

# **Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Community Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**

## **July 13, 2026, Meeting Minutes**

2:00 PM–3:30 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

### **Meeting Agenda**

#### **1. Introductions**

Sean Rourke (Metropolitan Planning Organization [MPO] staff) called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. S. Rourke acknowledged the death of City of Boston transportation planner and safe streets advocate, Louisa Gag.

Members and guests introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 6.)

#### **2. Chair's Report—Caitlin Allen-Connelly, TransitMatters**

C. Allen-Connelly asked Community Advisory Council (Advisory Council) members to honor Louisa Gag's legacy by upholding the Advisory Council's mission with a renewed focus and commitment to creating safer streets for all and implementing Vision Zero. C. Allen-Connelly asked meeting participants to join her in a moment of silence.

C. Allen-Connelly shared a brief overview of the July meeting content.

#### **3. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

#### **4. Approval of June 8, 2026, Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes of June 8, 2026, meeting was made by the 495/MetroWest Partnership (Jason Palitsch) and seconded by TransitMatters (Caitlin Allen-Connelly). The roll call vote for the minutes was approved by the following attendees:

- Karl Alexander (Mystic River Watershed Association)
- Caitlin Allen-Connelly (TransitMatters)
- Maureen Aylward (TownGreen)
- Patrick Bibbins (Bike to the Sea)

- Seth Gadbois (Conservation Law Foundation)
- Sophia Galimore (Watertown TMA)
- Morgan Griffiths (Town of Natick)
- Jesse Kanson-Benanav (Abundant Housing MA)
- Meg von Lossnitzer (Mystic Valley Elder Services)
- Galen Mook (MassBike)
- Jason Palitsch (495/MetroWest Partnership)
- Pete Wilson (Transportation for Massachusetts)

Angie Cradock (Prevention Research Center [PRC] on Nutrition and Physical Activity, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health) abstained from voting on the meeting minutes.

## **5. Advisory Council One-Year Reflection and Topics Outlook**

Tegin Teich (Executive Director to MPO staff) shared sympathies for friends and colleagues of Louisa Gag and acknowledged the impact of her work on making the city a safer space.

T. Teich said that the establishment of MPOs is deeply connected to working with community partners to create a transportation system that is responsive to public priorities. T. Teich reflected on the importance of the Advisory Council's role in knowledge building, providing input in decision-making, and holding the MPO Board and staff accountable to their commitments. T. Teich thanked Caitlin and Karl for their commitment and leadership in launching and stabilizing the Advisory Council.

T. Teich acknowledged the impact of the Advisory Council's feedback on planning and decision-making in the last year. T. Teich shared a few examples, including

- Advisory Council members expressed a strong preference to fund a study to advance research around roadway pricing that was selected to be funded in federal fiscal year 2027
- Advisory Council members provided input and recommendations related to vulnerable roadway users that were incorporated into the Freight Action Plan
- Advisory Council members shared the Regional Active Transportation Needs and Gaps survey with their member networks
- Advisory Council members provided input on best practices and strategies for youth engagement, which will inform an upcoming youth-focused civic education program

T. Teich stated that the importance of working with Advisory Council members is to ensure that engagement is effective and meaningful. T. Teich discussed various areas of MPO work and opened the meeting for discussion.

## **Discussion**

C. Allen-Connelly said that MPO staff are open to feedback and creating an Advisory Council that serves its mission and purpose. C. Allen-Connelly encouraged members to share their feedback to improve the process.

Maureen Aylward (TownGreen) said that as a local nonprofit, it would be helpful to have more direction on how it can share the Advisory Council's mission and work with its communities.

A. Cradock thanked the Advisory Council for the opportunity to learn more about the MPO's planning process. A. Cradock requested more guidance on sharing information about the MPO and how members can become involved in the planning process.

J. Palitsch said that the 495/MetroWest Partnership has been engaging with the MPO for many years and that MPO staff is responsive and open to feedback. J. Palitsch asked how to communicate the importance of the MPO to external partners.

T. Teich said that the MPO Board has subregional representatives to engage each subregion about MPO news and suggested a similar structure for Community Advisory Council members to share information with their communities. T. Teich encouraged Advisory Council members to engage with the MPO outside of the Community Advisory Council and seek ways to build a cohort.

T. Teich said that the Communications and Engagement team is advancing a plain language practice for MPO work and creating civic educational opportunities. T. Teich and J. Palitsch discussed the importance of building communication tools for intended audiences.

Karl Alexander (Mystic River Watershed Association) emphasized the need for accessible and engaging communication tools. K. Alexander encouraged MPO staff to continue leveraging members' professional expertise and sharing engagement opportunities, especially as they relate to members' areas of work.

Alexis Hosea-Abbott (MassBike) expressed interest in better relationship building with Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Highway Districts and Bike and Pedestrian Coordinators. T. Teich said that municipal staff have shared similar

interests and will consider what MPO staff can do to build something more systematic than relational.

Galen Mook (MassBike) expressed interest in providing more direct input in how the MassDOT operates. G. Mook discussed ways in which the MPO and community-based organizations can help advance each other's work.

Seth Gadbois (Conservation Law Foundation) discussed the relationship between plans and funded projects. S. Gadbois expressed interest in ongoing conversations about methodologies and tools to examine the effects of projects from a funding standpoint. S. Gadbois noted the importance of transparent and accessible communication in engaging members of the public.

Jesse Kanson-Benanav (Abundant Housing MA) reflected on his experience in the Advisory Council coming from the housing field. He said that it was helpful for MPO staff to share relevant engagement opportunities. J. Kanson-Benanav and T. Teich both remarked on the importance of the intersection between housing and transportation.

J. Kanson-Benanav said that virtual meetings are helpful for accessibility reasons but in-person relationship building opportunities would also be helpful. T. Teich said that the annual meeting in November will be in person. Michaela Grenier (MPO staff) said that an upcoming August social event also will be held in person in Malden.

C. Allen-Connelly said she will be stepping down from her position as Executive Director of TransitMatters and Chair of the Advisory Council in September. She added that TransitMatters will remain a member of the Advisory Council.

## **6. Upcoming MPO Engagement Opportunities—Michaela Grenier, MPO staff**

M. Grenier presented a timeline of upcoming topics and engagement for the next year, including long-range planning, capital programming, regional plans and studies, and agency processes.

M. Grenier said that the public review period for the Public Engagement Plan opened on June 22 and will end August 6.

M. Grenier provided details about the upcoming Certification Review process and encouraged members to attend meetings in August and September. T. Teich said that the Certification Review process is important to ensure accountability and said that federal partners encouraged Advisory Council members to attend the meetings with feedback and suggestions to improve MPO processes.

## **Discussion**

C. Allen-Connelly said staff should continue to share information about the effect of the Advisory Council's feedback and provide members with notice of engagement opportunities.

## **7. Advisory Council Member Information Sharing**

A. Cradock provided an overview of the PRC on Nutrition and Physical Activity at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, including the work efforts and focus areas. A. Cradock highlighted the PRC's current key initiatives such as the Leaders in Health, CHOICES Project, and Centers for Disease Control Research Networks, Physical Activity Policy Research and Evaluation Network (PAPREN), and Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation Network. A. Cradock said that PAPREN would be most relevant to the Advisory Council, which hosts monthly networking and presentation opportunities on transportation policy.

## **Discussion**

G. Mook and A. Cradock discussed opportunities to share relevant data to support their work.

## **8. Members' Items**

J. Kanson-Benanav discussed ongoing work with City of Boston's City Council around parking reform and requested that Advisory Council members reach out if they are interested.

G. Mook shared information about the upcoming vigil to honor Louisa Gag on July 16 at Boston City Hall Plaza hosted by the Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition.

K. Alexander said that the Mystic River Watershed Association and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council will host their Annual Bike Ride on July 29 to explore the shared-use paths and corridor reconstruction in the Lower Mystic.

## **9. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by the 495/MetroWest Partnership (Jason Palitsch) and seconded by the Mystic River Watershed Association (Karl Alexander). The motion carried.

## Attendees

| Member Municipalities | Representatives and Alternates |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Chelsea               | Sara Han                       |
| Natick                | Morgan Griffiths               |

| Community Based Organizations                                                                                        | Attendees            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 495/MetroWest Partnership                                                                                            | Jason Palitsch       |
| Abundant Housing MA                                                                                                  | Jesse Kanson-Benanav |
| Bike to the Sea                                                                                                      | Patrick Bibbins      |
| Conservation Law Foundation                                                                                          | Seth Gadbois         |
| MassBike                                                                                                             | Galen Mook           |
|                                                                                                                      | Alexis Hosea-Abbott  |
| Mystic River Watershed Association                                                                                   | Karl Alexander       |
| Mystic Valley Elder Services                                                                                         | Meg von Lossnitzer   |
|                                                                                                                      | Sheila Buckland      |
| Prevention Research Center (PRC) on Nutrition<br>and Physical Activity, Harvard T.H. Chan<br>School of Public Health | Angie Cradock        |
| Transportation for Massachusetts                                                                                     | Pete Wilson          |
| TownGreen                                                                                                            | Maureen Aylward      |
|                                                                                                                      | Greg Federspiel      |
| Watertown TMA                                                                                                        | Sophia Galimore      |

| Other Attendees | Affiliation |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Jon Seward      |             |
| Theo Braatz     |             |

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**MPO Staff**

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Michaela Grenier  
David Hong  
Jia Huang  
Lauren Magee  
Rebecca Morgan  
Meghan O'Connor  
Gina Perille  
Sean Rourke  
Tegin Teich

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