

MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

May 1, 2025, Meeting

10:00 AM–11:30, 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 March 20, 2025

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance starting on page 13.

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

D. Mohler discussed the recent letter from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Sean Duffy, which was addressed to all USDOT grant recipients and reminds recipients of the USDOT's interpretation of recipients' responsibilities, specifically related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs and United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). D. Mohler stated that MassDOT is reviewing the letter and working on developing a response, and there is no action required for anyone else.

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

Tegin Teich, Executive Director, discussed the agenda items, which included two presentations.

T. Teich stated that the next MPO board meeting will be held virtually on May 15, 2025, at 10:00 AM.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

Jay Monty, City of Everett, announced that the Congestion Management Process (CMP) Committee met on April 24, 2025. Committee members discussed the CMP network in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Jen Rowe, City of Boston, stated that the Draft Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2026–30 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was released for public review on April 28, 2025, and will be available for public comment until May 28, 2025. J. Rowe stated that the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee will meet on May 15, 2025, and Committee members will discuss anticipated changes in the Draft FFYs 2026–30 TIP, discuss expectations for TIP project proponents, and debrief the FFYs 2026–30 TIP development process. J. Rowe stated that the finalized FFYs 2026–30 TIP is scheduled to be voted on for endorsement by the MPO board on June 5, 2025.

Len Diggins, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, asked if there would be a statement on the Transit Working Group (TWG) meeting held on April 24, 2025, and stated that the meeting facilitated an excellent presentation and discussion.

T. Teich stated that a comment on the TWG meeting would be added to the next MPO board meeting's Executive Director's Report.

Melisa Tintocalis, North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC) (Town of Burlington), announced that the NSPC (Town of Burlington) authorized new alternate representatives to vote and represent at MPO board meetings, which included John Strauss, Town of Burlington Resident and transportation advocate.

6. Action Item: Approval of March 20, 2025, MPO Meeting Minutes Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. March 20, 2025, Meeting Minutes ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

J. Rowe suggested an addition to their report on the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee. J. Rowe clarified that they stated that on March 13, 2025, the Committee met and discussed initial programming scenarios for projects in the FFYs 2026–30 TIP, but no recommendation was reached. In addition, J. Rowe stated that M. Tintocalis asked a question regarding the TIP rescoring process, specifically why the Committee did not reach a recommendation, to which J. Rowe responded that there was a lot of information for committee members to digest during the discussion, and there was not enough time for members to process all the information.

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 20, 2025, was made by the City of Boston (J. Rowe) and seconded by the Town of Arlington (John Alessi). The motion carried.

7. Advisory Council Restructuring Update—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, and Stella Jordan, MPO Staff*

T. Teich discussed background on the Advisory Council restructuring initiative, specifically how and why it was initiated.

T. Teich stated that the MPO's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has consistently called for an advisory body that plays an integral role in the MPO's planning processes.

T. Teich stated that the most recent version of the MOU, which was endorsed in September 2024, updated the description of the advisory body and its role to include that the group's membership would elevate diverse perspectives from regional stakeholders, and the group's mission is to create space for knowledge building while advising the development of MPO programs to ensure that they are responsive to public priorities.

T. Teich stated that restructuring the Advisory Council aims to address the following questions:

- How can Advisory Council membership be more diverse and representative of the range of public perspectives in the region, including currently underrepresented voices?
- How can the Advisory Council be more closely aligned with/supportive of the MPO's Engagement Program and engagement activities?
- How can the Advisory Council have a more direct impact on MPO processes and decision-making?

T. Teich reviewed the timeline of the restructuring process, which included the following key dates and events:

- September 2024: Announce restructuring process
- November 2024: Hold final Regional Transportation Advisory Council meeting
- Fall 2024: Sunset Regional Transportation Advisory Council
- Winter 2024–25: Develop restructuring plans
- Spring 2025: Finalize restructuring plans; launch application
- Summer 2025: Stand up new Community Advisory Council group

T. Teich stated that the new Advisory Council will be named the Community Advisory Council, which will highlight voices and priorities of communities that are currently underrepresented, bring a community-centered perspective to MPO planning and decision-making, and continue to play a key advisory role on the board and committees, and with MPO staff.

Stella Jordan, MPO Staff, presented additional detail about MPO staff's work to restructure the Advisory Council.

S. Jordan stated that, during the few months after the sunset of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council, MPO staff contacted all former Advisory Council members and additional individuals engaged with the group in the past to debrief on their experience. In addition, MPO staff coordinated with the Advisory Council's leadership, who have continued to represent the Advisory Council on the MPO board.

S. Jordan stated that MPO staff engaged in internal coordination with MPO staff across the agency to identify opportunities for engagement and input to maximize the Advisory Council's impact. In addition, S. Jordan stated that MPO staff are drafting a charter to develop the structure and logistical details for the new advisory body and developing the application process for soliciting new members.

S. Jordan discussed the key themes that emerged through the conversations with former Advisory Council members, which included the following themes:

- Highlight perspectives that are not currently represented
- Incorporate findings from Community Planning Lab
- Use the LRTP as an initial framework for content
- Maximize timely connections to staff work
- Convey importance of advisory role and opportunity of connection to MPO board

S. Jordan stated that MPO staff have been planning the structure and content of the initial meetings for the new group, which will include an introduction to the MPO, using interactive educational activities, focusing on the LRTP, and electing new Community Advisory Council leadership.

S. Jordan discussed the Community Advisory Council's governance structure, which will include a new Chair and Vice Chair who will be elected by the new group and represent the Community Advisory Council on the MPO board. In addition, S. Jordan stated that the Community Advisory Council will remain independent, with MPO staff supporting meetings and facilitating information sharing between the Advisory Council and MPO board members.

S. Jordan stated that the next step in the restructuring process is launching the application to solicit new Advisory Council members. S. Jordan stated that the application process will allow MPO staff to cultivate a group that aligns with the mission and goals of the Advisory Council as written in the MOU, share information about the Community Advisory Council's mission and role, and collect information on member backgrounds, priorities, and areas of interest.

S. Jordan encouraged MPO board members to share the application with those who may be interested in joining the Community Advisory Council.

S. Jordan presented a timeline for the future milestones in the Advisory Council restructuring process, which included the following key dates and events:

- May–June 2025: Solicit members through application
- End of June 2025: Establish membership and begin governance
- July–August 2025: New group onboards and elects leadership
- September 2025: New Advisory Council Chair joins MPO Board

Discussion

Brad Rawson, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), expressed appreciation for MPO staff's work and presentation, and thanked L. Diggins for his time serving as the Chair of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council. In addition, B. Rawson emphasized the importance of collaboration, process improvements, and building and sustaining broad coalitions and participation.

Nayeli Rodriguez, City of Boston, expressed support for the Advisory Council restructuring process, specifically its goal of bringing in perspectives that are not currently represented on the MPO board. N. Rodriguez asked if there are any specific perspectives on environment, sustainability, or climate resilience that MPO staff are seeking for representation in the new advisory body.

S. Jordan stated that, through a study on environmental outreach and engagement, MPO staff cultivated relationships with several environmental stakeholders who could serve as potential members on the new advisory body.

Steve Olanoff, Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood), asked for additional information on the types of members MPO staff are looking to include in the new advisory body's membership, specifically whether municipalities would be considered for membership.

S. Jordan stated that anyone can apply to be a member, but MPO staff would like to highlight members that are not currently represented by the MPO board, and the MPO already has robust municipal engagement.

S. Olanoff asked for clarity on municipal applications and stated that municipal representation is effective through the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) monthly subregional meetings.

S. Jordan reiterated that anyone is welcome to apply for membership on the new advisory body, and the type of organizations that the new group will include will be highly dependent on application volumes and who applies.

J. Rowe stated that one of the key roles for the new advisory body is elevating underrepresented perspectives and stated that the Regional Transportation Advisory Council's representation was skewed towards municipalities, so it may not be necessary to have significant municipal representation in the new advisory body's membership. J. Rowe stated that having some amount of municipal representation on the Advisory Council allowed municipalities to have an established relationship with the MPO and other planners.

Ken Miller, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), stated that there should be more clarity when defining the term "community" when referring to the Community Advisory Council, because it can also refer to municipalities specifically. In addition, K. Miller asked why one of the main focuses is the LRTP, which is developed every four years and guides much of the MPO's work, rather than the MPO's more frequent work, such as the TIP and studies.

S. Jordan stated that the Advisory Council's new name intends to emphasize the group's mission of bringing in a range of perspectives from communities around the region, specifically communities of differing demographics. In addition, S. Jordan stated that the focus on the LRTP emerged through conversations with former Advisory Council members, and understanding the LRTP is critical because it guides the overarching vision and framework from which the rest of the MPO's work flows, including the TIP.

T. Teich stated that the new Advisory Council structure is a significant change from the previous one, but it is an important change because the MPO itself has changed significantly since the last time the structure of the Advisory Council was changed or updated.

L. Diggins expressed appreciation for the opportunity to chair the Advisory Council and stated that it has been a great learning experience. L. Diggins asked what Advisory Council members that left the group said regarding their reasons for not participating.

S. Jordan stated that the responses varied, including capacity issues, feelings of disconnect between the members, and feeling as though the impact on MPO board decision-making was not as significant as they thought it would be.

L. Diggins asked if the members would be organizations rather than individuals.

S. Jordan stated that members will primarily be affiliated with organizations, but MPO staff are not precluding any specific type of membership.

L. Diggins asked what the optimal size of the group would be.

S. Jordan stated that 10–20 people would be ideal for MPO staff, but the group may start off smaller and grow larger over time.

L. Diggins asked about compensation for Advisory Council members.

S. Jordan stated that the MPO plans to provide stipends to Advisory Council members that are not affiliated with a government entity, such as community-based groups, to reduce barriers to participation.

L. Diggins suggested adding “Regional” to the Community Advisory Council’s new name to clarify its meaning. In addition, L. Diggins suggested emphasizing the complexity of the regional transportation planning process to potential members and that effectively participating requires a high level of dedication to understanding the MPO’s processes.

J. Rowe suggested creating expectations for new Advisory Council members to share information with the communities they are representing with the complexity of the process in mind to help members feel as though they are making an impact.

T. Teich expressed appreciation for the comments from board members and stated that MPO staff wanted to ensure that there was space for a conversation about the restructuring process among board members because the advisory body is essential to the MPO’s governance.

8. MassDOT Highway Division Update on Newton-Weston Bridge Replacements and Rehabilitations at I-90/I-95—*Marco Pereira, MassDOT Design-Build Project Manager, and John Romano, MassDOT Legislative Affairs Manager, Highway*

John Romano, MassDOT Legislative Affairs Manager, Highway, stated that the weekends of May 30, 2025, and June 20, 2025, there will be a reduction from three lanes to one lane due to important construction work on Interstate 90 (I-90) near Interstate 95 (I-95) in the City of Newton and the Town of Weston, and MassDOT is encouraging individuals to stay away from this area on these weekends due to the high level of congestion the lane reduction will cause. In addition, J. Romano stated that the Commuter Rail will be closed during these weekends and replaced with buses, which will increase congestion.

Marco Pereira, MassDOT Design-Build Project Manager, presented background on Project 606783, Newton–Weston–Bridge Bundle, Replacement and Rehabilitation at I-90/I-95 Interchange including Ramp G (Design-Build), which will replace and rehabilitate eight bridges at the I-90/I-95 interchange in the City of Newton and the Town of Weston. M. Pereira stated that the project will improve safety, increase vertical clearance, and improve seismic resiliency. M. Pereira stated that the project type is Design-Build, and the project is two years into its four-and-a-half-year construction duration.

M. Pereira stated that MassDOT will complete stage one of the mainline I-90 bridge over I-95, the Charles River, and Ramps A and B, followed by the demolition of the existing I-90 eastbound bridge and reconstruction of stage two within its footprint. M. Pereira stated that construction on the three new Ramp G bridges is underway, and the goal is to have structural steel set and the bridge decks poured by the end of the season, along with construction of Mechanically Stabilized Earth retaining walls and ramp embankments. In addition, M. Pereira stated that rehabilitation work, including deck replacement, structural steel repairs, and substructure repairs, will progress on the bridge and ramps A and B over I-95 and the Charles River.

M. Pereira discussed the project's timeline, which included the following key events and dates:

- Rehabilitation and reconstruction of Ramps A and B will continue until November 2028
- Construction of Ramp G bridges and roadway will be completed in June 2026
- Construction on the I-90 over MBTA bridge is currently underway
- Work on the I-90 bridge over I-95 and the Charles River and ramps A and B

- Stage one, building out a portion of the new I-90 eastbound bridge is currently progressing
- Summer 2025–July 2026: Stage two, constructing the remaining portion of the I-90 eastbound bridge and a portion of the I-90 westbound bridge

M. Pereria discussed additional details of the work on the I-90 bridge over the MBTA and Amtrak railroad, including anticipated construction outcomes in 2025. Anticipated construction outcomes in 2025 included the following:

- Complete temporary median crossovers for upcoming bridge superstructure replacement
- Prepare for rapid weekend construction
- Reduce I-90 to one lane in each direction for rapid weekend construction
- Replace I-90 westbound and eastbound superstructure over railroad
- Remove median crossover and construct permanent bridge barrier

M. Pereira discussed further details of the weekends that will include superstructure replacement and stated that the traffic management plan will be deployed on the I-90 eastbound and westbound, which includes reducing traffic to one lane in each direction. M. Pereira stated that MBTA Commuter Rail service and Amtrak service will be diverted through project limits. M. Pereria stated that construction crews will complete the following steps to complete the superstructure replacement over these weekends:

- Demolish approximately one half of the bridge deck and structural steel within the work zone
- Hoist Prefabricated Bridge Units (PBU) into place, which will support I-90 traffic over the railroad
- Lock together the PBUs with high performance concrete closure pours, and allow the closures to cure
- Traffic barriers will be realigned, and construction equipment and materials will be removed from the work zone
- Motor vehicle traffic and train traffic will be restored for the Monday morning commute

M. Pereira reiterated the impacts of Stage 1A of the construction of the I-90 bridge over the MBTA and Amtrak railroad, which included the following key impacts and dates:

- Rapid Construction Weekends
 - 9:00 PM, May 30–5:00 AM, June 2, 2025
 - 9:00 PM, June 20–5:00 AM, June 23, 2025
- I-90 Impacts

- Lane reductions: one lane in each direction of I-90 eastbound and westbound
- Rail Impacts
 - Worcester Commuter Rail service between Framingham and South Station: Buses will replace the last Commuter Rail trip on Friday and replace all trips on Saturday and Sunday
 - Amtrak service along Lake Shore Limited between Boston and Albany: Buses will replace the last Amtrak trip on Friday, all trips on Saturday and Sunday, and the first trip Monday

M. Pereira discussed the I-90 dry run during the weekend of May 2, 2025, which will include lane reductions from three to one lane in each direction beginning at 9:00 PM, May 2, 2025, and ending at 7:00 AM, May 3, 2025. M. Pereira stated that, if necessary, the dry run will be repeated on May 3, 2025, to adjust the traffic management plan.

M. Pereira stated that there will be two Commuter Rail shuttle routes, which included the following routes and stops:

1. Framingham, West Natick, Natick Center, Wellesley Square, Wellesley Hills, Wellesley Farms, Auburndale to Riverside with increased Green Line-D service
2. West Newton, Newtonville, Boston Landing to Kenmore where customers can take the Green Line's B, C, or D trains.

M. Pereira stated that the lane closures on I-90 will begin approximately one mile before the work zone in the eastbound direction and approximately three-quarters of a mile before the work zone in the westbound direction. M. Pereira presented a map demonstrating the areas that are expected to have increased congestion due to the construction and stated that MassDOT encourages travelers to avoid the area, if possible, and consider alternative routes. M. Pereira stated that MassDOT encourages people located in the area north of I-90 to use Route 2 to travel into the Boston area, and people traveling from the south to use Interstate 495 (I-495) and I-95. M. Pereira stated that there will be mapping resources available in addition to message boards throughout the regional roadway network to provide accurate travel times.

M. Pereira stated that Howard Stein Hudson, a planning and engineering firm, reviewed existing traffic data to determine alternate routes that may have additional capacity during the closure period. M. Pereira stated that Route 9 has the most additional capacity during the weekend closures for people that are local to the project area, and when Route 2, Route 4, or I-495 are not options.

M. Pereira stated that MassDOT is coordinating with stakeholders including the highest trip origin and destination municipalities, local and regional emergency response medical services, local and regional tourism councils, stadiums and venues for sports and other events, government agencies, transportation and livery stakeholders, shipping and industrial stakeholders, and schools.

Discussion

David Koses, City of Newton, emphasized the significant impacts of the lane closures, and offered support from the City of Newton. In addition, D. Koses asked what the intended outcomes are from the dry run of the lane closures.

M. Pereira stated that the dry run of the lane closures will allow the contractor to ensure that they are able to employ the traffic management plan as smoothly as possible by identifying any problems with the plan beforehand.

J. Romano stated that MassDOT does not want the first time the lane closures are implemented to be the rapid construction weekends. J. Romano stated that the dry run will allow the contractor to identify issues with timing or otherwise prior to the rapid construction weekends. In addition, J. Romano stated that messaging will include two press conferences, 252 digital billboards with messaging, messaging on the screens in the Registries of Motor Vehicles, paid advertisements, and messaging to EZ-Pass customers.

J. Rowe asked if they could be forwarded materials for social media so the City of Boston can help amplify MassDOT's messaging.

B. Rawson expressed appreciation for MassDOT Highway Division and its Major Projects Group for their ability to manage complex construction, communicate it, and coordinate it over the years. B. Rawson discussed communication strategies and the importance of upstream notifications. In addition, B. Rawson asked if considerations for future rail electrification were considered for this project and others that might intersect with railways.

9. Members' Items

L. Diggins stated that the Town of Arlington is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that MassDOT and the MPO board should consider how they will respond to the Federal administration's requests to change the scope of the MPO's work. In addition, L. Diggins encouraged members to reach out to the leaders in their respective communities to gather input on their response to the federal administration.

10. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Advisory Council (L. Diggins) and seconded by the City of Boston (J. Rowe). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members

Representatives and Alternates

At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
	Eric Molinari
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
	Jenn Martin
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	John Alessi
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)	Erin Chute
	Amy Ingles
City of Boston	Jen Rowe
	Nayeli Rodriguez
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Brad Rawson
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	John Romano
	Chris Klem
MassDOT Highway Division	Lyris Liautaud
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Sandy Johnston
	Josh Ostroff
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	Hanna Switekowski
	Isabella MacKinnon
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
	Julia Wallerce
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Eric Johnson
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	Kristen Guichard
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	Melisa Tintocalis
	John Strauss
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs)	Jim Nee
	Tyler Terrasi
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood)	Tom O'Rourke
	Steve Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Erin Reed	Howard Stein Hudson
Cheryll-Ann Senior	MassDOT
Derek Shooster	MassDOT
Miranda Briseño	MassDOT
Marco Pereira	MassDOT
Jeff Coletti	MWRTA
Joy Glynn	MWRTA
Aleida Leza	Town of Belmont Resident
Paul Cobuzzi	Town of Belmont Resident
JR Frey	Town of Hingham

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Abby Cutrumbes Heerema
Alexandra Kleyman
Annette Demchur
Betsy Harvey Herzfeld
Bradley Putnam
Dave Hong
Dorcas Okaidjah
Erin Maguire
Ethan Lapointe
Gina Perille
Hiral Gandhi
Jenn Emiko Kaplan
Jia Huang
Lauren Magee
Olivia Saccocia
Rebecca Morgan
Sam Taylor
Sean Rourke
Stella Jordan

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