



---

# Task Force Meeting Summary

## Allston Multimodal Transportation Project

---

DATE: November 13, 2025  
PANELISTS: Beth Larkin (TY Lin)  
Susan Harrington (MassDOT)  
Chris Calnan (Tetra Tech)  
Paul Matthews (WRRB)  
Josh Boucher (WRRB)

HSH PROJECT NO.: 2021055.08

---

## Overview

On Thursday, November 13, 2025, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) convened a hybrid (in-person and virtual) meeting of the I-90 Allston Multimodal Transportation Project Task Force. There were 60 attendees (22 in-person and 38 virtual). The meeting covered the following agenda items:

- Welcome/ Introductions
- Project Update
- Early Action Project Considerations/Ideas
- Worcester Regional Research Bureau: “Express for Whom?: Ridership, Recovery, and the Importance of the Worcester Framingham Line”
- Next Steps

## Meeting Summary

### Welcome and Introductions

---

- **Beth Larkin (Larkin), TY Lin and Task Force Facilitator**, welcomed everyone to the meeting and began with a brief safety minute. Larkin introduced Paul Matthews and Josh Boucher from the Worcester Regional Research Bureau (WRRB), and Steve Rolle, City of Worcester Commissioner of Transportation and Mobility who was representing Worcester at the meeting since Peter Dunn was unable to attend.

### Project Update

---

- **Susan Harrington (Harrington), MassDOT Project Manager**, shared the following updates:
  - MassDOT is moving forward with procurement of consulting services for an independent cost and engineering review of the project to help align cost, scope, and delivery strategy with the available funding and policy goals and will be organized around two major tasks. The first will be a cost analysis to establish a realistic, inflation-adjusted baseline



- and identify cost drivers. The second task will be an engineering review to assess full build and hybrid concepts to identify cost-saving opportunities, validate schedules, and recommend sequencing, prioritization and contracting strategies. Consultant selection and contract execution is expected for January 2026. Harrington added that the Request for Proposal (RFP) scope would be reviewed at the December Task Force meeting, once the RFP is made public.
- An ongoing layover analysis is being conducted by MassDOT and MBTA in coordination with the City of Boston to evaluate alternative layover locations that can reduce or replace the storage currently proposed at Beacon Park Yard. The team is conducting a series of site walks and will continue to update the Task Force as the analysis progresses. This study is anticipated to conclude late winter/early spring 2026.

## DISCUSSION

- **Kane Larin (Larin), Charles River Alliance**, asked if the RFP will be made public. Harrington responded that once the RFP is issued it will be made public.
- **David Loutzenheiser (Loutzenheiser), Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC)**, asked if the RFP could be provided to the Task Force before it is released. Harrington responded that the Task Force could receive the RFP after it is released.
- **Harry Mattison (Mattison), Community Representative**, asked if the RFP would be shared with the Task Force before it is published. Harrington answered that the Task Force will receive a copy of the RFP once it is published.
- **Seth Gadbois (Gadbois), Conservation Law Foundation (CLF)**, asked the project team for more information on the engineering review. Harrington said that the engineering component will identify cost savings, validate schedules, recommend sequencing prioritization, and contracting strategies through the lenses of both the full build and hybrid concepts.
- **Gadbois** followed up by asking about where the “maximizing transportation benefits” language will be included. He pointed out that transportation benefits were a focal point of the input that the Task Force gave in August and was part of the initial announcement about the grant rescission. Harrington confirmed that maximizing transportation benefits is still a part of the review scope. Gadbois asked if the summary of input that the Task Force shared in August was included in the RFP. Harrington confirmed that the input from the Task Force was taken into consideration when the scope of the RFP was developed.
- **Harrington** stated that the project team has received feedback that made it sound like some thought the independent review process was only a cost analysis. The project update at tonight’s meeting was to clarify to the Task Force that the engineering review is also included in the independent consultant scope.
- **Mattison** asked if drafts of the RFP have been shared with the City of Boston or the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Harrington said that they have not been shared with the City or FHWA, and added that RFP is being developed within MassDOT in coordination with the MBTA and the Governor’s office. More details will be available after the RFP is released.



Mattison stated that he would have liked a more participatory process for deciding the scope and other parts of the RFP.

- **Mattison** asked about the consultant schedule. Harrington stated that as of now, the RFP is anticipated to go out in November, and the consultant contracted in January 2026. The independent review is expected to go well into 2026. Mattison asked if the independent review is expected to last several months, how will it affect the Task Force's meetings and other interim parts of the project, like the next round of environmental filing. Harrington said that the Task Force will continue to have monthly meetings during the review process and that more information regarding the timeline of the review process will be shared. She confirmed that more information regarding the review process timeline will be available for the upcoming Task Force meetings. As for the environmental filings, they will not be filed until the analysis is complete. Mattison said it would be much appreciated if the project team could share more about the timeline, or at least the order in which things need to be completed in the next meeting; as well as how this process will affect Early Action items. Harrington responded that the project team will be working towards putting a more detailed timeline together that can be shared. She noted that the independent review process will influence the timeline for many of the elements that are important to this Task Force, so a date cannot be tagged onto many actions with certainty.
- **Matthew Petersen (Petersen), City of Boston**, proposed creating a dateless waterfall chart to be prepared for a future meeting that represents the order in which some things need to get done, and shows which elements of the project can move forward unobstructed. He said that this chart could be helpful to understand why certain things can't be assigned end dates.
- **Fred Salvucci (Salvucci), Community Representative**, advocated for removing layover from the project and that the work to identify alternate layover locations be concluded in December. He shared his belief that continued study of layover is causing delay on the project, delay causes inflation and the decision to remove layover from the project should have already been made. Harrington clarified that the current consultant team will be looking into the alternative layover locations; it's not within the scope of the independent review.
- **Salvucci** said that the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) was originally scheduled to be available in September and that it should be made available to the public for comment and for the independent review team to use as a resource.
- **Salvucci** also urged that Early Action items be pushed forward because the longer some items take to start, the more the cost may increase and that Early Action projects are the best hope for beating inflation. Salvucci cautioned that Early Actions have to be feasible and consistent with the full project.
- **Mattison** asked if the cost of the layover tracks will be included in the independent cost estimate. Harrington said that the independent reviewer will start by looking at the baseline



cost of the project, and that costs will be broken out by project components. Alternative designs will be a part of the second phase engineering review.

- **Mattison** asked at what point will the Task Force get to see or be part of discussing different options the independent consultant will be studying and costing, and what role the Task Force will have in helping to shape those options. Harrington clarified that there will be open communication with the Task Force and that as MassDOT starts to get results from the independent review team over the next few months, MassDOT will bring them to the Task Force for discussion. The overall results of the study will be included in final reports for each task which will be publicly available.
- **Stacy Thompson, (Thompson), Livable Streets Alliance**, reiterated Petersen's earlier comment that the Task Force needs a better understanding of the timeline. She emphasized that even if exact dates can't be pinned down, it is important to have more clarity on what's happening and what needs to happen.
- **Petersen** suggested that it would be good to devote some time at an upcoming Task Force meeting to frame out the process by which the Task Force will be engaged during the independent consultant review. Petersen added that once the independent consultant is contracted that there be a mutual understanding of how the Task Force will be engaged in the independent review process. Harrington noted that MassDOT is looking for the work of the independent consultant to be a truly independent effort and that the independent consultant would be preparing materials that MassDOT would use to communicate with the Task Force.

## Early Action Project Consideration/Ideas

---

- **Harrington** stated that the current project team is looking at Early Action items that could be advanced by the project team while the independent review and layover analysis progresses and wanted to make sure the Task Force's ideas on Early Action projects are considered. Harrington added that feedback will ensure that early efforts align with Task Force priorities and the broader project goals. Early Action projects will also be evaluated for independent utility, readiness and compatibility with the future Allston Multimodal Transportation project.
- **Chris Calnan (Calnan), Tetra Tech**, reviewed the major factors to be considered when determining the feasibility of an Early Action project: community support, required permitting actions, independent utility, means of funding, ROW, and an item's role in the broader context of the project. Two Early Action initiatives that MassDOT is currently moving forward with are the Lincoln Street Noise Barriers and Cambridge Street Bridge preservation. The Lincoln Street Noise Barriers are currently progressing under an ongoing regulatory process where affected residents are giving input on the aesthetics and design of the project. Current Cambridge Street Bridge preservation includes ongoing preservation of



the substructure with railroad coordination. MassDOT is working with the City of Boston to obtain Boston Transportation Department (BTD) permits for construction phasing.

## DISCUSSION

- **Gadbois** commended MassDOT's inclusion of key legal considerations, independent utility, and openness to consider different Early Action alternatives.
- **Fred Yaloris (Yaloris), Community Representative**, suggested the Charles River's edge as an area to consider for Early Action. He said that issues like runoff contamination and sewage persist; and even outside of the scope of the project, this is an important issue to consider.
- **Thompson** commented that Task Force members have already corresponded with MassDOT about their preference for certain Early Action items to be considered. She said that some members of the Task Force are frustrated that the project team is asking for ideas for Early Action without acknowledging the existing requests from the community.
- **Anthony D'Isidoro (D'Isidoro), Allston Civic Association**, commented on the two projects that MassDOT is advancing. He said the Cambridge Street Bridge repairs are more of an issue of public safety than the noise barriers and should be given top priority. Calnan responded that the Cambridge Street Bridge repairs are a high priority and is currently being advanced.
- **Jessica Robertson (Robertson), Community Representative**, added that these two Early Action projects are not really Early Action, but late projects promised a long time ago and don't constitute a gesture of good faith to the Allston neighborhood. She pointed out that talks about adding noise barriers along Lincoln Street have long predated this project, and part of the sidewalk on Cambridge Street has been shut down for several years. Robertson said that it is important to acknowledge that both initiatives are long overdue.
- **D'Isidoro** emphasized that Allston needs to see something happen and that there needs to be a better sense of urgency. He stated he has been trying to keep residents enthusiastic, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep people optimistic about the project. He said that the people of Allston need to see something more than discussion, vision or what we would like to do. Allston wants to see projects moved forward in a meaningful way that directly benefit the people of Allston soon, not waiting another 5 or 10 years before seeing anything happen. D'Isidoro added that it is time for Allston to get some wins and to get due consideration from the Commonwealth. Harrington responded that the project had a lot of momentum towards filing the environmental documents until the project was paused in July when the grant was rescinded and that the project team is focusing on the high priority items like alternative layover and mitigation for the Grand Junction closure. These activities are happening concurrently with Early Action items because they are also high priority to the community. Harrington acknowledged that MassDOT had previously received input from some Task Force members on Early Action projects, however, was asking again for the Task



Force's input to get a sense of the consensus community support. The project team aims to focus on Early Action projects that are a high priority for the community.

- **Petersen** noted that the Lincoln Street Noise Barriers and Cambridge Street preservation projects are essentially state of good repair projects that should have been done before. Regarding the noise barriers, Petersen said that the City of Boston would be in favor of having a meeting to make sure that when the noise barriers get built it is as easy as possible for the City of Boston to build the adjacent path.
- **Petersen** commented that the City of Boston sees investments related to the railroad, transit infrastructure and local connectivity as top priorities as these projects are going to be needed to mitigate impacts to turnpike capacity during construction of the larger project. Moving rail work once the rail alignment is figured out is a possibility. Petersen added that looking at the continuity of service and improvement of service throughout the construction process is crucial, as well as projects from the MBTA CIP as a buttress to commuter rail service since rail components are important in both the final built condition and during construction.
- **Loutzenheiser** asked why the Franklin Street Footbridge is not listed with the other two Early Action projects. He also highlighted that five of the train stations on the Worcester Commuter Rail in Newton and Wellesley are not ADA-accessible, and only one of these stations has funding to make it accessible. He said it would also be helpful to see a presentation from the MBTA on the accessibility of commuter rail stations. Calnan noted that the Franklin Street Footbridge will be considered even though it was not listed on the slides – the two projects that were mentioned on the slides are just the two that MassDOT is currently actively advancing.
- **Salvucci** commended the presentation on Early Action considerations. He suggested advancing the Allston Community Path, West Station and early rail work, and the Franklin Street Footbridge replacement, as Early Action initiatives. He also mentioned the Paul Dudley White path along the Charles River, and cleaning up the effluence into the Charles River as Early Action projects. Salvucci suggested a briefing on the latest thinking on Grand Junction for an upcoming Task Force meeting.
- **Mattison** asked if the consultant selected to perform the independent review would be eligible to pursue the follow-on Design Build contract. Harrington said that there are many levels of consultants who look at a wide variety of elements and have different levels of involvement with the project. If those individual consultants are unsure about their extent in the project, they will need to submit a letter to the MassDOT Chief Engineering and that the MassDOT Capital Conflicts Committee would review and make a conflict determination. Mattison asked if those letter exchanges could be provided to the Task Force. Harrington said that is not typical practice.
- **Mattison** asked about seeing a timeline for the Lincoln Street Noise Barrier project. Harrington said that utility coordination is underway, design is progressing, and that more information on the timeline will be available in the coming months.





- **Galen Mook (Mook), MassBike** asked if the project team could share more about their outreach efforts on the noise barriers noting that the Task Force wants to make sure that the community is represented in this process. Harrington responded that the first step in the outreach process is communicating with the benefited receptors in the community, which is going on now.
- **Mattison** stated that it's important for the community to know when the noise barrier design will be finalized and when the project will break ground.
- **Petersen** said that there are several complicating factors in the details of the Lincoln Street Noise Barriers, particularly with getting the barrier as close to the highway as possible and dealing with certain choke points at Everett Street, Franklin Street, west of Portsmouth Street, and east towards Mansfield Street.
- **D'Isidoro** asked the project team to expand on the extent and the methods they are using to conduct outreach for the Lincoln Street Noise Barrier. He asked how much input is given to the community to decide if they want the noise barriers. D'Isidoro asked that the information provided to neighbors who are beneficial receptors also be shared with the Task Force, along with the design details. Harrington said that is something the project team can share more information on at an upcoming Task Force meeting.
- **Mook** asked for a clearer definition of Early Action items – does Early Action mean if the baseline project were to be put on pause, these initiatives could still move forwards? Calnan said that Mook is, in part, correct. Early Action requires independent utility. However, it also requires that it does not preclude other alternatives, and those alternatives are still up in the air. Mook commented that much of the community's requests for Early Action have been consistent throughout the roughly 13 years he has been a part of this project. There is a desire to reconnect Allston and have an ADA-compliant Franklin Street Footbridge. Mook requested that the project team prepare Early Action designs for each alternative so that once an alternative is picked, construction can start as soon as possible. Mook invited the project team on a walk around the area to show them where the community has been requesting action. Mook noted that elements of the MassDOT 2008 Accelerated Bridge Program still haven't been acted on yet, such as the Western Avenue and River Street Bridges. Mook suggested also adding contraflow bike lanes on Western Avenue. He listed a few requests that the Task Force and the community have for Early Action consideration: Franklin Street Footbridge, additional footbridges, temporary footbridges for before construction on the highway begins, buffer path designs for each alternative so that once the location of the Worcester Main Line rail is decided the buffer path can be constructed, and improving the intersection at the Doubletree Hotel.
- **Robertson** asked if the project team could compile a list of Early Action requests that have been sent in by members of the community over the past few years, as well as a list of the ideas that Task Force members suggested in this meeting. Larkin committed to sending the Task Force the list of Early Action projects suggested by the Task Force by the following



week. MassDOT and the project team would separately research prior suggestions from the Task Force

## WRRB: Express for Whom?: Ridership, Recovery, and the Importance of the Worcester-Framingham Line.

---

- **Paul Matthews (Matthews), Worcester Regional Research Bureau (WRRB),** explained that the Bureau is a 40-year independent 501c3 with the mission of conducting objective data-based research on issues impacting Greater Worcester, and referenced their prior work on the Commuter Rail. He also introduced himself, his colleague, Josh Boucher, and the study that WRRB has conducted on the ridership and usage of the Worcester-Framingham Commuter Rail service.
- **Josh Boucher (Boucher), WRRB,** gave a presentation on key statistics that highlight the vitality of the Worcester-Framingham Commuter Rail to Greater Worcester, Greater Boston, and all the other municipalities along the rail line. The Worcester-Framingham Line has the second highest ridership in the MBTA commuter rail system after the Providence Line. The line averaged 14,000 weekday riders in 2024. Nearly all of the recovery of pre-pandemic ridership numbers is from weekday riders. Weekend riders account for 10-15% of the monthly riders. 15% of onboardings happen at Worcester Union Station. 44.8% of riders make 30-80% of the average median income, and an additional 11.73% make less than 30%. Nearly 50% of weekday riders board at one of the six westernmost stops. Boucher stated that the data show there is a demand for robust and consistent service between Worcester and Framingham.

### DISCUSSION

- **D’Isidoro** asked if there was any data recorded in regard to how people get from their homes to the train stations. Boucher said that there is data not mentioned in the presentation that looks at this. Matthews said that pre-pandemic, site visits to Worcester Line stations with State Representatives during the winter highlighted that there is a strain on available parking. Post-pandemic, the WRRB had been told there is an increase in people being dropped off at stations, which may be correlated with an increase in hybrid jobs.
- **Thompson** recommended researching how fare-free service and expanding bus connectivity would influence ridership. Additionally, she said that Allston should not be seen as an area that needs to be bypassed, but rather as a destination for a lot of riders considering the number of institutions in the area. Thompson also asked WRRB if there is potential for a survey looking at how the plans for the multimodal project might impact riders and their desire to use the line. Boucher said that, as a nonprofit, WRRB relies on public data for much of their research so it would be hard for them to commission a survey like that. Matthews added that he takes the commuter rail to get off at Boston Landing regularly.
- **Albert Ng (Ng), Harvard,** said that in WRRB’s data, it shows that Boston Landing in Allston is one of the most popular locations for riders to board the eastbound train, highlighting demand for more transportation accessibility in Allston. Ng also added that one





of the benefits of West Station is better distribution of riders coming from the Worcester Line to large employment hubs like Longwood Medical Area and Kendall Square.

- **Mook** added that it's not that Allston is a transportation desert, but the neighborhood's density along with the inaccessibility to many of the stations from Lower Allston make it difficult for residents to utilize the Commuter Line. Mook also emphasized that there is a demand for people to travel from the Boston area to Worcester for concerts and sports events. Boucher said that WRRB has data on outbound alighting in the report as well.
- **Robertson** highlighted that as more housing gets added near train stations, the demand for Commuter Rail will increase. She explained that part of the Task Force's resistance to bypass tracks is because the residents of Allston do not want to be neglected in terms of transportation access.
- **Matthews** noted that WRRB's next volume report does not have an anticipated date for publication, but they would ideally like to publish it in early 2026.

## Next Steps

---

- Larkin noted that the meeting on December 11 is subject to change as it conflicts with another meeting in Allston. (Note: Subsequent to the November 13<sup>th</sup> Task Force meeting, the December 11<sup>th</sup> Task Force meeting date was confirmed.) Upcoming Task Force meetings are proposed for January 15 and February 26.
- Potential topics at upcoming Task Force meetings:
  - Project updates including strategic review and layover.
  - Lincoln Street noise barriers
  - Early Action projects.
  - Rail operations analysis.
  - City of Boston BPY regional framework plan.