

Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Unified Planning Work Program Committee Meeting Minutes

November 20, 2025, Meeting

1:00 PM–2:40 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Derek Shooster, Interim Chair, representing Philip Eng, Interim Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee agreed to the following:

- Approve the minutes of the September 25, 2025, UPWP Committee meeting

Materials

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. September 25, 2025, UPWP Committee Meeting Minutes ([PDF](#))([HTML](#))
2. Freight Planning Program Description ([PDF](#))([HTML](#))
3. Active Transportation Program Description ([PDF](#))([HTML](#))

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

D. Shooster (MassDOT) welcomed the new UPWP Committee representatives: Travis Pollack, representing the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Will Palmer, representing the Community Advisory Council, and Len Diggins, representing the Town of Arlington. Please see the full attendance beginning page 7.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Action Item: Approval of September 20, 2025, Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes was made by the Inner Core Committee (Tom Bent) and seconded by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Tom O'Rourke). The motion carried.

4. Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2027 UPWP Development Timeline—*Tegin Teich, Executive Director, and Olivia Saccocia, MPO Staff*

T. Teich welcomed the new representatives. She then explained how the work of the UPWP Committee is essential to the MPO's success. Each year, the committee recommends the MPO's annual planning budget for the full board to consider and adopt. She also stated that staff will continue to provide opportunities for the committee to engage in all the work that is funded through the UPWP, including both discrete studies and the ongoing programmatic work that is essential for advancing the MPO's goals.

O. Saccocia previewed the UPWP development timeline for the FFY 2027 cycle. The final UPWP is expected to be endorsed by the end of June, with staff hosting monthly committee meetings in the meantime to guide the development of the document. The first two committee meetings will be dedicated to discussing specific work that the agency is advancing through three of the MPO's programs. At one of these meetings, MAPC will also be sharing its recently completed and planned PL-funded transportation work. The third and fourth committee meetings will be dedicated to discussing and voting on which discrete studies will be prioritized for funding in FFY 2027. At the last two meetings, the committee will review the draft and final versions of the UPWP document.

O. Saccocia also described the processes that will be consistent with or differ from those in the previous cycle. Changes to the UPWP that involve adding discretionary grant awards into the appendix of the document will be considered administrative modifications, rather than amendments. This change is intended to streamline the process for adding grant awards into the UPWP and is compliant with guidance from MassDOT and the Federal Highway Administration.

O. Saccocia also stated that MPO staff are planning to adjust how the universe of UPWP proposal is refined. Over the past few years, staff have collected a list of UPWP proposals, many of which have been earmarked for future consideration. This year, rather than soliciting new ideas, staff will assess the existing list of UPWP proposals for funding as potential discrete studies.

Lastly, O. Saccocia explained that the committee will follow a similar approach to determine which discrete studies will be included in the next UPWP. Staff will first present a shortlist of feasible discrete studies to the committee for discussion, and at a subsequent meeting, the group will then make a formal vote on which studies will be prioritized for funding in FFY 2027.

Discussion

Len Diggins (Town of Arlington) expressed support for revisiting the existing UPWP proposals; however, he suggested that staff find a way to engage the public in this process. He stated that it is important to understand what studies the public is interested in the MPO pursuing. L. Diggins also expressed interest in seeing the list of corridor and intersection locations that staff review when selecting technical study sites.

O. Saccocia noted that MPO staff are planning to engage the new Community Advisory Council in developing the next UPWP and are looking forward to hearing the perspectives of the organizations and stakeholders part of that group.

5. Freight Planning Program Discussion—*Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan, MPO Staff*

S. Gopalan Narayanan provided information on the FFY 2026 Freight Action Plan, which will guide the MPO's freight planning activities over the next few years. She explained that the plan will describe the current conditions of freight movement and identify regional freight priorities for the MPO and other key partners to focus on.

Discussion

S. Gopalan Narayanan asked if there are any regional freight priorities that the committee is most interested in the MPO addressing. L. Diggins suggested that the MPO study curb management and specifically the interactions between freight delivery vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Will Palmer (Community Advisory Council) expressed interest in the MPO studying the environmental impact of the freight sector. Jenn Emiko Concannon (MPO Staff) noted that staff will begin engagement around the freight decarbonization plan this year, and information about this will be shared with the board soon.

S. Gopalan Narayanan asked if the group had specific areas of interest around freight mode-shift. Steven Olanoff (Three Rivers Interlocal Council alternate) expressed interest in the MPO analyzing the potential for better freight rail infrastructure in the Boston Region. S. Gopalan Narayanan stated that staff will investigate if data on rail freight routes is available. L. Diggins suggested the MPO explore the costs and benefits of using autonomous vehicles for freight transfers.

S. Gopalan Narayanan also asked the committee what freight planning resources or tools would be helpful for municipalities to have. Rachel Benson (SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee) expressed interest in the MPO creating a map showing the travel routes for different types of freight. D. Shooster stated that the MPO could create a list

of freight-related projects that municipalities could pursue through the Transportation Improvement Program.

Sarah Lee (Massport) stated that it would be helpful for the MPO to distinguish between the different types of freight activities that occur in the region, as this will provide more clarity on what parts of the freight sector the MPO is referring to when developing the Freight Action Plan. S. Lee stated examples such as freight movement at the Port of Boston versus urban deliveries via cargo bikes.

S. Gopalan Narayanan stated that the committee can contact staff for any recommendations of key freight stakeholders that should be engaged while developing this plan.

6. Active Transportation Program Discussion—*Kyle Casiglio, MPO Staff*

K. Casiglio explained several initiatives that are being conducted through the Active Transportation Program. He shared that additional automated bicycle pedestrian counters will be deployed to more communities in the Boston region to improve the MPO's bicycle and pedestrian count data.

K. Casiglio also explained the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Needs and Gap Analysis that he is currently working on. Staff will be updating the previous gap analysis that was last conducted in 2014 while also incorporating new methodology to enhance the assessment. Staff will be using the findings from the recent Vision Zero and NO-HEAT projects to identify major safety gaps in the network. There will be four different gap categories that will be assessed in this analysis:

- **Infrastructure gap**, for example, gaps in bike lanes or sidewalks.
- **Quality gap**, for example, bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure that is located on highspeed roads that users feel unsafe on.
- **Access gap**, for example, gaps in active transportation infrastructure connecting people to critical destinations, like healthcare services.
- **Heat gap**, for example, active transportation infrastructure where there is inadequate shelter from heat.

K. Casiglio explained that the Active Transportation Steering Committee is guiding the production of the gap analysis. This committee is comprised of municipal representatives, advocacy organizations, and partner agencies such as MassDOT, MAPC, and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA).

Discussion

K. Casiglio asked committee members to identify barriers that municipalities typically face when trying to make active transportation investments in their communities. L. Diggins stated that money is a major barrier for municipalities when trying to build active transportation infrastructure. Travis Pollack (MAPC) explained that he faces challenges in finding creative solutions to specific barriers at the municipal level (e.g., finding a creative solution to add bicycle infrastructure when a municipality is resistant to removing on-street parking).

D. Shooster stated that many community members often lack the planning context that professionals have and therefore may not understand the full value of active transportation investments. As a result, active transportation projects often face challenges with community buy-in. K. Casiglio mentioned that one goal of this project will be to conduct community outreach after identifying some of the challenges that communities experience with implementing projects. K. Casiglio stated that this is one way staff will be communicating to the public how these projects can impact their daily lives.

K. Casiglio also asked if the group had suggestions for other members that the MPO should consider including in the Active Transportation Steering Committee.

D. Shooster suggested including representatives from active transportation advisory groups that are common in Boston Region communities. L. Diggins also suggested researching how different municipalities in the region make decisions about roadway projects. He explained that in Arlington, there is a select board made up of a few individuals who have a strong influence on roadway investments. L. Diggins also suggested considering adding the perspective of rollers into the committee.

Tom Bent (Inner Core Committee) stated that it is important to consider a wide range of perspectives—such as those from local businesses, pedestrians, automobile drivers, and the elderly—when discussing active transportation topics. T. Bent also suggested that the steering committee discuss the question of who should be allowed in bike lanes.

7. Members' Items

There were none.

8. Next Meeting

O. Saccocia stated that the next UPWP Committee meeting will be on Thursday, January 8, 2026, to discuss two additional areas of program work.

9. Adjourn

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

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Office of Transportation Planning)	Derek Shooster
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Travis Pollack
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Council	Isabella MacKinnon
Community Advisory Council	Will Palmer
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Len Diggins
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Patrick Hoey
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke
Three Rivers Interlocal Council alternate (Town of Westwood)	Steve Olanoff
City of Framingham (Metrowest Regional Collaborative)	Dennis Giombetti
SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Wrentham)	Rachel Benson

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Eric Bourassa	Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Addie Mae Weiss	Town of Sherborn
Makaela Niles	MassDOT
Marcia Rasmussen	Town of Sudbury
Meghan Roche	Town of Lexington
Sarah Lee	Massport
Laurel Siegel	Town of Medford
Bob Wolf	Town of Lincoln

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director

Kyle Casiglio

Annette Demchur

Jenn Emiko Concannon

Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan

Dave Hong

Elena Ion

Ethan Lapointe

Lauren Magee

Erin Maguire

Rebecca Morgan

Ibbu Quraishi

Sean Rourke

Olivia Saccocia

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