

# **MPO Meeting Minutes**

## **Draft Memorandum for the Record**

### **Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting**

#### **July 17, 2025, Meeting**

10:00 AM–12:22 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

David Mohler, Chair, representing Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

#### **Decisions**

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreed to the following:

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of May 15, 2025
- Approve the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment Three
- Endorse the FFY 2026 UPWP Document

#### **Meeting Agenda**

##### **1. Introductions**

See attendance on page 12.

##### **2. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT***

There was none.

##### **3. Executive Director's Report—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)***

T. Teich welcomed two new staff members and congratulated another on a new position:

- Ibbu Quraishi, Assistant Planner in the MPO Activities Group
- Carmen Baskauf, Transportation Planner in the Multimodal Planning and Design Group
- Roger Roy, Model Network Specialist in the Travel Model Demand Group

T. Teich announced her invitation to an MPO and Department of Transportation (DOT) peer exchange in St. Paul, Minnesota, on behalf of the Boston Region MPO. The event was sponsored by the Association for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) and

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Center for Environmental Excellence.

T. Teich stated that the purpose of the exchange was to discuss strategies for improving collaboration between MPOs and DOTs on major projects like highway construction and transit lines.

T. Teich stated that the deputy chair of the MPO, John Bechard of MassDOT, will also be joining as a representative for MassDOT.

T. Teich highlighted an article in the American Planning Association's (APA) Massachusetts Planning summer 2025 publication by staff member Kyle Casiglio "Clearing the Path Toward Safer Bike Lanes." She also congratulated Melisa Tintocalis, who was featured in the same publication for receiving APA's Economic Development Division's Donald E. Hunter award for excellence in economic development.

T. Teich stated that the Boston Region MPO Vision Zero Action Plan's 30-day comment period is active through July 27, though engagement will continue all summer, and she asked board members and other attendees to help publicize the effort.

T. Teich provided an overview on the upcoming agenda for the day's meeting.

T. Teich stated that the next meeting will be held on August 7 and that she expects an update on the Community Advisory Council launch will be shared then.

T. Teich stated that the MPO Annual Meeting will be held November 13 at 1:00 PM, and a save-the-date communication had been sent to board members previously.

#### **4. Public Comments**

There were none.

#### **5. Committee Chairs' Reports**

Jen Rowe, City of Boston, shared an update from the June 12, 2025, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee meeting. The committee recommended the full board take on the topic of its role in TIP development.

J. Rowe shared some of the discussion points from the meeting:

- At first several members shared their expectation for the board to take up committee recommendations with thorough scrutiny, closely examining and critiquing the scenario alongside others staff had prepared.

- Another member suggested that the committee refrain from creating any new TIP scenarios that would add or remove specific projects from the scenarios that staff had prepared in advance. This would be in keeping with the committee's current practice.
- Another member suggested that having the committee select a preferred scenario among those prepared by staff helped to move the full board deliberations along by giving the board something to react to and discuss, focusing their attention.
- And finally, another member recalled some full board deliberations before they had the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee lasting 8 to 10 hours. They also suggested that quarterly Readiness Days could be another opportunity for information sharing about project cost and readiness.

J. Rowe stated that the upcoming TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee meeting is July 24, 2025. A discussion of two staff proposals is on the agenda. One proposal is a set of readiness guidelines and the other is an approach to project rescoring. J. Rowe encouraged everyone to attend regardless of official membership in the committee.

J. Rowe stated that staff are offering TIP Office Hours for any member to discuss proposals.

Chris Klem, MassDOT, stated that the UPWP Committee met the previous Thursday and reviewed the three UPWP agenda items, voting unanimously for both action items to be recommended for MPO endorsement.

C. Klem stated that he expects the committee to meet once more before the end of the fiscal year to debrief and look ahead to the FFY 2026 UPWP.

## **6. Action Item: Approval of May 15, 2025, MPO Meeting Minutes**

### ***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

1. May 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

### ***Vote***

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 15, 2025, was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (Tom Bent). The motion carried. The following members abstained: Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Nate Ryan) and the Massachusetts Port Authority (Sarah Lee).

## **7. Action Item: FFY 2025 UPWP Amendment Three—*Olivia Saccocia, MPO Staff***

### ***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

2. Amendment Three Memo ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
  - a. Signed ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
3. Amendment Three Redline ([pdf](#))
4. Amendment Three ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

O. Saccocia explained that amendments to the UPWP are triggered when budget transfers between UPWP tasks are equal to, or greater than 25 percent of the overall task budget. The three items in Amendment Three include budget reallocations, an updated description of the Multimodal Mobility Infrastructure Program, and the addition of two grant awards into the appendix of the document.

O. Saccocia was having technical difficulties, so D. Mohler took over the rest of the presentation.

D. Mohler stated that the budget reallocations are a standard yearly process and consist of staff “balancing the budget.” The net change in line items reduced and increased was zero. A request was made to bring this amendment to a vote. After the vote, D. Mohler noted for the record that two projects were added to the appendix because the MPO staff was awarded additional grants.

### ***Vote***

A motion to waive the public comment period and approve the UPWP Amendment Three was made by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Advisory Board (Brian Kane) and seconded by the MAPC (E. Bourassa). The motion carried.

## **8. FFY 2025 UPWP Administrative Modification—*Olivia Saccocia, MPO Staff***

### ***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

5. Administrative Modification ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

T. Teich presented on behalf of O. Saccocia.

T. Teich explained that minor changes can be made to the UPWP as administrative modifications without a release for public comment or board approval. These changes are still presented to the board, however.

T. Teich stated that \$100,000 of deobligated planning (PL) funds were reallocated to consultant support for Vision Zero from an agency rebranding initiative which is no

longer being moved forward. The consultant's work will include developing a dashboard to visualize crash data, high-injury networks, trends, and countermeasures. The consultant will also assist with updating the Vision Zero Action Plan.

**9. Action Item: FFY 2026 UPWP Document Endorsement—*Olivia Saccocia, MPO Staff***

***Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar***

6. UPWP Executive Summary ([html](#))
7. UPWP Document ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
  - a. Signed ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
8. UPWP Appendices
  - a. Signed ([html](#))

O. Saccocia stated that the FFY 2026 UPWP is set to go into effect October 1.

O. Saccocia stated that a successful 21-day public comment period was conducted and one comment was received. The commenter suggested legalizing single-stair housing for narrow lots, implementing congestion pricing, and building new rapid transit access as part of the Tobin Bridge rebuild, and requested more information about regional rail and Red-Blue Connector projects.

O. Saccocia summarized minor changes made to the document. The majority were formatting fixes and minor language changes made to improve clarity. Also, the name of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council was changed to Community Advisory Council.

***Vote***

A motion to endorse the FFY 2026 UPWP Document, was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane). The motion carried.

**10. Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Update—*Laura Gilmore, Senior Director of Strategic Transit Planning; Laura Brelsford, Assistant General Manager, Systemwide Accessibility; and Sandy Johnston, Deputy Director of Regional Transit Planning***

S. Johnston introduced the agenda for the presentation.

L. Gilmore discussed upcoming areas of focus for the MBTA. These include reinforcing the MBTA's accomplishments and community benefits, communicating costs, and showing where the MBTA is headed.

L. Gilmore discussed how the MBTA was doing business differently and highlighted recent progress and successes:

- Eliminated all 191 speed restrictions on light and heavy rail
- Increased scheduled weekday trips and reduced wait times for riders
- Made 11 stations accessible
- Exceeded hiring goals
- Launched Income Eligible Reduced Fares program
- Passed legislation allowing the use of cameras on buses for enforcing bus lane and bus stop rules

L. Gilmore discussed themes for the future of the MBTA:

- Maintaining and building a safe transit system
- Enhancing service and reliability
- Increasing connectivity
- Addressing threats to the system, focused on resilience
- Building and training a workforce for future needs

L. Gilmore shared some highlights from the MBTA's strategic plan, including the mission of serving the public by providing safe, reliable, and accessible transportation, and the vision of a thriving region enabled by a best-in-class transit system.

L. Gilmore also shared a future vision for service, called Full T Ahead. The focus is on making public transportation the preferred way to travel.

S. Johnston introduced the Program for Mass Transportation (PMT), the MBTA's long-term, priority-setting document with a 25-year outlook. It is an opportunity for the MBTA to highlight progress and priorities in a regularly produced public-facing document. The PMT has statutory requirements:

- To be reviewed by the MBTA Advisory Board
- Shaped and implemented through the Capital Investment Plan
- Developed in consultation with regional transit authorities, executive branch offices in the environmental and housing spheres, MAPC, and other relevant entities
- To be "reviewed not less than every five years"

S. Johnson shared the PMT timeline, including a kickoff in July 2025, public engagement starting in the fall of 2025, and a final work product expected between late 2026 and early 2027.

L. Gilmore provided an overview of the Mobility Integration Plan, which will guide how the MBTA builds connections between modes and providers. She discussed existing and new mobility integration activities. She then shared recommendations to build a more integrated MBTA.

S. Johnston explained how the MBTA coordinates with the MPO, including by having a representative on the MPO board, attending subregional meetings, participating in certification reviews, coordinating Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) and Long-Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs), and collaborating on discretionary grants. Most importantly he stated that the MBTA wants to hear from the MPO and other entities on what they find important.

L. Brelsford discussed ways the MBTA has been advancing accessibility. She showed how station accessibility has increased since the MBTA's creation and the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. She noted that there is significant emphasis on improving accessibility on the Green Line. Commuter rail stations are also being upgraded. There is potential for projects such as short full-high platforms at low ridership commuter rail stations or accessibility upgrades at various bus stops.

L. Brelsford said that the MBTA has been coordinating with municipalities to ensure bus stops remain safe and accessible year-round. This includes managing snow removal and bike lanes.

S. Johnston noted some early opportunities for integration and partnerships, including the Alewife garage development, Fairmount Line electrification, and Silver Line expansion.

S. Johnston made a call to action and partnership for municipalities and regional partners to work with the MBTA to enhance transit in various avenues.

### ***Discussion***

Matt Moran, City of Boston, thanked the MBTA staff for their work. He asked if there was any public engagement process around Full T Ahead. He also offered support for improving bus stop standards.

L. Gilmore explained that Full T Ahead is the general manager's vision for where the MBTA should head, while the PMT is the best opportunity for public engagement.

L. Brelsford explained the MBTA has started working with MassDOT to understand what data is available and she offered to reach out to M. Moran to coordinate.

B. Kane also thanked the MBTA and presenters for their work, specifically supporting the holistic nature of the plan.

### **11. Update on Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee Activities and The Committee's Continued Role in Supporting MPO Board Decision-making—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, CTPS***

T. Teich discussed the genesis of the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee. It was established in the MPO's operations plan in 2024. All committees are defined as supplemental to the MPO board. The TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee allows for further discussion of TIP topics without requiring additional board meetings.

T. Teich stated there are currently 10 members on this committee and she described the make-up. In the FFY 2026–30 TIP development cycle, the committee met six times to discuss project readiness, cost, and other challenges.

T. Teich said that in FFY 2027-31 TIP, the committee's role will be debriefing on the development process, developing policy and process recommendations, and supporting the TIP development process. The next committee meeting is scheduled for July 24 at 1:00 PM.

T. Teich set the stage for discussion by reminding members they voted to launch the committee during a time of escalating challenges around uncertainty and cost, and since then those challenges have only really increased.

#### ***Discussion***

B. Kane said the committee was originally recommended to mitigate the use of public comment periods in full board meetings by municipalities providing updates on project readiness. He stated that it was never envisioned to supplant the board, rather to supplement it, and he offered support for defining committee parameters more clearly.

J. Bechard, said that the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee was a good place to bring in communities to discuss projects without taking away from full board time. He also offered support for improving the definition of the committee's role.



Rachel Benson, South West Advisory Planning Committee, agreed with J. Bechard and stated that communities have varied skill levels concerning the TIP process, and the committee helps prepare proposals for the full board.

Erin Chute, Town of Brookline, stated that the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee is more accessible to communities and helps with transparency and inclusivity.

Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee, stated that the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee has done an excellent job streamlining the TIP project process in full board meetings, and is helpful for getting feedback from different state agencies.

D. Mohler said that he and the vice chair had concerns about the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee developing a recommended TIP scenario. He also noted that fewer communities are interested in applying for the TIP as of late, contributing to a reduced workload for the committee. He praised the committee's TIP process and readiness work but noted that his primary concern is about the committee taking a vote to recommend a particular scenario. He stated his concern about a 10-member committee being able to bring a scenario to the board with only six votes, thus putting the board in a situation where they feel obligated to vote on a pre-approved scenario.

B. Kane asked if the chair would be opposed to subcommittees giving a recommendation when asked by the MPO. D. Mohler responded that he believes the TIP is different as it is the primary focus annually and he is worried about having the board put in the position of voting a community's project out of the recommended scenario.

E. Bourassa agreed with D. Mohler that the committee should not be recommending new scenarios, though he would approve of the committee recommending a project and a member making a motion to bring the project before the full board. He also said that he does not believe the committee should be making motions, as this may lead cities and towns to believe they must go to the committee to get an endorsement. He stated he would rather have the committee be a place for conversation and for project proponents to get direction from staff.

B. Kane agreed that the committee should not be a "scenario recommender," rather it should be a "gatekeeper" to keep out projects that are not ready for full board consideration. He also said that if the full board was "stuck" members could ask the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee for a recommendation of a scenario.

John Alessi, Town of Arlington, said that as a new board member he has found the committee very helpful for understanding the TIP process. He stated he understood the concern about voting, but he advocated for the committee to still be able to make a recommendation to the full board.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative, asked about the difference between the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee and the MassDOT Project Readiness Committee regarding project readiness.

J. Rowe stated that the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee has enabled a dialogue for multiple stakeholders and project proponents to plan timelines and other readiness goals.

T. Teich explained that there is work the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee does year-round and that there should be a distinct conversation on the role of the committee. She highlighted the tight timeframe of information gathering and presentation to the board and noted that the committee has been very useful in providing guidance to the staff about the most realistic options to present to the full board.

J. Rowe shared a worry that if the committee is not able to make a recommendation, it will reduce the effectiveness of discussion at the committee as members may not choose to fully review information that will not be voted on.

## **12. MassDOT Municipal Planning and Support (MPS) and Local Early-stage and Actionable Planning (LEAP) Program—Derek Krevat, Manager of Municipal Planning and Support**

D. Krevat stated that MassDOT's new MPS group's mission is to connect municipalities with federal funding opportunities to advance local and regional transportation needs. It will provide technical assistance to Massachusetts communities to prepare projects for the receipt of federal funding, develop discretionary grant applications, and assist with coordinative efforts.

D. Krevat explained that the LEAP program is how the new group's goals will be achieved. MassDOT will procure two consultant teams to provide early-stage planning and project development activities. MassDOT anticipates individual tasks will cost roughly \$25,000-\$100,000 per project. He presented a proposed LEAP program process flow and categories for eligible activities.

D. Krevat stated that the review process and criteria will be completed in partnership with regional planning agencies and MassDOT Highway District offices, and will be refined on a rolling basis. The criteria include community designation, community needs, project momentum, and availability of alternative funding. He shared past and planned outreach for the LEAP program.

D. Krevat showed a map of how the group is structured, which is similar to the structure of the MPO Activities team at MassDOT.

### ***Discussion***

J. Alessi thanked D. Krevat and his team for helping the Town of Arlington get started on applying for discretionary funds. He emphasized the difficulties of smaller, meaningful projects and how the new group will help get them started.

### **13. Members' Items**

B. Kane asked for a discussion about a memo sent the previous night about grant agreement guidance.

D. Mohler emphasized that MassDOT does not offer legal advice, but noted that for MassDOT's grant process Massachusetts was successful in getting a preliminary injunction nullifying the Immigration Customs and Enforcement certification as a condition of federal grant approval. The memo contains language put in place by MassDOT attorneys that they believe is sufficient to protect MassDOT's rights.

### **14. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by the MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (B. Kane). The motion carried.

## Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
At-Large City (City of Newton)	Jenn Martin
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Claire Ricker
	John Alessi
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)	Erin Chute
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Jen Rowe
	Matthew Moran
Federal Highway Administration	
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	John Bechard
MassDOT Highway Division	
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Josh Ostroff
	Laura Gilmore
	Lynsey Heffernan
	Sandy Johnston
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
	Frank Tramontozzi
	Hanna
	Switekowski
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
	Lizzi Weyant
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
	Tyler Terrasi
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	Nate Ryan
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	
South Shore Coalition (Town of Hull)	
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Rachel Benson
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood)	Steve Olanoff

<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Abby Swaine	US Environmental Protection Agency
Alexis Vidaurreta	Toole Design
Andrew Wang	
Arnav Chatterjee	MassDOT
Ben Muller	
Bernave Twyman	Toole Design
Cam Sullivan	
Cheryll-Ann Senior	MassDOT
Corey Heniser	
Derek Shooster	MassDOT
Chris Klem	MassDOT
Derek Krevat	MassDOT
Diane Hayes	
Eric Burkman	Jacobs
Jonathan Church	MassDOT
Joy Glynn	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Justin Curewitz	Tighe & Bond
Katherine Duffy	
Kim Foltz	Boston Bikes
Laura Brelsford	MBTA
Laurel Siegel	City of Medford
Lily Wallace	
Mike Malia	MBTA
Miranda Briseño	MassDOT
Noah Harper	MassDOT
Patricia Cahill	MassDOT
Patrick Snyder	
Rick Azzalina	Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
Robert Warren	
Sheila Page	
Sophia Ashebir	City of Boston
Stephanie Abundo	MassDOT
Susan Barrett	Town of Lexington
Tracie Lenhardt	MassDOT
Travis Pollack	MAPC
Wig Zamore	City of Somerville

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**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Annette Demchur

Adriana Jacobsen

Bradley Putnam

Carmen Baskauf

Dave Hong

Elena Ion

Erin Maguire

Ethan Lapointe

Gina Perille

Hannah Jun

Ibbu Quraishi

Jenn Emiko

Lauren Magee

Olivia Saccocia

Priyanka Chapekar

Rebecca Morgan

Rose McCarron

Sam Taylor

Stella Jordan

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