

Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee Meeting Minutes

June 12, 2025 Meeting

1:00 PM–2:55 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Jen Rowe, Chair, representing the City of Boston

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee agreed to the following:

- Approve the meeting minutes of March 27, 2025
- Approve the meeting minutes of May 15, 2025
- Recommend to the MPO board that a discussion about the official role of the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee with regards to scenario development be added to the agenda at an upcoming meeting

Materials

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. March 27, 2025, Meeting Minutes ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))
2. May 15, 2025, Meeting Minutes ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

J. Rowe welcomed committee members to the meeting of the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee. See attendance on page 8.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments at this time.

3. Action Item: Approval of March 27, 2025, Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes was made by the Inner Core Committee (Brad Rawson) and seconded by the Town of Arlington (John Alessi). The motion carried.

4. Action Item: Approval of May 15, 2025, Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes was made by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Chris Klem) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (Brad Rawson). The motion carried.

5. Draft Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2026-30 TIP Debrief—*Adriana Jacobsen, MPO Staff*

Adriana Jacobsen (MPO Staff) discussed the results of the TIP Development Retrospective Survey. The survey respondents agreed that the MPO board had considered fewer unscored projects and received a higher volume of applications compared with the FFYs 2025–29 TIP development cycle. However, the survey respondents did not agree that there were fewer delayed projects or fewer cost increases during this development cycle. A. Jacobsen explained that although there were fewer projects delayed this year, this might not reflect project readiness improvements. Most of the delayed projects were in the first few programmed years of the TIP, so projects in the later years that are not meeting readiness requirements might have maintained their programmed years. The survey respondents were varied in their opinions of whether or not the MPO board had a strong selection of projects to choose from in the earlier years of the TIP. Most of the projects programmed to fill the surplus in FFY 2026 were in the Transit Transformation program, and a few of these projects were unscored.

A. Jacobsen shared a few of the comments submitted by the survey respondents. The respondents agreed that the MPO staff, the MPO board, and the TIP Committee are making improvements to the TIP process but thought that external factors were making the program more difficult to manage or that project proponents may not be following the MPO board's guidelines. Other respondents were interested in discussing the definition of the role of the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee (TIP Committee), especially in relationship to the MPO board.

Lenard Diggins (Regional Transportation Advisory Board) expressed his optimism about the ability of the group to improve the TIP process.

B. Rawson noted that the TIP Committee had worked on diversifying the pool of municipal-proponent projects, and that this was reflected in the increase of applicants

this year. He commended the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) for identifying fill-in projects early in the TIP development cycle.

Dan Jaffe (City of Boston resident) commented that the neighborhood of Charlestown, a mostly residential community in Boston, lacks sufficient connectivity to downtown Boston and surrounding municipalities.

L. Diggins asked if the TIP Committee had the responsibility to take an active role in helping municipalities put forth project applications or if that responsibility fell to the wider MPO board.

B. Rawson stated that he believed that the committee had a wide range of roles, including diversifying the project pipeline and reaching out to smaller communities that might not have a large team of dedicated planning staff.

J. Alessi stated that the committee should define guidelines for addressing projects that have been programmed on the TIP for several years and projects that have experienced large cost increases.

L. Diggins noted that the work of diversifying the municipal-proponent project pool might be a lot to ask of the MPO staff, and that if this responsibility did in fact officially fall to the TIP Committee, that the role should be formalized in writing.

Tom Bent (City of Somerville) explained that some municipalities do not submit TIP projects because they do not have the staff capacity to do so. He suggested that larger municipalities could set aside funds or staff time to work with smaller cities and towns. Lastly, he recommended that the MPO board consider reevaluating projects that incur significant cost increases.

B. Rawson noted that there were several TIP projects that had experienced unexpected cost increases and scope creep but that also were the center of significant community advocacy efforts. These projects included the Western Avenue project in Lynn (project ID 609246), the Belmont Community Path project (609204), and the Hingham Route 3A project (605168). He stated that it is difficult for the MPO board to weigh the opposing pressures to delay or remove these projects or to hold the original programming year to satisfy the requests of advocates and local representatives. He also noted that these projects could serve as useful teaching moments for the MPO board to identify and understand the common pitfalls of project development.

J. Alessi asked if the TIP Committee was tasked with making a full recommendation on project scenarios to the full MPO board. He noted that there had been some disagreement as to the specific roles of the TIP Committee during the in-person scenario-planning MPO board meeting on April 3, 2025.

L. Diggins stated that he expected the full MPO board to closely examine and critique the scenarios that the TIP Committee brought forth, as they might not have had much time to review the scenarios beforehand.

T. Bent stated that the scenarios that the TIP Committee recommends are not likely to be automatically accepted by the board. Instead, the committee offers a suggestion that the board discusses and subsequently modifies. However, he noted that the process seemed different this year. He referenced that there had been some disagreement as to whether or not the TIP Committee should put forth recommendations at all. He agreed that the role of the TIP Committee should be further defined.

Eric Bourassa (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) responded that he believed it was appropriate for the TIP Committee to make high-level policy and program recommendations, but not for the committee to hold formal votes to keep or remove specific projects. He suggested that the committee refrain from creating TIP scenarios.

L. Diggins stated that the TIP Committee has a responsibility to give the MPO board information based on the discussions and deliberations that had taken place within committee meetings; otherwise, the committee would not add value to the TIP development process.

J. Alessi explained that he did not see the scenario recommendation votes that took place in the TIP Committee as binding the full MPO board to a certain project selection; instead, the recommendation was a distillation of information for the MPO board to react to and discuss.

E. Bourassa asked if the TIP Committee would consider requiring a unanimous vote when recommending scenarios to the full MPO board.

E. Lapointe explained that the MPO staff have not been able to find additional MPO board meeting time to allocate to TIP scenario development unless board meetings are lengthened. The scenario format has been a useful way to convey information and possibilities in a manner consistent with the Open Meeting Law. He noted that MPO staff could provide more options and permutations of project scenarios, but that this

would require more time for the MPO board to synthesize and review each arrangement.

JR Frey (Town of Hingham) expressed that the scenarios that the MPO staff develop carry an implicit endorsement from the TIP Committee, so a recommendation vote may not be necessary.

B. Rawson referenced that the MPO board used to deliberate TIP scenarios for eight to 10 hours. He noted that the quarterly readiness days were recently created to be an additional opportunity for information sharing, and he was disappointed that many project proponents did not show up.

L. Diggins asked how quickly MPO staff could make notes about TIP Committee meetings available to the wider MPO board.

J. Rowe explained that this topic could be discussed at an upcoming MPO board meeting where the role of the TIP Committee is expected to be discussed.

J. Alessi suggested recommending to the full MPO board that the board holds a conversation about the role and purpose of the TIP Committee.

Vote

A motion to have the TIP Committee recommend to the MPO board that a discussion about the official role of the TIP Committee with regards to scenario development be added to the agenda at an upcoming meeting was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Lenard Diggins). The motion carried.

6. TIP Project Scoring and Rescoring—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

E. Lapointe described the proposal for rescoring existing TIP projects. He noted that the committee is not expected to create a policy today; instead, MPO staff are seeking recommendations for the policy that will eventually be brought before the full MPO board. He referenced that MPO staff had attempted to rescore projects during TIP development season in March 2025 as required by the MPO's TIP project cost policies, but many projects had insufficient information to properly rescore due to changing data storage methods, staff turnover, or other issues.

E. Lapointe explained that projects programmed in the FFYs 2021–25 TIP or prior were evaluated on a 134-point scale instead of a 100-point scale. This makes comparing

older and newer project scores difficult. In addition, the projects on the 100-point scale were not all scored with the same criteria or by the same person, leading to more inconsistencies. Although criteria may change with each Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) cycle, it would be beneficial if the scoring criteria remained the same within a single LRTP cycle.

E. Lapointe explained that a formal rescoring process is necessary because MPO staff lack sufficient information to score older projects. Staff would need to solicit information on project details from proponents in the summer and fall in order to rescore projects for the next TIP development cycle. Then, all project scores could be compared to each other in a fair manner.

J. Alessi suggested prioritizing rescoring the oldest projects, because that criteria is the most dissimilar.

J. Rowe commented that although it might be most useful to rescore projects programmed in FFY 2027 and onward, as these projects will appear in next year's TIP, there is a chance that some projects currently programmed in FFY 2026 might be delayed. It would likely be to the advantage of these project proponents if they proactively submitted updated information for rescoring.

E. Lapointe noted that this information will be presented to the board in August or September.

7. TIP Readiness Policy Improvements—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

E. Lapointe explained the proposed readiness guidelines for projects programmed in the TIP. See Table 1 for details.

Table 1
Five-Year Readiness Guidelines: Minimum Requirements for Projects
Programmed in FFY 2031

Year	Requirement	Within Six Months	Cost Estimate
2026 (spring)	25 percent prepared	25 percent received	New estimate
2027	25 percent comments	25 percent DPH	
2028	25 percent DPH	75 percent received	New estimate
2029	75 percent approved	100 percent received	
2030	100 percent submitted		New estimate

DPH = Design Public Hearing. FFY = Federal Fiscal Year

These guidelines would apply both to currently funded projects and newly funded projects. If a project did not meet a milestone, it would not be removed from the TIP; instead, it would be reevaluated alongside new projects vying for funding in the same federal fiscal year.

E. Lapointe concluded the discussion by asking committee members to bring comments on the proposed guidelines to the next TIP Committee meeting.

8. Members' Items

There were none.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on July 24, 2025.

10. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (Lenard Diggins) and seconded by the Town of Arlington (John Alessi). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
City of Boston	Jen Rowe
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)	Chris Klem
	Lyriss Liautaud
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	John Alessi
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Brad Rawson
MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)	Jim Nee

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Dan Jaffe	City of Boston Resident
Jeff Coletti	MWRTA
John Strauss	Town of Burlington
Jon Rockwell	TEC Inc.
Joy Glynn	MWRTA
JR Frey	Town of Hingham
Mark Gailus	Amphenol TCS
Meghan McNamara	Town of Lexington
Melissa Santley	MassDOT District 6
Tom Bent	City of Somerville

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Abby Cutrumbes Heerema

Adriana Jacobsen

Annette Demchur

Dave Hong

Elena Ion

Erin Maguire

Ethan Lapointe

Hannah Jun

Lauren Magee

Olivia Saccocia

Sam Taylor

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