

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

March 12, 2026, Meeting

1:00 PM–2:32 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Jen Rowe, Chair, representing the City of Boston

Materials

There were no attached meeting materials.

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

J. Rowe welcomed committee members to the meeting of the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee. See attendance on page 12.

2. Public Comments

Marzie Galazka (Town of Swampscott) requested that the MPO board continue to fund the Swampscott Rail Trail, project ID 610666. She stated that the Town of Swampscott is working with a MassDOT project manager and advancing the design, and that the trail is a regional priority included in the Border to Boston and East Coast Greenway projects.

3. Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2027-31 TIP Projects—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

E. Lapointe reviewed the five projects currently listed in the FFYs 2026-30 TIP that experienced cost changes of more than 10 percent, for projects with a programmed cost greater than \$10 million, or \$2.5 million, for projects with a programmed cost less than \$10 million. (See Tables 1 and 2.)

**Table 1
Larger Project Cost Increases**

Project Name		Current Cost	New Cost
Belmont- Community Path, Belmont	100% Comments		\$48,934,961
Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)	(01/15/2026)	\$27,306,266	+79.2%
Boston- Bridge Preservation, B-16-066 (38D),	25% Received		\$20,741,786
Cambridge Street over MBTA	(10/14/2025)	\$16,531,736	+25.5%
	25% Comments		\$39,015,364
Brookline- Rehabilitation of Washington Street	(01/27/2026)	\$27,959,721	+39.5%
	25% Received		\$33,813,139
Lynn- Rehabilitation of Essex Street	(09/24/2025)	\$23,567,554	+43.5%
Lynn- Rehabilitation of Western Avenue	25% Comments		\$68,189,552
(Route 107)	(12/02/2025)	\$45,897,600	+48.6%

MBTA = Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. MCRT = Massachusetts Central Rail Trail.

E. Lapointe noted that the City of Boston and the consultant for the Boston's Bridge Preservation project provided a memo for review on the MPO meeting calendar for the March 19, 2026, MPO board meeting ([pdf](#)) ([html](#)), specifying reasons for the recent cost increase.

**Table 2
Smaller Project Cost Increases**

Project Name	Design Status	Current Cost	New Cost
Hingham- Improvements on Route 3A from			
Otis Street/Cole Road including	100% Received		\$35,385,132
Summer Street and Rotary	(12/29/2025)	\$31,949,531	+10.8%
	25% Received		
	(08/25/2025)		
	PRC Resubmitted		\$7,983,824
Malden- Spot Pond Brook Greenway	(12/16/2025)	\$4,883,749	+63.5%
	100% Received		\$28,145,586
Salem- Boston Street Improvements	(02/27/2026)	\$25,155,213	+11.9%
Woburn- Intersection Reconstruction at			
Route 3 and Bedford Road and South	100% Expected		\$6,168,161
Bedford Street	April 2026	\$4,883,749	+26.3%

PRC = MassDOT Project Review Committee.

E. Lapointe noted that Salem's Boston Street project was given an FFY 2028 readiness year during TIP Readiness Days as the project lacked a 100 percent submission. However, with the recent 100 percent submission in February, MPO staff are recommending a FFY 2027 readiness year with some risk.

E. Lapointe stated that the proponent for the Sudbury-Framingham Bike Path Construction of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (Phase 3) project submitted a 75 percent design on February 25, 2026, putting the project ahead of schedule for FFY 2029. The project's cost decreased by \$1,518,140, or 17.6 percent. E. Lapointe noted that the project is a strong candidate for acceleration to an earlier programming year during the development of the FFYs 2028-32 TIP.

E. Lapointe presented two projects in the Statewide Highway Program that could be funded with Regional Target funding to resolve budget surpluses:

- Natick- Lake Cochituate Path, with an estimated cost \$6,397,960, had a Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) submission on November 4, 2025. There are some right-of-way and Section 4F permits to address. The project is ahead of the MPO's readiness guidelines for FFY 2027. It is currently funded in FFY 2027 in the Statewide Highway Program.
- Sharon- Cottage Street School Improvements, with an estimated cost \$3,114,162. A Design Public Hearing (DPH) is scheduled for March 26, 2026. There are no significant permitting challenges. Under MPO readiness guidelines, it is a candidate for FFY 2029 programming. However, due to the simple scope of the project, it may be accelerated for FFY 2028.

Discussion

Dennis Giombetti (MetroWest Regional Collaborative) asked what the original programming years and costs were for each project.

Adriana Jacobsen (MPO staff) responded with the following information.

- Belmont Community Path: The original cost was \$21,034,382 and the original programming year was FFY 2026 in the FFYs 2023-27 TIP.
- Boston- Bridge Preservation: There was no cost change and the original programming year was FFY 2026 in the FFYs 2024-28 TIP.
- Brookline- Washington Street: There was no cost change and the original programming year was FFY 2027 in the FFYs 2023-27 TIP.
- Lynn- Essex Street: The original cost was \$19,664,320 and the original programming year was FFY 2024 in the FFYs 2020-24 TIP.

- Lynn- Western Avenue: There was no cost change and the original programming year was FFY 2027 in the FFYs 2023-27 TIP.

Eric Bourassa (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) asked for breakdown of the costs of the Belmont Community Path project, specifically how much funding would be dedicated to the path itself versus the tunnel under the commuter rail tracks. He noted that the tunnel connects Belmont Center and the public middle and high schools to several neighborhoods.

E. Lapointe responded that the cost increases were in part due to costs related to managing diversions for the commuter rail during the construction of the tunnel and the trail. He stated that he did not have a detailed cost breakdown but referred to a rail crossing project in Cambridge with a cost of about \$16 million after Project Review Committee approval. Rail crossing projects and rail-with-trail projects tend to incur higher costs than other rail trail projects.

E. Bourassa asked about the cost history of the Hingham Route 3A project.

E. Lapointe answered that the original cost was \$8.7 million in the FFYs 2020-24 TIP, but the project scope grew over the years. The cost was \$15.5 million in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP and \$28.7 in the FFYs 2025-29 TIP.

Lenard Diggins (Town of Arlington) asked if the board would need to leave surplus funding in FFY 2028 in order to accelerate either the Sharon Cottage Street School Improvements or the Sudbury/Framingham Bruce Freeman Phase 3 projects.

E. Lapointe responded that the board would need to leave an unprogrammed balance in FFY 2028 to accommodate accelerated projects, but he noted that surpluses in the earlier years of the TIP often arise from delays late in the design process.

4. FFYs 2027-31 Development Discussion—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

E. Lapointe listed the outstanding issues for resolution before the draft TIP is released for public comment in April. The board needs to evaluate whether or not to accommodate several project cost increases. The Boston Bridge Preservation project needs to be considered for an exception to the readiness guidelines. Fill-in projects, including Transit Transformation and Statewide Highway Program projects, need to be considered for programming. Lastly, the board needs to consider the programming of new municipal-proponent projects. Table 3 shows the impact to programming balances in each year of the TIP when accounting for cost increases.

Table 3
Approximate Fiscal Constraint of FFYs 2027-31 Program, as of March 5, 2026

	FFY 2027	FFY 2028	FFY 2029	FFY 2030	FFY 2031
Regional Target Budget	\$153,053,705	\$31,949,531	\$157,842,971	\$155,744,426	\$159,173,521
Proposed Programming	\$103,894,337	\$4,883,749	\$147,157,952	\$142,433,302	\$158,873,255
Program Balance (Initial)	\$49,159,368	\$89,349,056	\$9,166,879	\$13,311,124	\$400,266
Cumulative Cost Changes	+\$19,611,554	+\$0	-\$1,518,140	+\$30,481,673	+\$0
Program Balance (Post-Increase)	\$29,547,814	\$89,547,814	\$10,685,019	-\$17,170,549	\$300,266

The cost increases are a result of the cost increases detailed in Tables 1 and 2. The cost decrease in FFY 2029 is a result of the Sudbury/Framingham Bruce Freeman Phase 3 project.

E. Lapointe stated that there is insufficient funding to both cover project cost increases and program new projects in FFYs 2030-31. In order to fund new projects or continue funding projects that do not meet the MPO's readiness guidelines, the board would either need to deny cost increases, remove other projects, or deplete funding reserves. E. Lapointe noted that the MPO must fund the entire cost of a project once programmed.

Discussion

E. Bourassa stated that the board may want to utilize advanced construction funding to resolve these deficits, and asked what the limitations on this strategy were.

E. Lapointe responded that the required minimum cost threshold for a project to utilize advanced construction funding is \$25 million, so many projects would not be eligible.

E. Bourassa asked if MPO staff had projected how much funding would be available in FFY 2032.

E. Lapointe responded that there is about \$70 million of unprogrammed funding in FFY 2032, after accounting for programming for Boston's Rutherford Avenue project, Lynn's Western Avenue project, and the set-asides.

Brad Rawson (Inner Core Committee) stated that if the MPO board does not adhere to the readiness and cost control policies, the \$70 million unprogrammed balance in FFY 2032 may quickly diminish.

E. Bourassa asked if there were any projects in FFYs 2029-31 that may be able to be accelerated.

E. Lapointe responded that the Sudbury/Framingham Bruce Freeman Phase 3 project may be able to be accelerated, but due to its low cost it might not have a major effect on the program. Some of the advanced construction funding in FFY 2029 for the McGrath Highway project in Somerville could be shifted into FFY 2028, though this might cause significant risk to the program because the impact of a delay out of FFY 2028 would be greater.

E. Lapointe stated that there are three potential projects to consider for acceleration from FFY 2030. The first is the Boston Bridge Preservation project on Cambridge Street. The MassDOT-recommended readiness year for this project was FFY 2028 because of the relatively simple project scope. The other two projects could be considered for acceleration into FFY 2029, but are unlikely to address the budget surplus in FFY 2028. These projects are the Everett Beacham Street project and the Brookline Washington Street project. E. Lapointe recommended that if these projects were to be accelerated to FFY 2029, they be programmed with an advanced construction schedule to mitigate risk to the program. He noted that if the Boston Bridge Preservation project were to be accelerated to FFY 2028, it would both mitigate some of the surplus in that programming year and resolve the deficit in FFY 2030.

Erin Chute (Town of Brookline) presented information on the cost estimates for the Washington Street project in Brookline. The project consultant examined the Contract Advertising and Planning Estimator (CAPE) to determine the reasons for the recent cost increase on the project. The subtotal for construction items is \$23.4 million. Both MassDOT and the Town of Brookline added separate 10 percent construction contingencies. Other shared budget items included construction administration costs and police detail costs. The MassDOT formula applied an additional 25 percent design contingency with the submission of the 25 percent design. The MPO's inflation estimate added an additional 16 percent. The difference between the consultant and MPO costs is primarily due to how contingency and inflation estimates are applied, not due to differences in project scope. E. Chute encouraged the board to factor in the phase of each project when considering cost estimates because projects in later design stages may have additional contingencies applied. She gave an example of another project in Brookline, the Davis Path bridge, where the Town's estimate is about \$5 million more than MassDOT's estimate. This discrepancy could lead to issues with the TIP program's budget assumptions if not accounted for.

B. Rawson highlighted that MassDOT staff had identified low-risk factors for the Boston Bridge Preservation project.

Michael O'Dowd (MassDOT) reiterated that FFY 2028 would be an achievable readiness year for the Boston Bridge Preservation project based on the project schedule and the progress on the right-of-way process.

E. Bourassa asked how the FFY 2030 budget would change if the Boston Bridge Preservation project were to be programmed in FFY 2028 instead of FFY 2030.

E. Lapointe answered that there would be about a \$6 million surplus in FFY 2030.

B. Rawson encouraged the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee members to relay this information to the full MPO board in order to resolve the budget challenges faced in the TIP program.

B. Rawson asked if the Boston Boylston Street project (project ID 606453) had met any recent design milestones or public engagement milestones.

J. Rowe responded that there was a 25 percent submittal in 2021 that covered a larger scope, including an intersection that was the site of a cyclist fatality. The intersection is owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). DCR had initially supported the project, but later decided to address the area as part of a separate feasibility study on Park Drive. The City of Boston is continuing to work with DCR on this project. Subsequently, the City of Boston rescoped the project with MassDOT and are now working toward a revised 25 percent design. A public meeting is planned for late April. J. Rowe noted that the area is on the high-crash network and that there are large pedestrian volumes due to several nearby attractions, including Fenway Park. In the interim, there have been some quick-build improvements, including buffered bike lanes. The project would make these improvements permanent.

L. Diggins asked the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee to consider how long a project should be able to stay on the TIP without advertising.

E. Bourassa stated that individual project delays have impacts on the whole TIP program. He encouraged that this message be delivered to project proponents. He asked if the design could be accelerated if the City of Boston decides not to move the street curbs and if the project could be a potential candidate for FFY 2028.

J. Rowe answered that the project schedule reflects that the project is of less complexity and a smaller scope than other projects. The project proponents would not be opposed to acceleration of the project in future years if the project were to outpace the MPO's readiness guidelines.

5. FFYs 2026-30 Amendment 3 Preview—*Adriana Jacobsen, MPO Staff*

A. Jacobsen gave a preview of the FFYs 2026-30 TIP Amendment Three. Several projects are proposed for programming as fill-ins in FFY 2026 to address the budget surplus. These comprise all four projects that applied for FFY 2026 funding as well as two CATA projects that operate on the state fiscal year (SFY) and require some funding in FFY 2026 as they are seeking funding in SFY 2027. New projects are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
FFYs 2026-30 Amendment Three, New Projects

Proponent	ID	Name	Proposed FFY 2026 Funding	Score
CATA	S13388	CATA Access for All	\$198,288	39.8
CATA	S13389	Cape Ann Dialysis Transportation Procurement of 10 Compressed	\$241,404	39.8
MWRTA	S13390	Natural Gas Vehicles	\$3,400,000	49.5
MBTA	S13393	Symphony Station Downtown Crossing Vertical Transportation Improvements	\$30,000,000	50.6
MBTA	S13394	Phase 2 Joint Municipality Bluebikes	\$15,000,000	42.6
MAPC	S13396	Expansion	\$5,944,032	85

CATA = Cape Ann Transportation Authority. FFY = Federal Fiscal Year. MAPC = Metropolitan Area Planning Council. MBTA = Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. MWRTA = Metro West Regional Transit Authority.

There are three design projects, listed in Table 5, seeking additional funding in FFY 2026. Two of the projects, the Holliston and Sherborn projects, were funded with Regional Target funding in FFY 2025 as part of the Design Pilot. The third, the Marblehead project, was funded with an earmark in FFY 2025. All three project proponents are requesting additional funding in FFY 2026 to accommodate higher-than-expected design bids.

Table 5
FFYs 2026-30 Amendment Three, Project Changes (Design)

ID	Name	FFY 2025 Award	FFY 2026 Proposed Additional Funding
	Holliston- Improvements at the Intersection of Route 16 and Whitney		
S12984	Street and Approaches	\$250,000	\$350,000
	Sherborn- Reconstruction of Route 27 and		
S12983	Route 16 (Design Only)	\$900,000	\$887,550
	Marblehead- Border to Boston Trail		
S13092	Design	\$175,000	\$125,000

Two projects in the Regional Target program in their final design stages have cost increases. These cost estimate changes were made as part of the final design submissions. These projects are shown in Table 6.

Table 6
FFYs 2026-30 Amendment Three, Project Changes (Construction)

ID	Name	FFY 2026 Current Funding	FFY 2026 Proposed Funding
	Peabody- Multi-Use Path Construction of Independence Greenway at I-95		
610544	and Route 1	\$19,127,610	\$23,251,038
	Lynnfield- Rail Trail Construction, from Ford Avenue to Nichols Lane		
613163	(Phase 1)	\$5,829,514	\$5,901,323

Four projects are being proposed for delay out of FFY 2026 as they are unlikely to advertise in FFY 2026. The Boston Boylston Street project will be proposed for FFY 2031 funding during the development of the FFYs 2027-31 TIP. The other three projects will be proposed for FFY 2027 funding. These projects are shown in Table 7.

Table 7
FFYs 2026-30 Amendment Three, Project Delays

ID	Name	FFY 2026 Funding
609204	Belmont- Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase I)	\$27,306,266
	Boston- Improvements on Boylston Street, from Intersection of	
606453	Brookline Avenue and Park Drive to Ipswich Street	\$10,185,935
	Woburn- Intersection Reconstruction at Route 3 (Cambridge Road) and	
608067	Bedford Road and South Bedford Street	\$4,883,750
	Hingham- Improvements on Route 3A from Otis Street/Cole Road	
	including Summer Street and Rotary, Rockland Street to George	
605168	Washington Boulevard	\$21,949,531

MCRT = Massachusetts Central Rail Trail

Discussion

B. Rawson asked if the new projects had been discussed and evaluated by the MPO staff and the MPO board.

A. Jacobsen responded that all the new projects being considered for programming in FFY 2026 applied for TIP funding as part of the usual TIP project solicitation effort, with the exception of the CATA projects, which applied as part of the Community Transit Grant program. All projects have been scored by staff and presented to the MPO board.

E. Lapointe noted that, unlike during other TIP development cycles, this year MPO staff were able to solicit projects specifically for inclusion in the FFY 2026 programming year due to advance warning about the FFY 2026 budget surplus. This gave MPO staff time to properly evaluate these projects.

B. Rawson noted that the projects in the Towns of Holliston and Sherborn had been identified as priority candidates for quick-build safety improvements as part of the MPO's Vision Zero Action Program. He commended the harmony between the MPO's planning processes and funding processes as well as the work being done in these two towns. He asked about the readiness statuses of the Lynnfield and Peabody projects that had recent cost increases.

A. Jacobsen answered that MassDOT corroborated that FFY 2026 is an appropriate readiness year for both projects. Both have approved 100 percent design submissions and PS&E submissions.

6. Members' Items

L. Diggins encouraged the board to consider the importance of cost contingencies and buffers for the TIP budget.

E. Chute highlighted the importance of considering whether or not a project's cost estimate has contingencies already incorporated.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2026.

8. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Town of Brookline (Erin Chute) and seconded by the Town of Arlington (Lenard Diggins). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
City of Boston	Jen Rowe
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Brad Rawson
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)	Sam Taylor
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)	Michael O'Dowd
MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)	Tyler Terrasi
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Lexington)	-
Community Advisory Council	Caitlin Allen-Connelly
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Lenard Diggins
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)	Erin Chute

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Adam Salinger-Mullen	MassDOT
Aleida Leza	-
Ben Sun	City of Boston
Barbara Lachance	MassDOT
Benjamin Muller	MassDOT
Carys Lustig	-
Casey Woodley	Cambridge Systematics
Charlotte Fleetwood	City of Boston
Chris Stairs	Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI)
Derek Shooster	MassDOT
Geoffrey Howie	GPI
Glenn Geiler	MBTA
Greg Lucas	Tighe & Bond
Heidi Doyle	Town of Sherborn
James Turnbull	Gill Engineering
Jim Tarr	City of Malden
Joe Fleury	City of Boston
Jon Rockwell	TEC, Inc.
Justin Curewitz	Tighe & Bond
Kristopher Surette	-
Marzie Galazka	Town of Swampscott
Michael Trepanier	MassDOT
Nelson Mui	MWRTA
Preston Huckabee	Gill Engineering
Richard Azzalina	Stantec
Romana Haque Suravi	City of Boston
Sarah Lee	Massachusetts Port Authority

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