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

October 5, 2026, Meeting Minutes

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

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

MPO staff called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 8.)

2. Chair's Report—Karl Alexander, Mystic River Watershed Association

K. Alexander noted that the Mystic River Watershed Association and MassBike will be stepping into the chair and vice chair roles.

K. Alexander provided updates from MPO board and committee meetings in September. He noted the federal certification review, modifications to the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and the public comment period for Amendment One to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Amendment Two to the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

K. Alexander noted that there will be space during this meeting for Advisory Council members to discuss the amendments so the chair and vice chair can represent the Advisory Council's collective position when the amendments are endorsed.

3. Public Comments

Michaela Grenier noted the procedures for the public comment period.

Wig Zamore (member of the public) shared interest in the Urban Ring project using electrified rail and connecting it to the Grand Junction Railroad. W. Zamore noted that using the Grand Junction Railroad could serve lower Mystic communities which have the densest environmental justice populations in eastern Massachusetts and are currently underserved by public transit. W. Zamore said the Urban Ring would be a timely project with other ongoing development and investments.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2026, meeting was made by the Mystic River Watershed Association (Karl Alexander) and seconded by 495/MetroWest Partnership (Jason Palitsch). The following Advisory Council members voted to approve the September meeting minutes

- Karl Alexander (Mystic River Watershed Association)
- Maureen Alyward (TownGreen)
- Maha Aslam (LivableStreets Alliance)
- Pat Bibbins (Bike to the Sea)
- Angie Cradock (Prevention Research Center on Nutrition and Physical Activity, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health)
- Chris Friend (TransitMatters)
- Sophia Galimore (Watertown TMA)
- Morgan Griffiths (Town of Natick)
- Jesse Kanson-Benanav (Abundant Housing MA)
- Meg von Lossnitzer (Mystic Valley Aging Services)
- Galen Mook (MassBike)
- Scott Mullen (A Better City)
- Paulina Muratore (Conservation Law Foundation)
- Jason Palitsch (495/MetroWest Partnership)
- Reggie Ramos (Transportation for Massachusetts)
- Jim Tarr (City of Chelsea)
- Mara Tu (Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation)

The motion carried and the September minutes were approved.

5. Transportation Improvement Program Investment Programs Discussion—Ethan Lapointe and Griffin O'Neill, MPO staff

G. O'Neill introduced himself as the new Transportation Planner for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

E. Lapointe noted the pre-read materials, which provide an outline of investment programs, targets, and performance to date as a reference for the presentation and discussion.

E. Lapointe noted that the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) provides a framework for how TIP projects are funded. MPO staff use the goals and objectives set through the LRTP to help prioritize which projects get funded and to categorize projects through investment programs. Staff are interested in soliciting feedback from

Advisory Council members as staff begin to evaluate the effectiveness of the current investment programs and consider potential changes to the investment programs as part of the development of the next LRTP.

E. Lapointe discussed the TIP solicitation process, which allocates approximately 150 million dollars annually to Regional Target projects. TIP projects are proposed by municipalities to the MPO for funding consideration. Staff rely on investment programs to categorize project types and evaluate them accordingly. E. Lapointe noted that while there are seven different categories, there is substantial overlap between categories.

E. Lapointe noted that the LRTP provides a framework for investment programs and sets forth a target level of funding for making funding decisions through the TIP. He discussed the Intersection Improvement program as an example of an investment program where the average annual TIP funding is lower than the LRTP's target level of funding for the program. The lower than anticipated level of Intersection Improvement program funding is a result of increasing design timelines and costs for municipalities. These factors have led municipalities to submit more corridor project proposals (which are categorized under Complete Streets) instead of Intersection Improvement project proposals.

E. Lapointe discussed the Community Connections program, which was launched in 2020 to address first-and-last mile transportation needs for non-automobile travel. Projects under the Community Connections program are intended to have a faster timeline compared the average TIP project, which takes about five to ten years. E. Lapointe discussed how the program has evolved, including a decline in interest in Community Connections since the creation of the Transit Transportation and Bikeshare Support investment programs. He noted that there is still demand for quick-build projects to fill gaps but there is currently no clear funding mechanism.

E. Lapointe discussed that staff are interested in potentially using the development of the next LRTP as an opportunity to combine the Intersection Improvements and Community Connections program. This program would address the demand for quick-build projects from municipalities and leverage the strategies from the MPO's Vision Zero Action Plan to create a long-term funding path for safety-oriented projects.

E. Lapointe stated that staff are engaging community members early during the development of the next LRTP to help identify unmet needs in project funding types. This feedback will help define the future of MPO investment programs.

E. Lapointe shared discussion questions for Advisory Council members to discuss in breakout groups. M. Grenier shared logistics for the breakout groups.

Discussion

The first discussion question for the breakout group asked how the MPO should balance funding short-term safety projects with traditional TIP projects.

Advisory Council members asked if the MPO could play the role of organizing group procurement for equipment such as bollards. MPO staff, Advisory Council members, and members of the public discussed the need for the MPO to play this role and challenges related to procurement for small projects and storage for equipment.

Advisory Council members asked about the MPO's scoring and selection process for quick-build and Vision Zero projects. MPO staff noted that if the MPO moves forward with a dedicated TIP funding program for quick-build safety projects, it will require a new scoring process.

Advisory Council members asked if the MPO could take elements of a Complete Streets project to begin implementing at a smaller scale or using quick-build elements. A member of the public stated that it is important for municipalities to chip away at bigger projects.

Advisory Council members discussed balancing types of needs and limited staff capacity to champion projects and move them forward. Advisory Council members asked about project scoring and the regional balance of projects that cross municipal borders.

Advisory Council members noted interest in seeing more funding going to quick-build projects that are built onto larger projects. Advisory Council members and members of the public discussed how quick-build projects can help build momentum for larger projects that have a longer timeline.

A member of the public noted that given funding capacity, intersection projects seem to be the most cost-effective opportunity to have an impact on safety.

A member of the public noted the need for small, medium, and large projects and to engage with professionals and community members using kind and realistic messaging.

The second discussion question for the breakout group asked about other project types the MPO should include in the investment project types.

Advisory Council members discussed quick-build projects that could be built onto larger projects, such as improvements to pedestrian or bike safety along a major project (e.g., the Somerville Community Path extension along the MBTA Green Line Extension).

Advisory Council members discussed inviting municipalities to propose projects that demonstrate the use of technology, innovate solving transportation challenges, encourage cross-municipality investments, and provide cross-jurisdictional services.

Advisory Council members suggested looking to peer MPOs' project types to understand how we can better innovate.

Advisory Council members discussed making investments in commuter rail and regional rail to improve service and encourage residents to use alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles.

Advisory Council members shared a need for expanding transportation services and programs between municipalities.

Advisory Council members noted a need for improving trails for all by designing for accessibility.

Advisory Council members discussed design and construction, challenges to getting funding from Chapter 90, and funding the design process.

A member of the public discussed the North-South Rail Link as a project to improve the quality of regional rail, which would open mobility options for the region.

6. Advisory Council Member Share Out

M. Grenier noted that the Advisory Council chair asked to discuss a separate topic during this portion of the meeting. The share out was postponed to the November meeting to allow space for the discussion requested by the chair.

K. Alexander shared information about the public comment period for Amendment One to the TIP and Amendment Two to the LRTP. K. Alexander stated the goal for this discussion is to give space for Advisory Council members to have a dialogue about the amendments and for staff to consider the public comments received. M. Grenier shared information about the amendments.

Discussion

Maha Aslam (LivableStreets Alliance) shared thoughts about the public comment portion of the October 8 MPO board meeting. M. Aslam asked MPO staff for effective strategies for advocacy organizations to share their feedback and about how public comments will be weighted during decision-making. M. Grenier noted that all public comments received will be shared with the MPO board for board members to review before deliberating and making a vote. The compiled list of comments received during the public comment period will be publicly available on the MPO's online calendar, attached to the meeting date of the vote. M. Grenier shared information about the MPO's public comment period procedure. E. Lapointe noted this public comment period follows standard procedures for federally funded projects. K. Alexander noted that the Advisory Council has a representative vote on the MPO board, and the chair and vice chair will take into consideration the input shared by members. Sean Rourke (MPO staff) shared the link to the public comment form in the Zoom chat.

Reggie Ramos (Transportation for Massachusetts) asked about the MPO's procedure and bylaws for voting on amendments. S. Rourke noted that a quorum of twelve MPO board members at a minimum is required to take a vote, and once the quorum is established an affirmative vote from the majority of members present is required to pass a motion.

Paulina Muratore (Conservation Law Foundation) asked if the MPO board has ever received a similar amount of public input on a project as on the amendments and if there was any action taken as a result. Tegin Teich (Executive Director, MPO staff) noted that there have been a few times, such as when the MPO board received comments on TIP projects being reviewed for inclusion in scenarios. T. Teich noted that while this public comment period has been different, there have been actions taken by the board as a result of elevated public comments in the past.

M. Aslam asked Advisory Council members for effective methods to leverage their capacity as advocates to share feedback with the MPO board. M. Grenier noted the role of the Advisory Council is to represent the different constituencies served by the Advisory Council member entities. M. Grenier also noted that the Advisory Council has a direct vote in the MPO board through the chair and the Advisory Council should determine what type of deliberation among members is needed in order for the chair to represent the Advisory Council's nuanced perspective during board votes.

Jim Taar (City of Chelsea) discussed the improvements of bus rapid transit for the City of Chelsea. He shared that studies have discussed how this form of public transportation investment has not driven displacement compared to large scale

projects such as light rail. He noted that bus rapid transit projects take a mindful approach to the community, including businesses and residents in the service area.

P. Muratore noted that MPO staff should provide clarity and transparency on how public input will be used and ensure closing the feedback loop.

G. Mook asked if Advisory Council members will be able to review the public comments received and asked about the MPO's process for consolidating comments given the amount of public interest. M. Grenier noted that public comments will be shared verbatim and summarized and that both would be shared with the MPO board and posted to the MPO meeting calendar section of the MPO website. M. Grenier noted that the date for the board vote on the amendments had not yet been set, but that the public comments would be posted to the appropriate meeting date page in advance of the meeting.

Jen Rowe (City of Boston) stated that Advisory Council members can reach out for more information about the project.

K. Alexander encouraged MPO staff to share comments clearly and in a timely manner for the MPO board and Advisory Council members to consider public input.
K. Alexander told Advisory Council members that the chair and vice chair will consider input from this meeting to ensure the Advisory Council's voice is representative of the group.

7. Members' Items

G. Mook noted that World Day of Remembrance is November 15 and reported that the Vision Zero coalition is partnering with the Families for Safe Streets Massachusetts to host events. Additionally, there will be mini-grants for communities throughout Massachusetts to help host events. G. Mook noted more information can be found on MassBike's website.

S. Mullen announced that the City of Boston will be hosting the "Ride & Chill" family-friendly event in Franklin Park on October 11. J. Rowe asked people to reach out if they are interested in volunteering for the event.

8. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the A Better City (Scott Mullen) and seconded by the Mystic River Watershed Association (Karl Alexander). The motion carried.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
Chelsea	Sara Han, Jim Tarr
Natick	Morgan Griffiths

Community Based Organizations	Attendees
495/MetroWest Partnership	Jason Palitsch
A Better City	Scott Mullen
Abundant Housing MA	Jesse Kanson-Benanav
Bike to the Sea	Pat Bibbins
Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation	Mara Tu
Conservation Law Foundation	Paulina Muratore
LivableStreets Alliance	Maha Aslam
MA Healthy Aging Collaborative	James Fuccione
MassBike	Galen Mook
Mystic River Watershed Association	Karl Alexander
Mystic Valley Aging Services	Meg von Lossnitzer, SheilaBuckland
Prevention Research Center (PRC) on Nutrition and Physical Activity, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health	Angie Cradock
Transportation for Massachusetts	Reggie Ramos
TownGreen	Maureen Aylward
TransitMatters	Chris Friend
Watertown TMA	Sophia Galimore

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Ali	
Robert	
Naveed	
Kristine Acevedo	Mattapan Food and Finess Coalition
Lauren Collins	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Elizabeth Maldari	Town of Arlington
Marcy Murninghan	
Jen Rowe	City of Boston
Tyler Terrasi	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Stephanie Williams	Alternatives for Community & Environment, Inc.
Wig Zamore	
Megan Zammuto	Town of Concord

MPO Staff
Michaela Grenier
Betsy Harvey Herzfeld
Ethan Lapointe
Griffin O'Neill
Gina Perille
Sean Rourke
Tegin Teich
Ibbu Quraishi

Civil Rights Notice to the Public

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Boston, MA 02116
Phone: 857.702.3700
Email: civilrights@bostonmpo.org

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