Continue to reaffirm and promote Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) as the procurement method for professional services.
2. Develop a QBS Education Plan (including additional presentations at MMA programs).
3. Broaden interaction with all state agencies on QBS.
4. Initiate, advocate and help pass legislation to improve the business environment for engineering companies.
5. Establish separate website for QBS in Massachusetts that has a link to ACEC/MA website.

#### ***Lead:***





## **ACEC/MA STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015**

1. Government Affairs Committee/QBS Committee.

**Results/Outcome:**

1. Become the spokesperson for the engineering industry.
2. Have QBS Education Plan developed.
3. Educate municipalities and state agencies about procurement via QBS.
4. All municipalities procure engineering services via QBS.
5. File Legislation to require all state agencies and municipalities to utilize QBS for professional engineering and land surveying services.

**Time Frame:**

1. Website FY13; other items FY14.

### **STRATEGIC GOAL #2**

(Champion: Senior Vice President)

#### **ENHANCE THE FINANCIAL STRENGTH OF ACEC/MA**

**DESCRIPTION:** Financial strength and stability will allow ACEC/MA to maintain its leadership role in providing business advocacy and programs for the member firms.

**DESIRED OUTCOMES:** Diversify revenue sources (sponsorships), meet or exceed national Political Action Committee (PAC) goals, higher attendance at events/programs, increase membership to increase dues revenue, maintain stable and profitable budget, and maintain a reserve account equal to the yearly operating expenses.

**ACTION PLAN:**

**Action Item 1 – Financial Partnership w/ Vendors**

**Key Steps:**

1. Continue to market program sponsorships to affiliate members using the system established in 2010.
2. Approach vendors to become affiliate members/event sponsors/ training providers.
3. Continue to promote sponsorship program for ACEC/MAttters, available only to Affiliate members.

**Lead:**

1. Executive Committee/Membership Committee/Program Committee.

**Results/Outcome:**

1. Hit revenue targets in FY 2013 budget (\$5,000 for program sponsorship; \$1,000 for ACEC/MAttters).



**ACEC/MA  
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2. Increase involvement of Affiliate Members.

***Time Frame:***

1. FY13 and ongoing in the future.

## **ACEC/MA STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015**

### **Action Item 2 - Generate monthly financials that accurately reflect the current financial position of ACEC/MA so that there are no year-end “surprises.”**

#### ***Key Steps:***

1. Have the Executive Committee work with TEC to develop procedures for accurately reflecting revenues and expenses (accrual vs. cash basis).
2. Continue to carefully monitor TEC budget to actual.
3. Timely and accurate monthly reporting; Investigate ways to streamline process.
4. Develop budget for all events (TEC Financial Staff) for approval by Executive Committee. Review historic data for predicting number of attendees.
5. Track and review change order requests on a timely basis.

#### ***Lead:***

1. Executive Committee with TEC Financial Staff.

#### ***Results/Outcome:***

1. Accurate statement of monthly financial position.

### **Action Item 3 – Increase Participation in Events to raise funds, provide exposure, participation, and to mentor next generation**

#### ***Key Steps:***

1. Find out why events/programs are and are not successful – continue to provide Survey Monkey evaluations after each event and analyze results. Consider reducing a number of events/programs by eliminating less popular and less profitable events/programs.
2. Send Save the Date post cards via regular mail for major programs.
3. Continue to coordinate programming with other committees through the Group Directors/Board Liaisons meetings and following the Program/Event Coordination Policy.
4. Consistent and timely delivery of notification of all programs through ACEC/MAttters.
5. Review program announcements and include information on the learning objectives of the program.
6. Contact past Emerging Leader and Odyssey Programs participants to get them involved. Consider Emerging Leader and/or Odyssey reunions.
7. Educate membership on ACEC/MA Leadership Education programs. Prepare a summary of programs available to all members. Review website content and update as appropriate.
8. Investigate “public employee” rate for events to attract more attendees.
9. When co-sponsoring events with other group(s), develop Memorandum of Understanding of sharing of profits/expenses during early planning stages of the event.



## **ACEC/MA STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015**

10. More collaborative programming efforts among Committees/Forums.

**Lead:**

1. Executive Committee with joint participation with Program, Engineering Excellence Awards (EEA), Business Practice Forum, Membership and Leadership Education Committees.

**Results/Outcome:**

1. Document and create guidelines for future programs and events.
2. Successful Program Sponsorship Program implemented.
3. All notifications at least one-month in advance with “save-the-date” posted on website and monthly ACEC/MAttters communication.
4. Consistent schedule of ACEC/MAttters communication, consistent template with more concise and short text. Goal is to send out 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month.
5. Increased participation in programs and events by 10% which will lead to more income and public relations.

**Time Frame:**

1. FY13 and ongoing in the future.

### **Action Item 4 – Complete Independent Audit of ACEC/MA Finances**

**Key Steps**

1. Appoint audit Committee.
2. Engage accounting firm.
3. Review audit findings and take necessary response actions.

**Lead:**

1. Audit Committee, TEC financial staff.

**Results/Outcome**

1. Completed financial audit.



**ACEC/MA**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015**

**STRATEGIC GOAL #3**  
(Champion: Vice President)

**MAINTAIN, DIVERSIFY AND GROW THE MEMBERSHIP OF ACEC/MA**

**DESCRIPTION:** The ACEC/MA goal of expanding member firms by at least two percent and member headcount by three percent (three-year annual averages) is in harmony with ACEC National's goals. Growth is important to maintain a healthy, viable organization. By adding new firms and new categories of firms, we will increase organizational diversity and enhance our programs, legislative initiatives, and pool of organizational volunteers. Additionally, maintenance of existing members leads to safeguarding existing dues revenues and better word of mouth testimonials by existing members to gain new members.

**DESIRED OUTCOME:** Increase in membership, membership diversity, revenue, and strengthen ACEC/MA.

**ACTION PLAN:**

**Action Item 1 – Attract more members to the organization**

**Key Steps:**

1. Continue development of a profile of the existing membership.
2. Evaluate and update target membership list. Develop a recruitment plan for the top 10 potential member firms.
3. Consider bringing potential members to events to help show the value of membership.
4. Commit to a Quarterly President's Letter in *Insights*.
5. Utilize "What have we done for you lately?" in showing member value.
6. Explore possibility of creating a "university" membership category.
7. Challenge each Board Member to recruit one new member firm on an annual basis.
8. Develop a simple fee chart to develop quotes for new Member Firms.
9. Review membership portion of ACEC/MA website to see if recruitment materials are available. Provide updated text/materials as appropriate.
10. Review lists of other organizations and/or public information for new leads, including:
  - State Office of Diversity website.
  - Boston Business Journal to find new firm filings.
11. Solicit testimonials from different types/sizes of firms. Publish on website and print materials, if appropriate.



## **ACEC/MA STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015**

12. Target programs based on firm sizes.
13. Develop more informal events/programs which are easier to attend with more pleasant environment (e.g. restaurants).

***Lead:***

1. Membership Committee, with support from Board.

***Results/Outcome:***

1. Five new MEP and/or Structural Engineering Firms (non-civil).
2. Five new Civil Engineering Firms.
3. Five new Affiliate Members.
4. Quarterly President's Letters in *Insights*.

***Time Frame:***

1. FY13 and ongoing in the future.

### **Action Item 2 – Enhance Participation from Existing Member Firms**

***Key Steps:***

1. Develop a “Tool Kit” for Member Firm Representatives.
2. Determine how to expand involvement of Affiliate Member firms.
3. Host a new member reception in the fall. Invite Board and Committee Chairs to participate.
4. Have Committee Work Plans available in a notebook at The Engineering Center (TEC) for all to review.
5. Post organization chart in networking area of all programs.
6. Use Membership profile to assess less active firms and reach out to those firms.
7. Consider having new member name tags in a different color at all events.
8. Consider younger member event, possibly a social event or a community service event.
9. Meet with firm representatives and request more participation from member firms.
10. Offer more smaller education courses by breaking out a portion of Leadership Education Courses (Genesis and Emerging Leaders).

***Lead:***

1. Membership Committee with assistance from the Board, Leadership Education Committee and Program Committee.



## **ACEC/MA STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015**

### ***Results/Outcome***

1. Higher participation by member firms on ACEC/MA Committees.
2. All Work Plans have been completed by Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs.

### ***Time Frame:***

1. Submission of Work Plans by September 1, 2012.
2. Distribution of all Work Plans by December 1, 2012.

### **Action 3 – Retain Existing Member Firms**

#### ***Key Steps:***

1. Develop press releases and educational materials outlining benefits of being ACEC/MA member.
2. Continue implementation of the Ambassador Program. Use membership profile to target firms for Ambassador visits.
3. Review, modify, and develop programs that meet Member needs and interests.

#### ***Lead:***

1. Membership Committee with assistance from the Board.

#### ***Results/Outcome:***

1. Increased participation (in terms of variety of people and firms), in events/programs.
2. Achieve goal of a net increase in member firms.

#### ***Time Frame:***

- 1 FY 13

