



Meeting Summary

Allston Multimodal Transportation Project

DATE: January 15, 2026

HSH PROJECT NO.: 2021055.08

PANELIST: Beth Larkin (TY Lin); Susan Harrington (MassDOT); Luisa Paiewonsky (MassDOT); Jim Keller (TetraTech)

Overview

On Thursday, January 15, 2026, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) convened a hybrid (in-person and virtual) meeting of the Allston Multimodal Transportation Project Task Force. There were 83 attendees (22 in-person and 61 virtual). The meeting agenda is below.

Agenda

I.	Agenda.....	1
II.	I. Welcome and Introductions	1
III.	II. 2026 Year Ahead	2
IV.	III. Project Goals and Priorities	5
V.	IV. Early Action Projects – Initial Project Screening	9
VI.	V. Next Steps	11

Meeting Summary

I. Welcome and Introductions

Beth Larkin (Larkin), TY Lin/Task Force Facilitator, welcomed everyone to the meeting and began with a brief safety minute. Larkin reviewed the meeting agenda with meeting attendees.



II. 2026 Year Ahead

PRESENTATION

- **Luisa Paiewonsky (Paiewonsky), MassDOT, and Susan Harrington (Harrington), MassDOT,** went over the following 2026 actions that the MassDOT/Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) interagency team is working together on to move this project forward.
 - Independent Review. MassDOT is moving towards the end of the selection process for an Independent Review Team (IRT) with consultant responses due on January 23, 2026. A selection committee has been formed and, once a selection has been made, MassDOT's Planning Division will issue a contract and the work will begin. MassDOT will provide regular updates to the Task Force on the progress of the work as tasks are completed. MassDOT may ask the IRT to present to the Task Force, but MassDOT will be the conduit between the Task Force and the IRT. Paiewonsky emphasized that the work of the IRT is not just a study, it will help to define a new path ahead for the Allston project.
 - Continued Allston Task Force Engagement. Paiewonsky reinforced the continuing monthly engagement with the Task Force.
 - Cambridge Street Preservation Project. Paiewonsky stated MassDOT has received clear feedback from the community on the importance of keeping the sidewalk open on the bridge. Work related to the preservation of the Cambridge Street Bridge is ongoing and a work zone was recently set up, taking space away from the bridge, which must be allocated among vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists crossing the bridge while creating a protected space for the construction workers to complete the required repairs. Paiewonsky noted that MassDOT District 6 is working with the contractor and will make adjustments to the work zone while maintaining safety objectives and the goal of getting the rebuilt sidewalk open by the end of 2026 and improving connections in Allston.
 - Lincoln Street Noise Barriers: In response to a Task Force member request for additional public engagement, MassDOT in coordination with the City of Boston, will hold an Open House for the public regarding the Lincoln Street Noise Barrier project on February 5, 2026 from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. at the Fiorentino Center. Paiewonsky noted that MassDOT engineers continue to coordinate with City of Boston engineering to coordinate their respective projects. MassDOT expects construction on the noise barriers to start in 2026. Harrington noted that the event would be an 'open house'



style with presentation boards and advertised to the public along with neighborhood “benefitted receptors” and the Task Force.

- Boston Layover Study. Harrington reported that MassDOT continues to regularly meet with the MBTA, MassDOT Rail and Transit, and the City of Boston, and that MassDOT is preparing schematics for several alternatives to discuss with the City. She noted that the study team is evaluating locations for up to eight (8) layover spots and assessing whether separating locations offers a feasible approach operationally and within the city.
- **Paiewonsky** reinforced that all focus is on action in 2026 – getting the IRT underway, developing a defined path forward, and getting back into permitting design and planning for construction.

DISCUSSION

- **Matthew Petersen (Petersen), City of Boston**, affirmed that the City of Boston continues to collaborate with MassDOT on the noise barriers project and stated that he believes that there are fruitful opportunities to get the most out of MassDOT’s work in Allston.
- **Paiewonsky** acknowledged receipt of a letter from some members of the Task Force directed towards MassDOT and the City requesting certain design features on the Lincoln Street Noise Barriers project, noting it would be considered as the project moves forward.
- **Anthony D’Isidoro (D’Isidoro), Allston Civic Association**, asked if there is any plan to include the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) in the conversations regarding the Lincoln Street Noise Barrier project considering the proximity to their ongoing work on Birmingham Parkway. Petersen confirmed that the City of Boston has monthly meetings with DCR regarding the work going on there. He added that DCR’s work on Leo Birmingham Parkway is nearly fully constructed, and once the Lincoln Street bikeway gets closer to being built, the City of Boston will coordinate more with DCR. Harrington added that DCR is represented on the Task Force, and she agreed that engagement with MassDOT and the City is a good idea.
- **Galen Mook (Mook), MassBike**, raised safety and accessibility concerns regarding work on the Cambridge Street Bridge and the recent closures, while also thanking MassDOT for getting the project started. Mook reported that the current work zone set up blocks bike access from the Cambridge Street Bridge to/from the Franklin Street footbridge resulting in bikes being forced onto the broken sidewalk and then down to the intersection at Harvard Avenue creating safety issues. Mook noted that wheelchair users cannot use the Franklin Street footbridge because they cannot travel across the broken sidewalk along Cambridge Street. Mook added that power wheelchair users can’t navigate on the broken sidewalk and use the bike lane across the Cambridge Street Bridge, noting that the current bike lane next



to the construction barriers is next to fast moving traffic. Mook asked that MassDOT District 6 look into providing some sort of barrier protection between bike and vehicles lanes to protect vulnerable road users as well as construction workers and for District 6 to keep in mind that when points of entry are closed it highly limits access for people who have no other way of getting around. Paiewonsky noted that the configuration of the work zone also considers the safety of construction workers and that MassDOT District 6 is working hard to balance the size of the work zone with room for cars, pedestrians, and cyclists. She said that that the project team would discuss alternative work zone configurations with MassDOT District 6 and reiterated the goal of keeping all users and workers safe and completing this portion of work as soon as possible.

- **Emily Jacobson (Jacobson), Member of the Public, Cambridge Resident**, said that she crosses the Cambridge Street Bridge daily for work and noted that there is often at least one other cyclist or pedestrian on it as well. She added that while there are two vehicle travel lanes, the construction barriers are in the middle of the bike lane. Jacobson added that many people use this bridge as their only means to get to work and asked MassDOT to resolve this issue. Petersen noted that the City of Boston is collaborating with MassDOT to develop a solution.
- **Harry Mattison (Mattison), Community Representative**, thanked MassDOT for scheduling an open house for the Lincoln Street Noise Barriers Project. Regarding the Cambridge Street Bridge, Mattison asked who the MassDOT project manager is on the project and whether there is a timeline for fixing the current condition. Paiewonsky answered that she is coordinating with the District 6 Director and that she expects changes in the next few days and asked the Task Force members not to contact District 6 staff directly, noting the project team is coordinating with District 6.
- **Mattison** asked MassDOT to clarify Task Force and stakeholder engagement with the IRT and whether there would be any direct contact with the IRT. Paiewonsky replied that MassDOT will manage the IRT and be the conduit between all stakeholders and the IRT. Paiewonsky added that MassDOT regularly meets with the City of Boston, Harvard University, and Boston University, and those meetings will continue. Paiewonsky noted that should the IRT request specific input from a stakeholder, then MassDOT could facilitate a meeting between the IRT and stakeholder. Paiewonsky reiterated that MassDOT would manage the consultant process, and meet with stakeholder partners, as well as the Task Force, on a regular basis to keep everyone informed.
- **Mattison** reflected that there will be very little opportunity for the public or advocacy community to directly talk to the consultant. Paiewonsky responded that because the study is intended to be an independent review, Task Force members could offer their views to



MassDOT but would not be given the opportunity to advocate to or lobby the consultant. She added that MassDOT does not intend for this process to be a black box exercise, but ultimately MassDOT is responsible and accountable to the public, and the interagency team would make decisions about how to move forward in cooperation with the Task Force. Mattison responded that it doesn't sound like the process, as described, is a way to move forward to build consensus.

- **Seth Gabois (Gadbois), Conservation Law Foundation**, stated he supports a closer relationship between the Task Force and the independent consultant. He asked if the consultant could attend Task Force meetings even if they aren't presenting to hear the discussion and that there is a potential risk of keeping the consultant at arm's length. Gadbois also stated there had been a prior request for a steering committee and, although that is not happening, if there could be some level of dialogue. Paiewonsky reiterated that MassDOT does not expect the consultant to attend meetings with the Task Force while they are performing their independent assessments, but as there are deliverables to share it is likely that MassDOT would have them at a Task Force meeting.
- **Jennifer Roberts (Roberts), Member of the Public**, noted that the work on I-90, Cambridge Street Bridge, as well as ongoing work on Harvard Street, creates a "perfect storm" for bus services. She asked the project team to, in addition to bikes and pedestrians, also consider transit and bus routes.

III. Project Goals and Priorities

PRESENTATION

- **Paiewonsky** reviewed the project goals developed by MassDOT for the project for feedback from the Task Force. She noted that the project goals were included in the consultant Request for Responses (RFR), adding that when a project goes on for as long as this project has, it is necessary to periodically review project goals. She summarized the goals for the project as follows:
 1. Provide safe multimodal connections between the Allston neighborhood and the regional transportation network and Charles River.
 2. Expand and improve multimodal connections among metropolitan Boston, Metrowest, Worcester, and Springfield.
 3. Provide opportunities for future redevelopment of Beacon Park Yard.
- **Paiewonsky** stated that the project team went through the priorities that were mentioned in meeting notes and other communications.
- **Paiewonsky** opened the conversation up for discussion, stating that MassDOT wants to hear what other project goals the Task Force might have.



DISCUSSION

- **Tom Nally (Nally), A Better City**, noted a discrepancy between the project goals sent to the Task Force earlier in the month from Larkin, and those presented at this meeting. Paiewonsky reiterated that the goals she presented are a summary of MassDOT's project goals and do not reflect the exact wording that was shared in the RFR. Nally stated that as the discussion is focused on the relationship of the priorities to the project goals, we should look at full goals rather than the abridged versions.
- **Mook** commented on how the wording of MassDOT's second goal mentions the east-west connections but not the north-south connections. Mook asked why the north-south connection to Kendall Square via Grand Junction is not included in these goals. Paiewonsky clarified that for the project goals, they avoided talking about specific project elements, since it is not the intention of these goals to specifically include or preclude any elements of the project.
- **D'Isidoro** stated that one of his goals is for successful construction mitigation and management. He added that although there is a long way to go before breaking ground, construction will last for many years, and it is important that handling the impacts of construction remains an important part of decision making throughout the entire process.
- **Albert Ng (Ng), Harvard University**, voiced his appreciation for MassDOT laying out the project goals as explicitly as they are. Ng requested that as the project moves forward with the independent review, that these goals be used as a beacon for evaluating each individual element, as well as the broader project, and ultimately decide on the best project possible. Ng added that something that might be missing from the project goals is quality of life.
- **Mattison** asked if this discussion is intended to update or revisit the Purpose and Need of the project. Paiewonsky clarified that the Purpose and Need is an official piece of a prior draft environmental document that was not filed. She added that this discussion is to convey MassDOT's expression of project goals. Mattison noted that Fred Salvucci and Jack Wofford wrote a letter to MassDOT in 2024 outlining project goals and suggested that it be forwarded to the consultant and incorporated in MassDOT's ongoing thoughts.
- **John Shields (Shields), Member of the Public**, suggested thinking about a project goal #4 which looks at the Charles River specifically, the riverbanks and how they can be not only protected, but enhanced and enlarged.
- **Stacy Thompson (Thompson), Livable Streets Alliance**, noted that the goals presented don't include addressing past harms or existing conditions caused by the original I-90 project and should be acknowledged and included in the project goals. Thompson added that the project is not just about making a multimodal connection, but a need to reconnect the community.



- **Thomspson** asked if there will be any specific goal regarding reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, regional traffic and the Commonwealth's climate goals and laws and to integrate those goals specifically into this project. Paiewonsky clarified that within the environmental documents there is discussion about reducing pollutant emissions and quality of life, and the project goals are not intended to be all-encompassing.
- **Bill Deigan (Diegan), City of Cambridge**, emphasized comments from earlier that north-south connections are an important priority for the project, including the Grand Junction for rail, as well as for a future multi-use path connection to Kendall Square and beyond.
- **Gadbois** reinforced the importance of north-south connections, quality of life, and mitigating construction impacts. He noted that as the goals and priorities begin to effectively alter the project Purpose and Need, that should be done in collaboration with the Task Force. Gadbois also asked that the reparative aspects be upgraded to the kind of language included in the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods application, and that that vision should continue to guide other priorities. Gadbois added the need to continue to pursue getting back federal funding through the Massachusetts federal delegation. Gadbois emphasized that climate solutions should still be a priority so that they are included into elements like the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) modelling. Paiewonsky responded that the previous Purpose and Need is not the same as project goals, and that when the time comes to relook at the Purpose and Need it would be discussed with the Task Force.
- **Jessica Robertson (Robertson), Community Representative**, noted that overall the goals are good, but there seems to be a couple key things missing, namely including Allston as a node in a regional network, not just an east-west corridor, and some aspects of quality of life for humans and the river. Robertson noted that the project goals presented are MassDOT's goals and that according to MassDOT, the Task Force can have their own goals. She stated that this reflects a larger concern of one-way communication, similar to the one-way communication with the Independent Review consultant that has been discussed. Robertson asked if there could be more opportunity for two-way conversation between the Task Force and the consultant to make sure the right questions are being asked and that really important things aren't left out. Paiewonsky responded that the discussion on the goals and priorities has been a two-way discussion and that sharing perspectives and helping one another understand how we all view the project is helpful. Paiewonsky added that many of the priorities expressed by the Task Force have been incorporated in the current project design. Paiewonsky reinforced that MassDOT will be managing the independent consultant and does not share the view that it would be better for the consultant to interact directly with the Task Force.



TASK FORCE MEETING SUMMARY

I-90 Allston Multimodal Project

January 15, 2026

- **Petersen** shared that the City of Boston is very interested in making sure that the work of the independent consultant reflects the needs of Boston constituents and residents, as well as the regional stakeholders that work and visit the City. He added that as the project moves forward, he sees two pathways, the technical feasibility pathway and the political/community consensus pathway and it's important to make sure the two pathways stay in alignment. Petersen stated that he understands MassDOT holds the contract with the independent consultant and will manage the relationship the Task Force has with the consultant. However, he wants to make sure there are enough conversations so that we're all moving in the same direction. He added that the City is confident that MassDOT will continue to be a good partner in this process.
- **Mattison** asked if MassDOT would update the goals and priorities and share them with the Task Force. Paiewonsky answered that the project team would consider Task Force comments and consider how to update the project goals.
- **Robertson** stated that it is unclear whether MassDOT is willing to amend the project goals based on tonight's discussion since there are important things, such as including key elements to enable a future Grand Junction Rail (GJR) connection, which are not quite reflected in the project goals as they are currently written. Robertson added that the Task Force is not asking that everything be included as a goal and understands the distinction between priorities and goals. She would also like to make sure that feedback from the Task Force will be passed along to the consultant. Paiewonsky reiterated that the project team would respond to the Task Force about their proposed project goals and priorities.
- **Mook** asked if MassDOT could take the feedback provided and reform the project goals. He suggested using words like "maximize multimodal connections" to incentivize the consultant to think about ways in which we can start to build project elements that don't just not preclude a future Kendall Square connection but actually activates and ignites that possibility. Mook also referenced augmenting Goal #2 to not just "expand and improve" but to maximize multimodal connections in alignment with the state's climate goals for mode shift. Mook offered his appreciation for the discussion about the project goals and priorities.
- **Larkin** highlighted that there is much agreement between MassDOT and the Task Force on the project goals and priorities, and there have been additional priorities discussed that can be added to help support the project goals. Larkin said she supported updating the goals and priorities and providing them back to the Task Force and the independent consultant.



IV. Early Action Projects – Initial Project Screening

PRESENTATION

- **Susan Harrington (Harrington), MassDOT**, introduced the early action items that MassDOT is looking at in collaboration with the Task Force. The current design team is evaluating elements such as the noise barrier, Cambridge Street bridge preservation, and a full build design evaluation in combination with the Franklin Street pedestrian bridge. She emphasized that the Independent Review consultant will analyze early action items from a different perspective. They are being scoped to analyze phasing and staging opportunities to identify whether components could be separated from the main project and assess cost implications. This includes reviewing how advancing certain elements independently could affect the overall project budget and whether alternative or supplemental funding sources could support those components. If feasible and recommended, the current design team would ultimately advance the design and implementation of those elements.
- **Jim Keller (Keller), Tetra Tech**, gave a presentation on the initial screening of the early action items suggested by Task Force members. These items were screened based on whether they were included in the prior project scope and whether they could be standalone projects. He noted that this evaluation does not include determination of technical or operational feasibility, agency support, or project prioritization considering long-term planning, fiscal constraints, and public input. Every potential early action item would be screened for environmental review requirements. Prioritizing transit, railroad, and local connections is considered part of the goal of the overall project.
- **Keller** reviewed each early action item and whether it met the requirements of being included in the prior project scope, and if they could be a standalone project, which is summarized below.
 - The Franklin Street Pedestrian Bridge and the Lincoln Street Noise Barriers were both included in the prior scope and have the potential to be standalone projects.
 - Rail relocations were included in the prior project scope but are not potential standalone projects.
 - West Station, the Allston Community Path, the Cambridge Street Bridge replacement, and redesigning the intersection at the Double Tree Hotel all are considered to be part of the prior project scope and are potential standalone projects.
 - While replacement of the River Street Bridge and the Western Avenue Bridge could both be standalone projects, neither project was included in the prior scope of the Allston Multimodal Transportation Project.



- Updating the river’s edge and the Paul Dudley White Path, as well as cleaning up effluence in the Charles River, would be considered within the prior scope and have the potential to be standalone projects.
- Additional projects along the Worcester Mainline, including accessibility improvements at stations along the line and adding full, high-level platforms to Newton Stations, were not included in the prior scope of the project.

DISCUSSION

- **Robertson** noted that Rail Relocations is shown as not having potential as a standalone project, but many other early action items would require rail relocation. Keller agreed, although rail relocations would be required to support other elements, rail relocation wouldn’t be done on its own.
- **Gadbois** asked which consultant team would set these early action items into motion, and asked how this initial screening relates to the environmental review process, whether addressing the river’s edge would include filling the river. He noted that the more standalone projects there are the more cumulative impacts and that he continues to advocate for reviewing the number of lanes on I-90 and Soldiers Field Road, and re-examining the throat area. Harrington responded that the current project team would advance the early action items and that the IRT would evaluate sequencing and priority. She noted that certain projects such as the noise barriers and Cambridge Street Bridge preservation are advancing as independent projects whereas some potential early action items are dependent on other project elements and would need to be permitted as a whole with the overall project. Some early action items could then be phased as early works projects under an overall design-build contract. Regarding the river’s edge, Harrington stated that this would be a DCR project since it is on DCR property. Gadbois noted that advancing any river’s edge projects could preclude seriously examining other alternatives through this area.
- **D’Isidoro** asked if there is anything that could disqualify the Franklin Street Bridge from being an early action item. Keller said that the purpose of the Franklin Street Bridge and Cambridge Street Bridge Replacement is to make them accessible. The Franklin Street Bridge is a potential standalone project but tied in with the Cambridge Street Bridge Replacement as well. The project team is looking at them both independently and together.
- **Kane Larin (Larin), Charles River Alliance of Boaters**, asked for clarification on the independent review process, how it relates to advancing early action items when so many of the project elements are intertwined, and asked where does the Independent Review consultant starts. He also asked whether the independent consultant is performing a “clean slate” review and if there are pieces of the project design that are inviolate and can’t be changed. Paiewonsky replied that this review is not a blank slate. MassDOT is going to



provide the consultant with the work that has been done to this point, convey what the core elements are and provide them with studies that have been previously performed. MassDOT is not asking the consultant to start from the beginning, but to assess prior work. Regarding the starting point of the Independent Review consultant start, Paiewonsky said that the in-depth cost analysis will be the first deliverable. Once the costs are known, including all indirect costs, MassDOT will discuss the results with the Task Force.

- **Petersen** commented that the integration of West Station into its surrounding environment is critical. He noted the City's support for West Station being well-connected to the surrounding environment through means of interim north-south connections or West Station Way and other solutions.
- **Nally** stated that it is critical, as part of the next round of review of early action projects, to identify interrelationships to show which projects can be separated out and which cannot. He emphasized that it is important not to reduce the benefits of the project or make tradeoffs to advance one aspect of transportation. He added that it is critical to determine the project cost to assess how to implement the pieces of the project that can be afforded and the rate at which they can be implemented. Paiewonsky stated that although changes are expected, MassDOT does not intend to start from the beginning. MassDOT expects the Independent Review consultant to provide new ideas and fresh and independent thinking on how to approach this project. MassDOT believes that it is important to define the project goals and priorities to clarify what the project trying to accomplish.

V. Next Steps

- **Mattison** asked if Lincoln Street Noise Barrier Open House materials could be made available online for those who cannot attend in person. Paiewonsky confirmed that Open House materials would be posted online.
- Proposed Upcoming Task Force Meeting Dates
 - February 26, March 24, April TBD
(NOTE: Subsequent to this meeting, the Feb. 26 meeting was cancelled and replaced with a written General Update.)
- Potential Topics at Upcoming Task Force Meetings
 - Early Action Projects
 - Independent Consultant Review
 - City of Boston Beacon Park Yards (BPY) Regional Framework



Additional Online Q&A

- **Clint Richards (Richards), Sierra Club**, asked if cost saving measures could include eliminating one or more lanes, particularly outbound lanes, on I-90 or Soldiers Field Road. Adding that even a rough estimate of this scenario would be invaluable. Response: MassDOT is not considering the elimination of travel lanes on I-90 or Soldiers Field Road.
- **Zachary Yaro (Yaro)**, commented that he is extremely excited to see the team pursuing options for breaking the larger project down into smaller pieces that can be built early rather than let some elements hold everything else back. Yaro asked what the public can expect to see by the end of 2026. Yaro said that he would like to know what the minimum that can be expected is, as well as what the highest bar that the project team is shooting for in 2026. Response: Expectations for 2026 are as conveyed in the 2026 Year Ahead remarks captured on the first page of these Summary Notes.