

Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee Meeting Minutes

July 23, 2026, Meeting Minutes

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

Jen Rowe, Chair, representing the City of Boston

Decisions

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

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of March 12, 2026
- Approve the minutes of the meeting of March 26, 2026

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 8.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Action Item: Approval of March 12, 2026, Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 12, 2026, and March 26, 2026, was made by the Eric Bourassa (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) and seconded by the Erin Chute (Town of Brookline). The motion carried.

4. Action Item: Approval of March 26, 2026, Meeting Minutes

These meeting minutes were approved as part of a consolidated motion under agenda item #3.

5. Potential TIP Investment Program Modifications—Erin Maguire, Transportation Planner, and Ethan Lapointe, Senior Transportation Planner

E. Maguire provided an overview of the presentation, providing context that the presentation was intended to solicit early feedback for the development of investment programs under the next Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in 2028.

E. Maguire reiterated the connection between the LRTP and the TIP, namely in how the LRTP sets forth the investment programs and goals for projects funded by the TIP, and described each of the seven MPO investment programs and investment target amounts for the LRTP.

E. Lapointe summarized how LRTP investment program targets compared to actual investments under the current Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2026–30 TIP and the Draft FFYs 2027–31 TIP. He noted consistent performance for Complete Streets and Major Infrastructure, but qualified that this was a coincidence of project delays and cost increases rather than funding of additional projects.

E. Lapointe highlighted a substantial decline in investments in the Intersection Improvements and Community Connections programs.

E. Lapointe reiterated the objective of the presentation as providing a high-level assessment of how investment programs could evolve in the next LRTP with strategic pivots based on project proponent demand. E. Lapointe identified how the persistent trend of cost increases has limited the number of projects funded on the TIP, and how a smaller number of projects were bearing greater influence on the MPO's performance against investment program targets.

E. Lapointe indicated that challenges and rising costs for project design have incentivized municipalities to develop larger projects to capture economies of scale, which has limited interest in smaller investment programs such as Intersection Improvements.

E. Lapointe reviewed the background of the Community Connections program, noting that the MPO's original 2018 vision for the program differed substantially from its implementation in 2026. This was in part due to the creation of new investment programs in the *Destination 2050* LRTP, namely Bikeshare Support and Transit Transformation, that overlapped with this program, alongside project design challenges.

E. Lapointe suggested that the decline in interest in Intersection Improvements and Community Connections could present an opportunity for the MPO board to consolidate the programs for a new safety-oriented program that builds off of quick-build, Vision Zero projects, meeting the spirit of the Community Connections program and intention of the Intersection Improvements program.

E. Lapointe framed the discussion for the committee by posing three questions:

1. In your opinion, are the investment programs meaningfully helping the MPO to achieve its goals?
2. What are some strengths and weaknesses of the MPO's current investment programs? Are there unmet needs? Should some programs be more specific as to their intent?
3. What are some short-term ways to improve investment programs? What are some longer-term methods?

Discussion

J. Rowe asked a clarifying question regarding MassDOT's quick-build programs for vulnerable user safety and their comparatively faster timelines than traditional TIP projects. J. Rowe asked if the intent was to set-aside funds in the TIP to deliver projects through that process?

E. Lapointe noted that the average TIP projects take 5-10 years, whereas MassDOT's quick-build style projects take about 2-3 years. While not as quick as the original vision of Community Connections projects, they are still a dramatic improvement over the average. If the MPO board wanted to advance this strategy today, projects would likely be funded in FFY 2029.

Len Diggins, At-Large Town (Town of Arlington), asked about differences in the investment program targets in the LRTP between FFY 2029 and 2033 and their origin.

E. Maguire responded that they arose during development of *Destination 2050* as Major Infrastructure projects had overlapping construction schedules.

L. Diggins recalled that decision and said he remembered it was a deviation and thought that at the time the board should have deliberated further before committing to that change. He asked if perhaps it would be more useful to depict the investment program targets as a composite of the two target sets based on LRTP timeband.

E. Maguire noted that having two sets of targets has proven difficult to communicate effectively and will likely be a recurring challenge.

L. Diggins reiterated concerns about deviation in the investment program targets and said that the MPO should be more clear about these targets and make further deliberation in the future.

E. Bourassa asked to review the TIP Investment Over Time Chart depicting TIP funding trends against LRTP program targets.

Karl Alexander, Community Advisory Council, highlighted that the greatest discrepancy was between the Transit Transformation program target and actual investment in the TIP. The Transit Transformation program represented 5 percent of the target, but the real investment level in the TIP was much higher, suggesting that the 5 percent target should perhaps be set higher.

J. Rowe asked if staff wanted to clarify further given Transit Transformation was one of the newest investment programs.

E. Lapointe responded that Transit Transformation was an evolution of the Transit Modernization program adopted for *Destination 2050*.

E. Chute noted that MPO transit funding trends were related to years-long strategies for managing project readiness, and indicated hope that MPO policy updates would lead to improvements in the upcoming fiscal year. E. Chute reiterated interest in seeing a bench of smaller municipal projects that could advance with more flexible use of planning and design funds.

J. Rowe stated that this is an opportunity for MPO staff and the board to work to direct and identify the types of projects that best align with the MPO's goals to generate demand for new and exciting TIP projects.

E. Chute emphasized the importance of alignment with MPO goals.

Annette Demchur, MPO staff, reiterated that LRTP investment program targets were long-range targets that do not necessarily need to be met each year, and therefore charts showing investment program trends are meant to depict progress towards targets rather than achievement.

J. Rowe asked if there were opportunities in the TIP development process where it would be helpful for the MPO board to be reminded of the importance of target-tracking.

E. Bourassa supported investment program strategies set in the LRTP and progress that the MPO has made in the last 15 years of LRTP development. He noted that Community Connections may require further review or changes. He asked for clarification about whether the Bikeshare Support program was exclusive of bikeshare expansion or if it applies to both replacement and expansion.

E. Bourassa asked which projects were currently listed in the MPO's LRTP. E. Maguire noted the Route 1 and University Avenue project in Norwood, the Interstate 495 and Route 1A ramps in Wrentham, the Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue in Boston, McGrath Boulevard construction in Somerville, the Route 126/135 grade crossing project in Framingham, and the Reconstruction of Hartwell Avenue and Bedford Street in Lexington.

E. Lapointe noted advertisement dates for the above projects, which were listed in the TIP. He also noted that the Western Avenue project in Lynn, which was not listed in the LRTP despite prior applications for inclusion, is classified as Major Infrastructure in the TIP due to its cost threshold.

E. Bourassa asked if the Major Infrastructure definition required meeting a cost threshold and a capacity modification. E. Lapointe noted it can be either or both—the project must either cost \$50 million or more or modify capacity. This definition applies to both roadway and transit projects.

Meghan Roche, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton), reiterated an earlier comment about how changes to the design process are leading to increases to project scopes and costs. M. Roche asked if that trend was why the MPO saw increasing costs on Complete Streets projects, and if there were some of these projects that had originally started out as Intersection Improvement projects prior to scope creep.

L. Diggins noted that saying a project has to be Complete Streets sells active transportation improvements to municipal leadership. L. Diggins returned to discussing LRTP investment program targets and the deviation between timebands, noting that he supported the list of Major Infrastructure targets. L. Diggins also noted that incorporating last-mile improvements from Community Connections into a Vision Zero strategy would be a good fit.

L. Diggins also noted that the MPO should differentiate between the project pipeline and the project bench when deliberately considering differences among the projects in development for funding.

J. Rowe noted that the last 4-8 years of MPO work through grants demonstrates an opportunity to leverage the TIP to support those efforts to continue in a direction of using regional funds to support municipal priorities with regional significance. J. Rowe also highlighted opportunities to learn from peer MPOs to support larger ambitions such as regional rail or bicycle and pedestrian network gap mapping through coalition-building and convening.

E. Lapointe noted that having a sustainable funding pathway through the TIP is key to maintaining both a project bench and project pipeline. The next few TIP cycles will struggle to fund projects in the outer years of the TIP, so getting creative with developing municipal projects with a bench will buy time to create a more formal process that would support a project pipeline, akin to Transit Modernization before it became Transit Transformation.

J. Rowe noted prior conversations between City of Boston staff and MPO staff and how some recurring themes had come up in discussions, one being a need for a collective procurement of goods that are consistently needed by municipalities. For example, municipalities could coordinate on procurement of regionally owned striping equipment to accomplish efficiencies, collective fleet procurement, red light and bus lane enforcement equipment, or add-ons such as green infrastructure, lighting, and other street amenities.

6. Members' Items

L. Diggins and Tom Bent, Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), noted the abundant attendance at Chamber of Commerce-led World Cup watch parties in Somerville.

J. Rowe mentioned how events presented interesting examples of ways to reconfigure streets.

K. Alexander invited attendees to join the Mystic River Watershed Association and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council on a joint bike ride to tour half a dozen different projects, several of which were funded through the TIP. The event is scheduled for August 5, 2026, at 5:00 PM.

7. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Len Diggins (Town of Arlington) and seconded by Tom Bent (Inner Core Committee, City of Somerville). The motion carried.

Attendance¹

Members	Representatives and Alternates
City of Boston	Jen Rowe
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)	Sam Taylor
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)	
MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)	Tyler Terrasi
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	Meghan Roche
Community Advisory Council	Karl Alexander
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Len Diggins
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)	Erin Chute

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Annette Demchur, Director of Planning and Policy
Erin Maguire, Transportation Planner
Ethan Lapointe, Senior Transportation Planner

¹ The full list of meeting attendees was not available for this meeting due to an error with the Zoom Client. The attendees list reflects roll call attendance from committee members and the record of individuals who spoke during the meeting.

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Boston, MA 02116

Phone: 857.702.3700

Email: civilrights@ctps.org

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