

Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Community Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2026, Meeting Minutes

2:00 PM–3:30 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

MPO staff called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 9.)

2. Chair's Report—Caitlin Allen-Connelly, TransitMatters

C. Allen-Connelly provided updates from the July and August MPO board meetings, which included votes on three amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program and the endorsement of the Public Engagement Plan.

C. Allen-Connelly provided an update about the status of the Boston Region MPO's federal certification review process.

C. Allen-Connelly noted that this is her last Community Advisory Council meeting and voiced appreciation for MPO staff and Community Advisory Council members.

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2026, meeting was made by the 495/MetroWest Partnership (Jason Palitsch) and seconded by the Mystic River Watershed Association (Karl Alexander). The following members voted to approve the minutes in a roll call vote:

- Karl Alexander (Mystic River Watershed Association)
- Caitlin Allen-Connelly (TransitMatters)
- Maha Aslam (LivableStreets Alliance)
- Sophia Galimore (Watertown TMA)
- Morgan Griffiths (Town of Natick)

- Sara Han (City of Chelsea)
- Jesse Kanson-Benanav (Abundant Housing MA)
- Meg von Lossnitzer (Mystic Valley Aging Services)
- Galen Mook (MassBike)
- Paulina Muratore (Conservation Law Foundation)
- Jason Palitsch (495/MetroWest Partnership)

Scott Mullen (A Better City) and Angie Cradock (Prevention Research Center [PRC] on Nutrition and Physical Activity, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health) abstained from voting on the meeting minutes.

5. Roadway Pricing Study Scoping Discussion—Joe Delorto, MPO Staff

J. Delorto (MPO staff) gave a presentation about the MPO staff's next roadway pricing study, which will be funded through the Unified Planning Work Program for the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2027. The study is part of a growing body of MPO research on roadway pricing.

J. Delorto stated the three goals of the study. The first goal is to further explore data and tools available to learn more about the potential impacts of roadway pricing. The second goal is to establish a process to evaluate potential impacts of roadway pricing. The third goal is to analyze the impacts of the status quo and how current free road access affects communities.

J. Delorto discussed key findings from two prior MPO studies on roadway pricing, the FFY 2025 Technical Analysis Phase I and FFY 2026 Stakeholder Analysis. The findings from both of these studies will inform possible analyses for the FFY 2027 Roadway Pricing Study. Potential areas of focus for the FFY 2027 study include more detailed metrics, summary of impacts by specific geographics, impacts of different prices, impact of free road access, safety benefits of reduced vehicle travel, and transit system capacity.

After providing this background information, J. Delorto invited Advisory Council members to share their thoughts on questions related to the metrics used to analyze the impacts of roadway pricing and the impacts of the status quo.

J. Delorto stated that the goal for the discussion is to help MPO staff identify the key priorities and themes for the analysis and metrics to estimate potential impacts.

Discussion

Amir Wilson (A Better City) asked what the MPO's goal is for studying roadway pricing and stated the significance of having a clear focus and goals. J. Delorto noted the goal of this study is to be able to identify the impacts of roadway pricing and to be able to tailor a system towards a particular set of goals. A. Wilson noted the importance of considering the financial impact on communities who already have a difficult time affording transportation. J. Delorto stated that the MPO is thinking about trip purpose and characteristics and hopes to explore how the response changes with different pricing levels.

K. Alexander noted the importance of data availability and the limits of efforts due to political implications. He discussed various political lenses that can be used to help translate the message and identify data that speaks to different political bases and their constituencies. J. Delorto noted that as the study continues to develop, data about metrics and geographies will help staff frame communications.

Tony Collins (Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority [MBTA]) discussed the safety connections between roadway pricing and vulnerable road users. He noted opportunities to explore how road space could be reallocated if there was a reduction of cars on the road. J. Delorto discussed the MPO's research related to safety for vulnerable road users. J. Delorto noted that staff are considering how the outputs of this study could support roadway safety efforts in the region.

J. Palitsch discussed the regional concerns and perspectives of commuters from the MetroWest region who are already paying tolls on Interstate 90 when driving in and out of the city as compared to commuters driving in from the north or south who are not subject to the same tolls. J. Delorto discussed the importance of using the data and information available and communicating the utility gained to address regional concerns and support future conversations.

Scott Mullen (A Better City) brought up the transit analysis aspect, noting that he wanted to ensure that the MPO's Bluebikes and MBTA Connections study informs how the roadway pricing study determines what counts as part of the region's public transit system. S. Mullen also expressed a wish to one day have more counts of how many transit trips involve use of MBTA transit and Bluebikes. J. Delorto then noted the importance of multimodal connections to mode shift and creating alternatives to automobile travel.

A. Cradock echoed K. Alexander's comments and recommended thinking about how MPO staff can use existing information about different constituencies' interests and

the questions they might have about roadway pricing to help shape the study.

A. Cradock also recommended thinking about the potential economic benefits of roadway pricing and how those economic benefits can benefit different groups.

A. Cradock connected this to thinking through the potential benefits that might be possible with different potential pricing levels. J. Delorto said that MPO staff have been thinking about economic benefits but that quantifying economic benefits is challenging because of the data tools available. To help address this, MPO staff are pulling from the experiences of other regions to help communicate about potential public health benefits of roadway pricing (i.e., decreases in vehicle-miles traveled or increases in active transportation).

A. Wilson requested that the MPO's analysis explore how different roadway pricing levels increase commuters' willingness to use longer and less convenient public transit routes or bike or scooter routes rather than driving.

Jon Seward (member of the public) discussed the security implications of tolling and suggested levying a fee on yearly mileage instead of roadway pricing. J. Delorto noted the study is looking at a cordon zone charge largely because the cordon zone geography and scenario had already been developed for the previous studies.

J. Delorto also noted that the decision to look at a cordon zone approach was informed by conversations with the MPO's Congestion Management Committee when developing the first study. J. Delorto stated that the cordon zone charge is not the only roadway pricing strategy and that the study's exploration of the cordon zone charge is not an endorsement of the cordon zone method of roadway pricing. J. Delorto also acknowledged J. Seward's security concerns and clarified that determining the logistics of how roadway pricing could potentially be implemented is beyond the scope of the current study.

S. Mullen asked about the timeline for the study. J. Delorto responded that the study is tied to the 2027 federal fiscal year which runs from October 2026 to September 2027, and that the goal is to have the final report for the MPO board by October 2027.

James Fuccione (MA Healthy Aging Collaborative) asked if staff will reach out to older adults as a part of the process. J. Delorto noted the importance of engaging older adults while also acknowledging that there might not be direct community engagement as part of this study. Rose McCarron (MPO staff) discussed how the results of the MPO's Representing the Experience of People with Limited Mobility study can provide insights for this study. One insight from the prior study was that for many people with limited mobility being able to take a one-seat public transit ride was very important due to the challenges involved in transferring between train or bus lines

during a commute. As a result, R. McCarron recommended thinking about measuring transit access levels for those who are only able to take a one-seat ride.

S. Mullen offered to share a study that A Better City is currently conducting, which is exploring what a thirty-minute trip looks like and what MBTA stations are key transfer stations for commuters connected to A Better City's members.

A. Cradock asked if there was any local public opinion polling on roadway pricing.

J. Delorto shared that there is sustained interest from the MPO board and committees in further exploring public opinion. J. Delorto noted there was a recent public poll by the Boston Globe.

Jesse Kanson-Benanav (Abundant Housing MA) discussed the connections to housing, specifically how data from the roadway pricing study can help inform the parking specifications for new development in the region. J. Delorto discussed combining data on the impacts of recent zoning changes with impacts of a roadway pricing system to explore parking needs.

Galen Mook (MassBike) noted the overlap between transportation and topics such as housing, public health, and climate. G. Mook stated the importance of making that overlap discrete and explicit so messaging can be effective for different audiences.

G. Mook asked when and why the MPO decided to use "roadway pricing" as the framing for the topic instead of "congestion pricing." R. McCarron noted that during the first MPO roadway pricing study, staff were open to potentially exploring transportation elements beyond just congestion (i.e., parking pricing); but, as the work developed staff focused on roadway pricing to reduce congestion.

G. Mook noted that the framing of "free road access" is inaccurate because of the financial, environmental, and health costs Massachusetts residents pay for car focused infrastructure. G. Mook requested that the MPO try to financially quantify the health and environmental costs currently paid by Massachusetts residents to support the current status quo of roads being free at point of access for roadway users.

G. Mook also requested that the research explore the implications of the region's population growth trajectory on constrained roadway space.

S. Mullen built on G. Mook's comment and recommended including vehicle bloat as part of the analysis of how to support population growth given increasingly strained roadways. S. Mullen noted that average car sizes are growing and this is furthering pressure on constrained road space and parking space.

J. Seward noted privacy concerns related to roadway pricing.

6. Updated Community Advisory Council Charter—Michaela Grenier, MPO Staff

M. Grenier invited Community Advisory Council members to share any questions or comments about the updates to the charter.

A motion to approve the updated Community Advisory Council Charter was made by Abundant Housing MA (Jesse Kanson-Benanav) and seconded by TransitMatters (Caitlin Allen-Connelly). The roll call to vote to adopt the charter was approved by the following attendees:

- Karl Alexander (Mystic River Watershed Association)
- Caitlin Allen-Connelly (TransitMatters)
- Maha Aslam (LivableStreets Alliance)
- Angie Cradock (Prevention Research Center [PRC] on Nutrition and Physical Activity, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health)
- James Fuccione (MA Healthy Aging Collaborative)
- Sophia Galimore (Watertown TMA)
- Morgan Griffiths (Town of Natick)
- Sara Han (City of Chelsea)
- Jesse Kanson-Benanav (Abundant Housing MA)
- Meg von Lossnitzer (Mystic Valley Aging Services)
- Galen Mook (MassBike)
- Scott Mullen (A Better City)
- Paulina Muratore (Conservation Law Foundation)
- Jason Palitsch (495/MetroWest Partnership)

7. Vice Chair Elections—Michaela Grenier, MPO Staff

M. Grenier noted that MassBike was the one member entity from the Community Advisory Council that submitted a candidate interest form for the vice chair position.

A motion to elect MassBike to the vice chair position was made by TransitMatters (Caitlin Allen-Connelly) and seconded by Abundant Housing MA (Jesse Kanson-Benanav). The following members voted to elect MassBike in a roll call vote:

- Karl Alexander (Mystic River Watershed Association)
- Caitlin Allen-Connelly (TransitMatters)
- Maha Aslam (LivableStreets Alliance)

- Angie Cradock (Prevention Research Center [PRC] on Nutrition and Physical Activity, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health)
- James Fuccione (MA Healthy Aging Collaborative)
- Sophia Galimore (Watertown TMA)
- Morgan Griffiths (Town of Natick)
- Sara Han (City of Chelsea)
- Jesse Kanson-Benanav (Abundant Housing MA)
- Meg von Lossnitzer (Mystic Valley Aging Services)
- Scott Mullen (A Better City)
- Paulina Muratore (Conservation Law Foundation)
- Jason Palitsch (495/MetroWest Partnership)

Galen Mook (MassBike) abstained from voting in the vice chair election.

8. Members' Items

G. Mook said that MassBike and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation are working on a community grant that will focus on engaging older adults in accessing bikeshare across the state, called Golden Gears. The first event will be held on September 27 in Everett.

J. Kanson-Benanav discussed a Massachusetts ballot question related to starter homes. Abundant Housing MA is seeking support from other organizations and he offered to share more information about the ballot question for interested members.

Maha Aslam shared information about LivableStreets Alliance Tour de Streets 2026 event. M. Aslam noted the annual celebration and fundraiser honors people who have lost their lives in traffic fatalities.

Sophia Galimore said that September 22 is Car-Free Day and encouraged participation.

C. Allen-Connelly said that TransitMatters' Pokey/Schleppie Awards report will be released on September 15.

S. Mullen said that the Guided Ride Series wrapped up at the end of June, which focused on separated bicycle infrastructure and transit connections. A Better City is planning to continue the guided tours, including a ride in early October from Malden to the arboretum. S. Mullen said that A Better City is hosting a ferry tour on September 16 and asked interested members to reach out.

9. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by TransitMatters (Caitlin Allen-Connelly) and seconded by Mystic River Watershed Association (Karl Alexander). The motion carried.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
Chelsea	Sara Han
Natick	Morgan Griffiths
Community Based Organizations	Attendees
495/MetroWest Partnership	Jason Palitsch
A Better City	Scott Mullen
	Amir Wilson
Abundant Housing MA	Jesse Kanson-Benanav
Conservation Law Foundation	Paulina Muratore
LivableStreets Alliance	Maha Aslam
MA Healthy Aging Collaborative	James Fuccione
MassBike	Galen Mook
Mystic River Watershed Association	Karl Alexander
Mystic Valley Aging Services	Meg von Lossnitzer
Prevention Research Center on Nutrition and Physical Activity, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health	Angie Cradock
TransitMatters	Caitlin Allen-Connelly
Watertown TMA	Sophia Galimore
Other Attendees	Affiliation
Amanda Beatrice	Town of Reading
Tony Collins	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
Jon Seward	

MPO Staff

Joe Delorto

Michaela Grenier

Jia Huang

Rose McCarron

Gina Perille

Sean Rourke

Civil Rights Notice to the Public

Welcome. Bem Vinda. Bienvenido. Akeyi. 欢迎. 歡迎



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Boston, MA 02116

Phone: 857.702.3700

Email: civilrights@ctps.org

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