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

March 26, 2026, Meeting

1:00 PM–2:30 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Tom Bent, Interim Chair, representing the Inner Core Committee

Decisions

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

- Appoint Tom Bent as the Interim Chair
- Approve the minutes of February 25, 2026

Materials

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. February 25, 2026, TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Meeting Minutes (pdf) (html)
2. Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2027–31 TIP Initial Development Tables (pdf) (html)
3. TIP Project Descriptions (pdf) (html)

Meeting Agenda

1. Action Item: Appointing of Interim Chair

A motion to appoint Tom Bent (Inner Core Committee) was made by Erin Chute (Town of Brookline) and seconded by Meghan Roche (Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination).

2. Introductions

T. Bent welcomed committee members to the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee meeting. See attendance on page 10.

3. Public Comments

There were none.

4. Action Item: Approval of February 25, 2026, Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the City of Boston (Lydia Hausle). The motion carried.

5. FFYs 2027–31 TIP Development Discussion—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff, and Adriana Jacobsen, MPO Staff*

E. Lapointe first stated that the Salem Boston Street Improvements project had a recent additional increase to $30,942,025. At the March 19, 2026, MPO board meeting, the board voted to approve a cost increase on this project from $25,155,213 to $28,145,586. E. Lapointe stated that the board will not need to vote to incorporate the additional increase.

E. Lapointe stated that FFYs 2027 and 2028 have significant budget surpluses of about $48 million each. He listed the transit projects that MPO staff have scored for consideration for programming in these two years. Project descriptions were included on the MPO meeting calendar. E. Lapointe described a variety of “project bundles”, or collections of projects that meet fiscal constraint and resolve the majority of the budget surpluses in FFYs 2027 and 2028. For example, projects could be prioritized by score, by impact on regional equity, station accessibility, resilience, or system reliability, or by any other metric the board wished to investigate.

Discussion

E. Bourassa asked for more information on the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) North Station Rapid Transit Flooring Replacement and the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) hydrogen fuel cell vehicle project.

Adriana Jacobsen (MPO staff) replied that the project was focusing on investigating the source of and addressing trip hazards that have been forming the station’s flooring, creating accessibility and safety issues. She noted that the project descriptions attached in the MPO meeting calendar provided more detailed information on each scored project.

Tyler Terrasi (MWRTA) replied that the MWRTA is not currently operating any hydrogen vehicles, but that the agency wished to explore their usage due to the safety benefits and the lower emissions.

Jim Nee (MWRTA) replied that battery-electric buses are not particularly reliable in the Northeast, especially for longer-range suburban and rural routes. Hydrogen vehicles have a longer range, but fuel sourcing is more difficult. Therefore, the MWRTA is considering both procuring hydrogen to be delivered to the Blandin Hub as well as on-site generation, including renewable sources of said generation. He stated that the maintenance facility line item could be scaled to include or exclude the hydrogen fuel cell related items. Battery-electric and hydrogen-electric vehicles cost approximately $1–1.2 million each. In summation, hydrogen-electric buses have more physical infrastructure needs, but require a smaller fleet size due to improved range.

L. Hausle asked if MPO staff had any perspective on which projects should be prioritized based on a purely financial standpoint.

E. Lapointe replied that some projects, including the Symphony Station project, have a longer construction cycle and therefore have more flexibility as to when funding can be programmed.

T. Terrasi asked if any MBTA projects were currently funded.

E. Lapointe replied that the MBTA's Locomotive Procurement project is an example of a project that is already seeking funding through the MBTA Capital Investment Plan but is requesting additional funding from the MPO.

A. Jacobsen noted that the project descriptions attached in the MPO meeting calendar contain information on whether each MBTA project is already funded, requesting funding for continued operations, or a new project request.

Cost Escalation Projections

A. Jacobsen described research that MPO staff had conducted regarding project cost increases from programming to advertisement. MPO staff collected data on two dozen projects that advertised between FFYs 2021 to 2025. The majority of the projects had a cost increase ranging from 40 percent to 100 percent between programming and advertisement. There were a few outliers with cost increases or more than 200 percent. One of these three projects advertised in FFY 2024; the other two advertised in FFY 2025. The median cost increase was 61 percent, though projects programmed at 25 percent design had a smaller average increase (46 percent) when compared with projects programmed at the Project Review Committee (PRC) approval stage (63 percent).

A. Jacobsen discussed the effects on the current TIP program if similar cost increases were to take place. For this analysis, MPO staff applied a 46 percent increase to projects at the 25 percent design stage and a 63 percent increase to projects at the PRC approval stage. Staff excluded projects at 75 percent and 100 percent design stages from the analysis so as not to overestimate any cost increases, given that none of the projects in the original analysis had been programmed at a 75 percent design stage or later. In addition, staff excluded projects exceeding $50 million because the MPO has never funded projects at this scale and therefore does not have accurate data on how the cost of these projects change over time. With these factors considered, a $129,411,294 cumulative increase is projected.

A. Jacobsen described the trending direction of project cost increases. Seven projects on the TIP, excluding projects programmed as fill-ins from the Statewide Highway Program, have reached a 100 percent design stage. The median cost increase of these projects, from their cost at the time of programming to their latest cost estimate, is 129 percent. A. Jacobsen noted that several of these projects are mid- to large-size projects. Three of the five projects with cost increases more than 100 percent have a current cost estimate of more than $30 million.

A. Jacobsen discussed the effects on the current TIP program if similar cost increases were to take place. For this analysis, MPO staff applied a 129 percent cost increase to the originally programmed project cost of each project currently programmed on the TIP at a 25 percent or PRC approval design stage. For example, if a project had an original cost of $15 million, but is currently programmed on the TIP for $30 million, the 129 percent cost increase would be applied to the original $15 million figure, bringing the projected cost increase to $34.35 million. Therefore, the projected cost increase would be $4.35 million. As with the previous analysis, MPO staff excluded projects at a 75 percent design stage or higher, as well as any project with a cost about $50 million. With these factors taken into account, a $241,580,382 aggregate increase is projected.

Discussion

Lenard Diggins (Town of Arlington) asked if MPO staff believed if five years is a reasonable amount of time for a project to advertise after being programmed on the TIP. He also asked where he could find more detailed project cost information.

A. Jacobsen stated that MPO staff found that the average time for a project to advertise after submitting a 25 percent design was 4.5 years, though there were several outliers in both directions. She added that MPO staff do not have access to much more specific project cost information than the general public does but stated that staff are working with Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to gain access to more information.

M. Roche asked if there were commonalities between projects that had larger cost increases.

A. Jacobsen replied that there were not many trends in that sense; in fact, many different types of projects had significant cost increases. She noted that her data pool was small and that this would be an interesting topic to look into further.

Caitlin Allen-Connelly (Community Advisory Council) asked if there were best practices for regional planning agencies and MPOs to follow regarding cost increases.

E. Lapointe answered that some MPOs are met with less resistance when it comes to removing and delaying projects. For example, some MPOs will remove TIP projects if they are not ready to advertise in a certain year. However, every MPO operates differently.

E. Chute asked if these cost increases were due to inflation adjustments, cost contingencies, scope changes, unforeseen conditions, or other reasons.

A. Jacobsen answered that although MPO staff did not have access to the reasons for cost increases, projects that were programmed at the PRC approval stage experienced higher cost increases than projects programmed at the 25 percent design stage, potentially because of the contingencies accounted for at that stage.

E. Bourassa stated that it seems like many cost increases are out of the control of the proponents, but programming projects that have more advanced designs could lead to lower cost increases overall.

L. Diggins suggested that MassDOT could take responsibility for design costs, which could bring down the design contingencies.

T. Bent asked if these issues might have to do with consultant bandwidth. He also stated that he was not sure if the four percent inflation estimate was sufficient.

New Municipal Projects

E. Lapointe listed the seven municipal-proponent projects eligible for funding in the FFYs 2027–31 TIP, shown in Table 1.

Table 1
New Eligible Projects

Project Name	Design Status	Score	Adjusted Cost
Brookline- Davis Path Bridge	25% Received (08/08/2025)	73.65	$15,904,000
Concord- Assabet River Multi-Use Trail and Bridge Construction	25% Received (01/15/2026)	59.9	$23,121,479
Everett- Reconstruction of Vine Street and Third Street	25% Received (11/05/2025)	67.1	$14,927,573
Malden- Broadway Reconstruction, Everett to Melrose Line	25% Received (2/13/2026)	78	$35,393,082
Marblehead- Village Street Bridge Replacement	25% Comments (12/12/2025)	44.4	$7,820,794
Needham- Newton- Bridge Replacement on Christina Street	Pre-25% Submission (02/27/2026)	74	$6,786,000
Wakefield- Comprehensive Downtown Transportation Improvements	Pre-25% Submission (August 2025)	63.8	$36,176,000
Total			**$140,128,928**

E. Lapointe stated that because there are only a few hundred thousand dollars available in FFY 2031 and only $6 million available in FFY 2030, none of these seven projects can be programmed on the FFYs 2027–31 TIP without removing other projects. There are other projects likely to soon seek funding, including the six projects funded for design under the MPO’s FFY 2025 Project Design Pilot, shown in Table 2, the six projects funded for design in FFY 2026, shown in Table 3, and other projects in the TIP Universe with programmed earmarks or other federal funding, shown in Table 4.

Table 2
FFY 2025 MPO-Funded Design Projects

Project Name	Score	Adjusted Cost
Arlington- Reconstruction of Broadway Corridor	80.1	$7,378,625
Framingham- Chris Walsh Trail	79.9	$26,812,500
Holliston- Intersection Improvements at Route 16 and Whitney Street	42.8	$14,550,000
Marlborough- Reconstruction of Granger Boulevard	79.9	$12,145,000
Norfolk- Wrentham- Walpole- Metacomet Greenway	65	TBD
Sherborn- Reconstruction of Route 27 and Route 16	81.8	$29,514,500
Total		**$90,400,625**

TBD = To Be Determined.

Table 3
FFY 2026 MPO-Funded Design Projects

Project Name	Score	Adjusted Cost
Acton- Reconstruction of Route 2A/119 (Great Road) from Davis Road to Harris Street	45.4	$12,847,235
Cambridge- New Bridge and Shared Use Path Construction over Fitchburg Line at Danehy Park Connector	85.3	$15,722,875
Hudson- Bike Path Construction of Mass Central Rail Trail, from Felton Street to Priest Street	62.7	$17,482,300
Malden- Improvements on Eastern Avenue	71.15	$18,943,114
Marblehead- Rail Trail Improvements (Border to Boston)	Unscored	$9,862,762
Salem- Broad Street and Dalton Parkway Redesign	68.1	TBD
Total		**$74,858,286**

TBD = To Be Determined.

Table 4
Other Tracked Projects

Project Name	Design	Adjusted Cost
Arlington- Mystic River Path Connection	PRC Approved	$10,688,515
Braintree- Reconstruction of Allen Street	25% Approved	$8,555,285
Brookline- Beacon Street Bridle Path	PRC Approved	$42,674,225
Lexington- Roadway Reconstruction on Hartwell Avenue	PRC Resubmitted	$60,000,000
Salem- Peabody- Harmony Grove Multi-Use Path Construction	PRC Approved	$1,021,556
Stow- Shared Use Path Construction on Track Road	25% Received	$6,786,000
Total		**$129,725,581**

PRC = Project Review Committee.

E. Lapointe noted that when the MPO funds a project for design, federal regulations require the MPO and MassDOT to inform the Federal Highway Administration approximately when the project is going to be funded for construction, meaning that there is an expectation that projects funded for design will soon be funded for construction. With these approximately $435 million worth of projects approaching TIP eligibility, a bottleneck is forming. In FFY 2032, about $75 million of funding is available after accounting for advanced construction projects and set-asides. However, cost increases and project delays may cause this number to grow. This estimate also assumes that debt service payments do not escalate.

E. Lapointe noted that the readiness guidelines will likely lead to less of a surplus in the inner years of the TIP, so new projects seeking funding will probably have to apply for funding in the later years. He also added that for many projects, proponents wait to appropriate design funding from their town meeting until they are programmed on the TIP, so projects may not move forward in design unless they have secured construction funding. He stated that though the four percent inflation estimate does not cover all cost increases, some project cost estimates have significant contingencies added to them, often about 35 percent of the total cost.

E. Lapointe concluded that the best way to control project costs is to keep the projects moving forward in the design process. Often, the longer a project stays on the TIP, the more cost it will accumulate over time. Keeping the project pipeline open by keeping projects moving is the best way to have a regional spread of different projects constructed.

Discussion

L. Diggins asked how MassDOT controls TIP project costs.

Ben Muller (MassDOT) replied that MassDOT has similar timelines for project readiness as the MPO, and the Statewide Highway Program faces many of the same concerns as the Regional Target Program. MassDOT also did not program any new projects this year in the Statewide Highway Program.

M. Roche stated that several of the projects applying for TIP funding this year were also turned away last year. She expressed concern that without timely funding, municipal-proponent projects that have been showing design progress could potentially lose momentum.

T. Bent encouraged the MPO board to stick with the readiness and cost policies. He noted that if projects are around for a while, scope creep and cost increases are likely to happen. He asked if anyone is doing value engineering on TIP projects, as this is often done in the private sector.

6. Members' Items

There were none.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting has not yet been scheduled.

8. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Town of Arlington (Lenard Diggins) and seconded by the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Meghan Roche). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
City of Boston	Lydia Hausle
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	
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)	Meghan Roche
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
Aleida Leza	
Andrew MacNichol	Town of Reading
Ben Muller	MassDOT
Derek Shooster	MassDOT
Jennifer LaFlam	Cape Ann Transportation Authority
Jim Nee	MWRTA
Jon Seward	-
Justin Curewitz	Tighe & Bond
Marcia Rasmussen	Town of Sudbury
Marzie Galazka	Town of Swampscott
Nelson Mui	MWRTA
Richard Azzalina	Stantec
Steve Olanoff	Town of Westwood

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff
Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Annette Demchur
Dave Hong
Ethan Lapointe
Ibbu Quraishi
Lauren Magee
Richard Barad
Sean Rourke

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