

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

## **July 24, 2025, Meeting**

1:00 PM–2:58 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Jen Rowe, Chair, representing the City of Boston

## **Decisions**

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

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of June 12, 2025

## **Materials**

Materials for this meeting included the following:

1. June 12, 2025, TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Meeting Minutes ([pdf](#)) ([html](#))

## **Meeting Agenda**

### **1. Introductions**

J. Rowe welcomed committee members to the meeting of the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee. See attendance on page 10.

### **2. Public Comments**

There were none.

### **3. Action Item: Approval of June 12, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes was made by the Town of Arlington (John Alessi) and seconded by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa). The motion carried.

#### 4. TIP Project Scoring and Rescoring—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff*

E. Lapointe introduced the discussion and explained the history of project rescoring efforts. Project rescoring was included as a required stage of the MPO's TIP project cost policies, but the policies never defined a specific process by which a project would be rescored, instead requiring the MPO board to select individual projects to be rescored. Over the years, the scoring criteria have changed; in addition, some of the older projects are scored out of 134 points instead of out of 100 points. MPO staff had attempted a rescoring effort during this year's TIP development season, but there was insufficient information to meaningfully rescore several of the selected projects. MPO staff learned that the longer a project has been on the TIP, the greater the likelihood that the current scope of work differs from what was originally scored. Staff may not have access to older application materials or project limits may have significantly changed.

E. Lapointe stated that MPO staff previewed an example of a rescoring policy at the June 12, 2025, TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee meeting. MPO staff discussed that having a rescoring policy leads to more consistency, fairness, and predictability within the rescoring process, denotes clear expectations for MPO staff and board members alike, and establishes a repeatable process for future TIP cycles.

**Table 1**  
**Project Scoring Criteria by FFY**

<b>Timespan</b>	<b>Projects</b>	<b>Notes</b>
FFYs 2021–25 TIPs and older	12	Projects used a 134-point scale that limits comparison to recent projects
FFYs 2022–26 and FFYs 2023–27 TIPs	9	New criteria were established using a 100- point scale
FFYs 2024–28 TIP	5	Criteria were mostly unchanged, but scoring processes changed due to staff turnover
Current TIPs	5	Current criteria reflect the LRTP goal areas
FFYs 2029–33 TIPs and beyond	TBD	Criteria may change with the next iteration of the LRTP

FFY = Federal Fiscal Year. LRTP = Long-Range Transportation Plan. TBD = To be Determined. TIP = Transportation Improvement Program.

MPO staff plan to ask the MPO board for permission to rescore projects that were scored under the 134-point scale in August or September 2025. Ideally, MPO staff would begin soliciting project proponents for new information for rescoring on

September 1, 2025. This proposal would be collected into a memorandum that would be applied to the next Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) cycle if the MPO board chooses to approve it.

E. Lapointe discussed the projects that were under consideration for scoring, if they were unscored, or rescoring, if they were scored under the 134-point scale.

E. Lapointe stated that MPO staff selected the projects listed in Table 2 for rescoring because these project scores may be relevant to the development of the FFYs 2027–31 TIP. Even though some of these projects are programmed in FFY 2026, scoring these projects for the first time or rescoring these projects would be useful for before-and-after studies.

E. Lapointe asked the committee to consider whether all projects included in Table 2 should be scored or rescored, or if only a specific subset should be evaluated. He also asked the committee to discuss if there should be guidelines for the MPO board to consider if a project's score changes substantially between its initial score and its subsequent scores.

**Table 2**  
**Projects for Potential Scoring and Rescoring**

<b>Project Name (abbreviated)</b>	<b>Project ID</b>	<b>Original TIP Year</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Medford- Shared Use Path Connection	611982	2025 (FFYs 2025–29)	Unscored	\$5,488,945
Boston- Improvements On Boylston Street	606453	2019 (FFYs 2016–20)	58/134	\$10,185,935
Framingham- Preliminary Design of Intersection Improvements at Route 126/135 and MBTA/CSX	S13147	2026 (FFYs 2025–29)	Unscored	\$1,400,000
Lexington- Design of Safety Improvements at I-95 and Route 4/225 Interchange	S13146	2026 (FFYs 2025–29)	Unscored	\$1,650,000
Lynnfield- Rail Trail Construction	613163	2029 (FFYs 2025–29)	Unscored	\$5,829,514
Hingham- Improvements on Route 3A	605168	2024 (FFYs 2020–24)	55/134	\$31,949,531
Milford- Rehabilitation on Route 16	608045	2024 (FFYs 2020–24)	43/134	\$13,548,565
Norwood- Intersection Improvements at Route 1	605857	2021 (FFYs 2017–21)	55/134	\$27,636,336
Everett- Reconstruction of Beacham Street	609257	2024 (FFYs 2020–24)	54/134	\$12,075,024
Ipswich- Resurfacing and Related Work on Central and South Main Streets	605743	2023 (FFYs 2019–23)	47/134	\$15,035,254
Woburn- Roadway and Intersection Improvements at Woburn Common	610662	2025 (FFYs 2021–25)	75/134	\$18,026,400
Boston- Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue	606226	2020 (FFYs 2016–20)	Unscored	\$197,759,449

FFY = Federal Fiscal Year. MBTA = Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. TIP = Transportation Improvement Program.

### **Discussion**

E. Bourassa stated that the reason for scoring is to compare projects against each other. He noted that there are other ways for projects to be programmed on the TIP,

such as a fill-in when there is a budget surplus. The original rescoring discussion came about because of budget deficits and the need to decide which projects to remove from the TIP. He asked MPO staff if there was an easy and fair way of projects once they were already programmed on the TIP.

J. Alessi asked if MPO staff had the capacity to rescore projects.

E. Lapointe explained that the project applications have been updated for this upcoming solicitation of new projects. The project solicitation period would last four months, which should allow for enough time for all portions of the process.

E. Bourassa asked if the scoring process could be simplified without compromising the values of the MPO board.

E. Lapointe stated that MPO staff were able to score transit projects for the first time this year due to early project solicitation from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and the Regional Transit Authorities. However, MPO staff are still unable to easily score fill-in projects from the Highway program. He also noted that some MPOs have automatic scoring systems similar to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Project Review Committee scoring system, but that the Boston Region MPO's scoring system is too complicated for this type of tool at this time.

J. Rowe asked if MPO staff had asked MassDOT for a list of potential fill-ins.

E. Lapointe answered that they did not, but that this could be a possibility in the future.

Erin Chute (Town of Brookline) expressed hesitation with rescoring projects that have already been programmed on the TIP, particularly if there were no major scope changes. She agreed with E. Bourassa that the scoring process should be simplified.

J. Alessi agreed that the project applications should be simplified, especially for smaller towns. He also encouraged MPO staff to communicate the expectations to municipalities clearly.

Brad Rawson (Inner Core Committee, City of Somerville) noted that MPO staff were asking for the rescoring effort themselves. He highlighted the importance of scoring consistency, particularly as some municipalities commit to progressive upzoning and regulatory reform efforts to address the regional housing crisis. He stated that the MPO had recently launched the Vision Zero Action Plan, which could be incorporated into project scoring. B. Rawson asked if the project solicitation window aligned with the MassDOT Quarterly Project Readiness Reviews.

E. Lapointe answered that most of the projects that MPO staff would be rescoring have already been through the review process. The project solicitation period would be completed by the Municipal Readiness Days exercise that MPO staff are planning for February 2026.

J. Rowe agreed that requesting this information from project proponents early could encourage more engagement from proponents. They asked if the rescoring efforts would align with LRTP cycles. They asked if MPO staff could include an ask for project proponents to explain any changes to the project that have happened since the MPO board approved the project.

E. Lapointe emphasized that this proposal is not meant to replace any existing MPO policies; instead, it is meant to reinforce the scoring policies that were set in the project cost policies developed in 2021. He stated that there is no efficient way to identify what scope changes have taken place over time. When MPO staff were working on the “Exploring the Potential for Using Conveyal in TIP Project Evaluations” study, they noticed gaps in information, especially for older projects. For example, though a project application might reference a bike lane, it was not clear whether the lane was painted or physically protected.

Dennis Giombetti (MetroWest Regional Collaborative, City of Framingham) asked what the MPO board had to lose by reevaluating projects. This process would help the MPO gain a better metric to compare projects on an equal scale.

E. Lapointe stated that the MPO staff are asking for two distinct actions from the MPO board. First, MPO staff are asking for approval to score the projects in Table 2. Second, MPO staff will create a policy likely within the calendar year that will detail future guidelines for project scoring and rescoring.

J. Rowe asked board members if they had any concerns representing in their Chairs Report that the Committee believes it worthwhile for MPO staff to conduct the rescoring exercise. After hearing no concerns, J. Rowe stated they would bring this discussion to the MPO board in their Chair's report.

## **5. TIP Readiness Policy Improvements—*Ethan Lapointe, MPO Staff***

E. Lapointe explained the objectives of the discussion: first, to identify any gaps in the guidelines, and second, to develop a timeline for further discussion of the policy. MPO staff aim to bring this policy before the MPO board before 2026.

E. Lapointe stated that the TIP Project Cost Policies developed in 2021 required a 25 percent design for projects applying for TIP programming. However, this requirement

was only for new applications, and there were no standards for programmed projects even if they experienced significant scope or cost estimate changes. These guidelines are intended to complement the original TIP Project Cost Policy and to create a consistent standard for all TIP projects.

E. Lapointe stated that if projects failed to meet the minimum requirements listed in Table 3, they would be flagged as "high risk." In addition, project proponents would be required to regularly update the cost estimates of their projects. E. Lapointe noted that there is not yet a proposed procedure for flagged projects. These procedures could include rescoring, reevaluation of programming in the TIP or in its current fiscal year, or something else.

**Table 3**  
**Five-Year Readiness Guidelines**

	<b>Year 1 (FFY 2027)</b>	<b>Year 2 (FFY 2028)</b>	<b>Year 3 (FFY 2029)</b>
<b>Minimum Requirement</b>	100 percent design submission	75 percent approval or combined 75 and 100 percent submission	25 percent Design Public Hearing
<b>Next Stage</b>	PS&E within nine months	100 percent design submission within six months	75 percent design submission within six months
<b>Cost Status</b>	New cost estimate	Cost estimate less than 18 months old	New cost estimate
	<b>Year 4 (FFY 2030)</b>	<b>Year 5 (FFY 2031)</b>	
<b>Minimum Requirement</b>	25 percent received with comments	25 percent prepared or Project Review Committee (PRC) approved with a schedule for 25 percent design submission	
<b>Next Stage</b>	25 percent DPH scheduled	25 percent received within six months	
<b>Cost Status</b>	Cost estimate less than 18 months old	New cost estimate	

DPH =Design Public Hearing. FFY = Federal Fiscal Year. PS&E = Plan, Specifications, and Estimates.

### ***Discussion***

E. Bourassa cautioned against removing flagged projects from the TIP but agreed that the guidelines were a good first step.

J. Alessi expressed support for the readiness guidelines. He stated that some projects do not move at the necessary speed to avoid delays once they have been programmed on the TIP. He stated that the readiness guidelines should line up with defined MassDOT design stages. For example, asking for a “25 percent design prepared” could be vague.

E. Bourassa supported requesting the municipal proponent, the design consultant, and the MassDOT project manager for each high-risk project to come to a TIP Committee meeting to answer questions.

Lyris Liautaud (MassDOT) stated that MassDOT project managers work closely with the design consultants and have a good understanding of each project’s design and readiness status. She noted that although MassDOT keeps track of projects in all five fiscal years of the TIP, they are more focused on the first two fiscal years of FFYs 2026 and 2027.

Tegin Teich (Executive Director, Boston Region MPO) noted that there is a tradeoff between flexibility and enforcing these project readiness standards. To hold projects accountable to these policies, the MPO board would have to allow less flexibility for project proponents.

J. Rowe asked the committee to consider whether these policies should be applied automatically or if projects should be considered individually and with a more flexible approach.

B. Rawson asked if the MPO board or subcommittees have received a technical presentation of the MassDOT Highway Division project review process in the last 15 years.

Tom Bent (City of Somerville) answered that there had been technical presentations on the subject in the past. He stated that the MPO board used to have all stakeholders in the room for TIP discussions. He noted that he is less likely to vote to program a project if the project stakeholders do not show up to MPO board meetings.

B. Rawson noted that these proposed procedures provide guidance not just for project removal, but for delaying projects as well. He also noted that the committee had been focused primarily on projects with municipal proponents although several high-risk projects were MassDOT-proponent projects.

Justin Curewitz (Tighe & Bond) asked if there would be different standards for larger projects. He explained that the 25 percent design submission process is laborious for large projects.

E. Lapointe answered that the five-year program does not capture that some projects may have been initiated in the MassDOT system a few years before they were programmed on the TIP. A position on “Year 5” of TIP, as explained in Table 3, is meant to align not with project initiation with MassDOT, but with the preparation of a 25 percent design submission. These policies are meant to provide uniform expectations for all projects, regardless of size, while still allowing for some flexibility. In this approach, projects do not have to be singled out. E. Lapointe stated that the goal of these policies is to ensure that projects are ready for their respective programming years and are not being programmed in those years as a placeholder. Projects that are routinely delayed prevent new projects from being programmed due to limited funding availability. E. Lapointe asked the committee to consider any loopholes, elements that are too strict, or other issues with the proposed policies.

E. Lapointe noted that project proponents from the City of Lynn have reached out to provide project status updates to the TIP committee.

## **6. Members’ Items**

J. Rowe invited committee members to the upcoming Open Streets event in Hyde Park. They noted that the National Association of City Transportation Officials has been hosting helpful listening sessions about the current federal funding environment.

## **7. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for September 4, 2025.

## **8. Adjourn**

There was no motion to adjourn.

## Attendance

<b>Members</b>	<b>Representatives and Alternates</b>
City of Boston	Jen Rowe
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Brad Rawson
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)	Chris Klem
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)	Lyris Liautaud
MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)	Tyler Terrasi
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	-
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	John Alessi
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)	Erin Chute

<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Aleida Leza	-
Darin Takemoto	-
Jeff Coletti	MWRTA
Justin Curewitz	Tighe & Bond
Joy Glynn	MWRTA
Pete Sutton	MassDOT

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### **MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Tegin Teich, Executive Director  
 Dave Hong  
 Elena Ion  
 Ethan Lapointe  
 Ibbu Quraishi  
 Sam Taylor

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