

Public Comments Submitted to the Boston Region MPO

April 17, 2025

The following written comments were submitted to the MPO during the development of the FFYs 2026-30 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

Comments received since last MPO meeting (April 3, 2025, through April 15, 2025):

- **Project #610666: Swampscott—Swampscott Rail Trail**
 - o Four letters in support from Swampscott residents (pages 2-5)
 - o Letter in support from State Representative for the Eighth Essex District, Jenny Armini (page 6)
- **FFYs 2026-30 TIP Project Programming Scenario 2A and Project #613594: Newton—Christina Street Bridge**
 - o Letter in support of Scenario 2 of the TIP by City of Newton Mayor, Ruthanne Fuller (pages 7-8)
- **Project #611983: Chelsea—Park Street and Pearl Street Reconstruction**
 - o Letter in support from the Chelsea City Manager, Fidel A. Maltez (pages 9-10)

Comments received prior to last MPO meeting (April 3, 2025):

- Comments received prior to March 20, 2025, posted to MPO calendar for March 20, 2025, MPO meeting
(https://www.ctps.org/data/calendar/pdfs/2025/0403_MPO_FFYs26-30_TIP_Development_Comments.pdf)
- **Project #S13184: Marblehead—Procurement of 22 bicycle racks with 117 spaces**
 - o Letter in support from Marblehead resident (pages 11-12)
- **Project #610666: Swampscott—Swampscott Rail Trail**
 - o Letter in opposition from Swampscott resident (pages 13-14)

432 Humphrey Street #11
Swampscott, Massachusetts 01907
April 1, 2025

Ethan Lapointe, Program Manager, TIP
Central Transportation Planning Staff
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
elapointe@ctps.org

RE: SWAMPSCOTT RAIL TRAIL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT 610666

Dear Mr. Lapointe:

I am writing in support of completion of the Swampscott Rail Trail. I have lived in Swampscott for 19 years and have also lived in Marblehead, where the entire trail was completed a number of years ago, running from the Salem line to the Swampscott line. Salem has recently enhanced their trail along Canal Street, and Lynn is extending theirs as well. I am so grateful that Swampscott Town Meeting members have consistently supported creation of the Rail Trail. I am asking the Metropolitan Planning Organization to continue its support of the Swampscott Rail Trail by including this project (#610666) for funding in 2028.

I was delighted to hear that Swampscott was recently awarded a grant from the EEA Division of Conservation Services to plant 52 new trees along walking routes and in known hotspots in town. This will enable the town to continue in its effort to replace Norway Maples (a known invasive) with native species. I know that the town has gone to great lengths to replace invasives during construction of the sections of the trail that have already been completed. I don't think everyone realizes that the trees that seeded themselves when the former railroad stopped operating were invasives, and primarily Norway Maples, because of their ability to crowd out other trees.

The trail portion that has been completed is always busy with walkers, dog walkers and bike riders as well as young children learning to ride bikes. It is in constant use, and contrary to some early concerns, people are respectful of neighbors and they aren't littering or noisy! It worries me to see everyone having to leave the trail and ride on streets that are certainly not as safe.

I look forward to seeing the trail completed and thank you in advance for your support for this project!

Sincerely,

Emily Andreano

Emily Andreano

Friday, April 11, 2025

Swampscott Rail Trail Project

Hi Ethan,

I'm writing in vociferous support of the Swampscott Rail Trail project, and to convey the urgency that I feel this project needs for my community and my family. Please keep it on its current timeline.

For my purposes, completion of the rail trail in a timely manner will provide a much needed transportation corridor through Swampscott that will allow my kids to travel through town and to school in a much safer environment than what they currently face biking on roads and sidewalks. As we know, our towns were not built with pedestrians and cyclists in mind, and there are myriad safety concerns for kids wanting to ride bikes, or even walk to school. I want my kids to be able to walk and bike to school on their own, but dangerous intersections, distracted drivers, and cars driving way too fast are enough to force us to drive to school.

For my community as a whole, completion of the rail trail will provide a pivotal recreation asset to encourage exercise and physical activity, and will connect us to the Marblehead and Salem trails on one side, to the waterfront and Northern Strand on the other.

So I urge the MPO to keep the Swampscott Rail Trail on track, as scheduled without delay, so our town and our kids can travel safer and enjoy this asset as soon as possible!

Thank you!

Trevor Henry

Resident

36 Dale Street

Swampscott, MA 01907



Adriana Jacobsen <ajacobsen@ctps.org>

Fwd: Support for Swampscott Rail Trail

1 message

Ethan Lapointe <elapointe@ctps.org>
To: TIP <tip@ctps.org>

Wed, Apr 2, 2025 at 11:58 AM

Ethan Lapointe | he, him, his

Program Manager, TIP

Central Transportation Planning Staff
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
857.702.3703 | elapointe@ctps.org | <http://bostonmpo.org/>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **jennifer honig** <jenhonig@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, Apr 2, 2025 at 11:57 AM
Subject: Support for Swampscott Rail Trail
To: elapointe@ctps.org <elapointe@ctps.org>
Cc: Christopher Muntiu <cmuntiu@yahoo.com>

Hello, please find my letter of support for the Swampscott Rail Trail. Thx!

April 2, 2025

Ethan Lapointe, Program Manager, TIP
Central Transportation Planning Staff
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

Dear Mr. Lapointe:

I write, along with my husband, Christopher Muntiu, in support of the funding for the Swampscott Rail Trail. We urge that the project remain on the TIP for FFY 2028.

We live on a street that overlooks the bike path and we would access it around the corner from our house. We are avid bike riders and bike commuters. Chris would use the trail to commute to his job at Marblehead's Village School, avoiding the substantial traffic on the roads during rush hour. (He has already incurred the wrath of a stressed-out parent trying to drop her kids off at school when he tried to share the road on his bike.)

Our entire family would use the trail to go to downtown Marblehead, the Marblehead JCC, and maybe Stowaway Sweets on occasion! We are also excited now to use the new connector to Lynn to use the trail to go to Encore and hopefully across the water to Boston.

With the Northern Strand Community Path extension to Lynn nearing completion, we know that Swampscott will be the only remaining gap in the Mystic River to Salem shared-use path. We really want to allow people to come up from other communities to enjoy the North Shore.

Thank you for keeping this project going. We look forward to hearing information regarding your April meeting.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Honig
Chris Muntiu
[12 Banks Ter.](#)
[Swampscott, MA 01907](#)



Adriana Jacobsen <ajacobsen@ctps.org>

Fwd: Swampscott rail trail

1 message

Ethan Lapointe <elapointe@ctps.org>
To: TIP <tip@ctps.org>

Wed, Apr 2, 2025 at 2:36 PM

Ethan Lapointe | he, him, his

Program Manager, TIP

Central Transportation Planning Staff

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

857.702.3703 | elapointe@ctps.org | <http://bostonmpo.org/>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <marcbarden@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Apr 2, 2025 at 2:28 PM

Subject: Swampscott rail trail

To: <elapointe@ctps.org>

CC: Alexis Runstadler <acrunstadler@yahoo.com>, Jennifer Honig <jenhonig@yahoo.com>

Mr. Lapointe - I just wanted to drop you an email in support of the rail trail project in Swampscott.

I could go on and on how it will make walkers, runners and bike riders safer. And how it will achieve a continuous rail trail gap connecting the Northern Strand trail in Lynn and the Marblehead and Salem rail trails. I can tell you how it will serve Swampscott as a safe route to schools for the kids going to the new elementary school as well as the middle school and high school. I can tell you how it will server Swampscott's residents as a health space alternative. But I expect you already know all of this.

I wanted to point out how it will improve this seaside community in ways not seen since the introduction of public schools, libraries and parks.

I hope we can continue to make a difference.

Marc Barden

[377 Forest Ave, Swampscott, MA](#)

781 738-3898

Sent from Marc Barden's iPhone

Please be advised that the Massachusetts Secretary of State considers e-mail to be a public record, and therefore subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L. c. 66 § 10.



Jenny Armini
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

8TH Essex District

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1020

6

COMMITTEES:
Vice Chair, Human Resources and
Employee Engagement

Environment and Natural Resources

Transportation

State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

STATE HOUSE, ROOM 21
(617) 722-2147

April 4, 2025

Boston Regional Metropolitan Planning Organization
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Members of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Swampscott Rail Trail – Project Number 610666 – which is currently under consideration for funding through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

As the State Representative for the area, I know firsthand how important this project is to the residents of Swampscott and the surrounding communities. The trail will provide safe, off-road access across town, improve connectivity to our schools, and link the Northern Strand Community Path with the Marblehead Rail Trail—creating a vital regional corridor for walkers, cyclists, and families.

Beyond local benefits, this project strongly aligns with the Commonwealth's goals of promoting sustainable transportation, improving quality of life, and supporting economic development. It enjoys widespread community support and will serve as a long-term asset to the region.

I respectfully urge full consideration for TIP funding for this critical project. Thank you for your attention and commitment to investing in transportation solutions that strengthen our communities.

Sincerely,

Jenny Armini
State Representative
Eighth Essex District



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Office of the Mayor

7
Telephone
(617) 796-1100
Fax
(617) 796-1113
TDD/TTY
(617) 796-1089
Email
rfuller@newtonma.gov

April 2, 2025

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
c/o Central Transportation Planning Staff
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

RE: Support for Scenario 2A – FFY 2026–2030 TIP Amendment

Dear Fellow Members of the Boston Region MPO,

On behalf of the City of Newton, I respectfully urge your support for **Scenario 2A** as the preferred programming option for FY 2026-2030 in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Scenario 2A represents the most balanced and equitable approach among those under consideration, and I am especially encouraging that Scenario 2A includes funding for the **Christina Street Bridge project** — a priority for Newton, Needham and the surrounding region along the Charles River.

The Christina Street Bridge, which crosses the Charles River between Newton and Needham, was previously a freight bridge under MBTA ownership. With plans to demolish the old, failed structure, the City of Newton, in partnership with the Town of Needham and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), are working to construct a new recreational bridge at this location. The new bridge will serve as a vital link in the Upper Charles River Greenway, improving access for cyclists and pedestrians, enhancing regional connectivity, and supporting broader goals related to housing, economic development, and public transportation by linking residential neighborhoods, job centers, and transit corridors across Newton, Needham, and beyond.

We are grateful that Scenario 2A funds this important project.

More broadly, Scenario 2A stands out for its thoughtful balance of regional needs and priorities:

- **Cost:** Funds for four new, moderately sized projects, ensuring responsible financial planning.
- **Readiness:** Support for projects that are further along in design, increasing the likelihood of on-time delivery.
- **Equity:** Improving geographic distribution of investments across the region, including in the MAGIC subregion.
- **Fairness:** Partially funding the Park and Pearl Street project in Chelsea — rather than removing it entirely — thereby taking a fair and measured approach to TIP adjustments.

On behalf of the residents of Newton, I strongly encourage the MPO to vote in favor of Scenario 2A at its April 3 meeting. We appreciate your leadership and thoughtful consideration in advancing a TIP that supports regional mobility, sustainability, and equity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ruthanne Fuller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R".

Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor

City of Newton



CITY OF CHELSEA, MA

Executive Department

City Hall, 500 Broadway, Chelsea, MA 02150
Phone: 617.466-4100 · Fax: 617.466-4105



Fidel A. Maltez
City Manager
fmaltez@chelseama.gov

April 3, 2025

David Mohler
Chair, Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
Boston MPO
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Mr. Mohler,

On behalf of the City of Chelsea, I am writing to strongly support the Park & Pearl project area (Project #611983), currently funded at \$12,123,769. This project is of critical importance to our community, and we respectfully request that it not be functionally removed from the Boston MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). We urge that it be maintained in FY2030 to ensure that this vital infrastructure improvement is not delayed, allowing us to enhance safety and accessibility in a key area of our city.

Chelsea is an entirely Environmental Justice (EJ) community, and we bear more than our fair share of regional traffic and congestion moving in and out of Boston. Pearl Street connects to the McArdle Bridge and East Boston, and carries significant traffic through this region. This exacerbates the significant traffic-related issues in this intersection, including a cluster of vehicular, bicyclist, and pedestrian conflicts that make the intersection unsafe and inhospitable to multi-modal users. The safety concerns of the project area are compounded by heavy congestion, and this intersection is a barrier to safe and efficient transportation for our residents, many of whom rely on walking, biking, and public transit to access key services and employment opportunities.

The Park & Pearl intersection is in dire need of modernization. It is critical to reducing congestion, improving safety, and increasing accessibility for all users, particularly vulnerable populations in our community. With major redevelopment projects, including affordable housing, planned adjacent to this intersection, the project becomes even more vital to ensure that the infrastructure can support future growth and improve quality of life for our residents.

This project was given a high score of 70 out of 100 as determined by the Boston MPO, and we strongly believe that its continued support will provide long-term benefits to both the City of Chelsea and the broader region. Moreover, the project is on track with MassDOT design review for a 25% submission and review this April 2025 and a public hearing tentatively scheduled for September 2025.



We urge the Boston MPO to maintain the Park & Pearl project in the TIP for FY2030 and ensure its timely completion. Thank you for your consideration and continued support of this critical project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fidel M.", with a stylized, cursive script.

Fidel A. Maltez
City Manager

Cc: Ben Cares, Director of Housing and Community Development



Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150

Boston, MA 02116

February 13, 2025

Funding for Bike Racks for the Town of Marblehead, MA

Dear Members of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

The recent placement of Bike Parking Racks at Marblehead Schools resulted in a large, immediate and measurable increase in students biking to/from these Schools. I therefore urge Boston MPO to support the Town of Marblehead's Application and provide funding for more Bike Racks so that we can expand this proven project to other destinations in town.

An Investment with Proven Results:

Six years ago, Marblehead High School had a parking lot for 200 cars, but only enough Racks for 8 bikes. These were always full. When my friends and I donated additional Racks, they kept getting filled within weeks of placement. Last October, I counted 68 bikes at the High School. When we expanded these donations to the Middle School, bike use increased from 10 to 75 students. But the biggest impact was at our Elementary School: the placement of more Racks resulted in 122 students now biking to/from school versus just 18 before we made this investment. The kids bike in groups with friends from their neighborhood. Sometimes they even "allow" a parent to come along.

The Town of Marblehead:

This is a small town with many points of interest, making it ideal for cycling. However, our current cycling infrastructure is underdeveloped and many of our streets are crowded and narrow. A network of bike racks in locations which can be reached safely via the old railroad track, or a wider road has proven to encourage people of all ages to switch from using cars to using bikes instead.

Funding Needed:

I strongly urge Boston MPO to support the Town of Marblehead's Application. This project represents a proven opportunity to invest in safe and sustainable transportation infrastructure that will benefit our community for years to come.

If you have any questions regarding my support for this project, please contact me via my personal email: felix.twaalfhoven@gmail.com

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Felix Twaalfhoven', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Felix Twaalfhoven

- Member, Marblehead Complete Streets Committee
- Parent of 7 children who have biked with me in Holland, England, Paris, Miami, around Manhattan and across the Golden Gate.
- Resident: 19 Doaks Lane, Marblehead, MA 01945

May 5, 2024

Mr. David Mohler, Chair
 Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
 State Transportation Building
 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
 Boston, MA 02116
 c/o Ethan Lapointe, Elapointe@ctps.org

Re: Swampscott Rail Trail Project #610666

Dear Mr. Mohler,

I am writing as a follow-up to my previous letters dated **March 28, 2021, May 10, 2022 and May 5, 2024** regarding the proposed Swampscott Rail Trail (Project #610666).

As noted previously, I am a 50+-year resident of Swampscott, MA and have lived in the same neighborhood for all of those years with the exception of when I attended college. I again respectfully request that you **decline funding for the Swampscott Rail Trail** at this time. With respect to the section of the proposed Rail Trail in my neighborhood, and since the dates of my previous letters, no changes have been made as it relates to ownership, use of eminent domain, density, nor has the Town of Swampscott been willing to consider alternatives outside the proposed Trail path which could eliminate the use of eminent domain. Additionally, the Town of Swampscott has not been transparent with respect to the timing of the project in this section over the last 7 years, leaving residents in limbo and anxious as to what is actually happening. As an example, the last status update on the Town's website project page is dated May 2018: [Swampscott Rail Trail | Swampscott, MA \(swampscottma.gov\)](https://www.swampscottma.gov/swampscott-rail-trail).

For context, my section of the proposed Trail runs between Bradlee Avenue and Humphrey Street. This section of the proposed Trail is definitively owned by the adjacent property owners and is reflected on their deeds, including myself. The Town's campaign in 2017 to support the provision of \$850k for the design and related land acquisition costs was run on vague and misleading information related to the true ownership of the related property. Additionally, I note again that the Town has represented in the information provided to you that Swampscott Town Meeting overwhelmingly approved the provision of \$850k in 2017; what they have failed to mention is that a group of residents pushed the matter to a town wide vote which occurred on June 29, 2017. While that vote was not successful in preventing the provision of funding, it more accurately represents the divided sentiments of Swampscott's residents. On that voting day, 46% of Swampscott's registered voters turned out with the proponents winning by 589 votes, which is hardly the overwhelming majority the Town would have you believe.

The Town of Swampscott intends to use Eminent Domain to take an easement for a recreational path in this section. Although the Town maintains that the residents will continue to "own the dirt

underneath the easement,” once the land is taken via eminent domain for a recreational path, the use of the land is forever changed and will never be returned to the property owners. Furthermore, the Town is not willing to pay market value for the property. This then puts the onus on the homeowner, at their own expense, to take the Town to court to secure reasonable compensation. A representative of the Town came to visit my property in 2017 and provided paperwork seeking the easement, along with a 10-year construction easement, with compensation of \$100, which is hardly market value.

I continue to maintain my previous position which is that I am not at all opposed to Rail Trails, however, I am vehemently opposed to using eminent domain for a recreation path. Eminent domain powers were created to facilitate building hospitals, schools and highways, not recreational paths.

This section of the proposed Trail would run between a dense area of homes, many of whom have maintained the property as part of their yards because it is. This tract is full of mature trees and vegetation, including native blackberry bushes on my own property. The Town likes to mention that the proposed Trail is currently a trash-strewn deserted area . . . while that may be true in some sections, it is most notably not true in the Bradlee Avenue to Humphrey Street section. As property owners, we take pride in maintaining our yards and properties.

In the past, we have suggested that the Town take a less aggressive approach in our section and move the trail to the quiet adjacent street. This would eliminate the need for eminent domain, however, to date, the Town has not been willing to consider any alternative outside the proposed path.

I again respectfully ask that you **decline all funding** until the Town of Swampscott is willing to engage in meaningful dialogue with affected residents in this area and to at least consider alternatives that do not require the use of any form of eminent domain.

As in the past, I invite you and your colleagues to visit my property at any time to view first-hand the devastation the Trail will cause in this very dense section of Town. I am confident that my neighbors would agree to the same site visit. I am happy to arrange such a visit at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration,



Kimberly S. Nassar

27 Morton Road

Swampscott, MA 01907