



Meeting Summary

Allston Multimodal Transportation Project

DATE: March 24, 2026 HSH PROJECT NO.: 2021055.08

PANELIST: Beth Larkin (TY Lin); Susan Harrington (MassDOT); Luisa Paiewonsky (MassDOT); Chris Osgood (City of Boston); Ben Zunkeler (City of Boston); Tom Nally (A Better City); Tony D'Isidoro (Allston Civic Association)

Overview

On Tuesday, March 24, 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 51 attendees (17 in-person and 34 virtual). The meeting agenda is below.

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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. Task Force members and elected officials in attendance introduced themselves.
- **Patrick Snyder (Snyder), MassDOT**, gave a brief overview of the function of the hybrid meeting and how online participants can provide comments.

II. Project Update

PRESENTATION

- **Luisa Paiewonsky (Paiewonsky), MassDOT**, provided updates on the Independent Review Consultant (IRC) selection process and layover.



Independent Consultant Selection Process. Paiewonsky stated that six teams had submitted proposals, the selection process is complete and MassDOT is currently in the process of contract negotiations with the selected firm. The name of the firm will be shared with the Task Force once the contract is finalized.

Layover. Paiewonsky said that MassDOT is continuing to work with the City of Boston, the MBTA, and MassDOT's Rail and Transit Division to identify potential layover sites and assess their viability. MassDOT will continue to keep the Task Force updated on these efforts.

- **Susan Harrington (Harrington), MassDOT,** provided updates on the Lincoln Street Noise Barriers and Cambridge Street Bridge Preservation early action projects.

Lincoln Street Noise Barriers. Harrington noted that the MassDOT held a well-attended Lincoln St. Noise Barrier Open House on February 5, 2026, to provide an informational and informal forum for neighborhood residents, the City of Boston, DCR and Task Force members. The Open House featured renderings and displays and encouraged members of the public to learn and ask questions about the noise barriers. The displays and renderings described the wall's placement, height, texture, landscaping, and potential for public art. MassDOT is coordinating with the City of Boston in its plans to develop a mixed-use path between the planned noise wall and Lincoln Street. Harrington said that final design for the noise barriers would be completed this summer and that initial site preparation activities are expected to begin although most of construction will be in 2027. Harrington added that MassDOT is still gauging interest for what the wall treatment will be and is very interested in public feedback. MassDOT is still coordinating with the City on what the future path adjacent to the noise barrier could look like.

Cambridge Street Bridge Preservation Project. Harrington stated that work is ongoing. There continues to be a work zone on the westbound sidewalk and the goal is to have that open by October 2026. Harrington said that there is now a landing page for updates on the Allston Preservation Project, including repairs to both the I-90 Viaduct and the Cambridge Street bridge, where people can communicate directly with MassDOT District 6. The landing page can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/allston-preservation-project>.

DISCUSSION

- **Anthony D'Isidoro (D'Isidoro), Allston Civic Association,** asked if there is an anticipated timeframe for when a decision will be made on layover. **Paiewonsky** answered that resolving the layover issue is one of MassDOT's priorities for this year, along with groundbreaking for the noise barriers project and completing the IRC work. She added that MassDOT can share with the Task Force over the next couple of months more on MassDOT's ongoing work with the City on layover options that have been identified and considered.
- **Stacey Thompson (Thompson), Livable Streets Alliance,** asked what elements of the project can't move forward until the layover decision is made. **Paiewonsky** stated that although she could not say exactly what is and isn't being held up by layover, she did



emphasize that MassDOT shares the goal of finding a new location for layover tracks within the City of Boston. She added that the project team, the City, the MBTA and MassDOT Rail and Transit are working hard to solve the layover issue by coming up with new ideas and new approaches.

- **Matthew Petersen (Petersen), City of Boston**, emphasized that the City of Boston continues to be active partners working collaboratively with MassDOT on layover and moving the process forward as quickly as possible.

III. City of Boston Beacon Park Yard Regional Framework

PRESENTATION

- **Ben Zunkeler (Zunkeler), City of Boston**, opened the Beacon Park Yard Regional Framework Plan (BPY Plan) presentation by thanking MassDOT for the opportunity to present to the Task Force and providing an overview of what will be presented. The presentation would focus on 1) reviewing the content that has been worked on over the past two years, 2) providing a detailed overview of the City's recommendations and 3) concluding with next steps.
- **Chris Osgood (Osgood), City of Boston**, reiterated the City's appreciation to present to the Task Force and invited everyone to continue being engaged in the process. Osgood noted the importance of uplifting and improving a whole set of critical regional transportation assets, transit, roadway, walking, and biking assets and improving the overall environmental health in this area. Osgood stated that although a major part of the BPY Plan is about facilitating BPY itself, much of the presentation is about the subsequent BPY land use. He acknowledged that BPY cannot move forward without the Allston Multimodal Transportation Project and that that project shapes what could be possible in BPY in the future. Osgood added that the foundation of the City's work is a credit to MAPC and A Better City (ABC), referring to ABC's 2022 report outlining the incredible opportunity that BPY presents. Osgood explained that the BPY Plan was developed with community and Task Force input, and it outlines goals and scenarios rather than prescribing one specific design. These scenarios intend to guide future land-use decisions, and the independent review while fitting alongside other planning work happening across Allston-Brighton. Osgood extended an invitation to all Task Force members to get involved in the city's future workshops where they will continue to develop the framework for Beacon Park Yard.
- **Tom Nally (Nally), A Better City**, said that in 2022, as MassDOT and the City of Boston were preparing several federal grant applications, ABC worked with their consultant to prepare a report that would help to demonstrate the economic benefits that could be realized by the multimodal project (the *Economic Benefits of the I-90 Allston Multimodal Project* report). Nally said that the analysis began with MAPC's assumption of approximately 11 million square feet of future development within the Beacon Park Yard site. The analysis performed for the ABC report states that the multiplier effect for the construction of the



project would generate over 54,000 jobs, over \$13 billion (2022 USD) in contribution to GDP, and \$150 million (2022 USD) in taxes at full build-out. The ABC report stated that projected recurring benefits from full buildout, ongoing occupation and use of the new development include approximately 6,100 on-site jobs, and with multiplier effects, a total of 36,000 jobs. Nally stated that the projected total payroll for jobs would exceed \$4 billion in annual revenue, with over \$6 billion contributed annually to GDP with the multiplier effect. He noted that the multiplier effect starts with direct investment, plus indirect, which is the second layer of spending, plus induced benefits. He stated BPY transportation facilities would produce payback both short-term and long-term and that the ABC study was the basis for some of the work the City has done.

- **Ben Zunkeler (Zunkeler), City of Boston**, said that when the City took some of these baseline economic assumptions, the projections showed that the future BPY development would represent over 10% of the net growth of the county, as well as nearly an equal share of the county's housing growth over the duration of the project. Zunkeler explained that the site includes several complex infrastructure and physical constraints that must be addressed to unlock its full potential. The Boston Planning Department is developing an Allston-Brighton Community Plan that will address issues such as near-term development, zoning, and housing production in relation to the Beacon Park Yard redevelopment.
- **D'Isidoro** thanked MassDOT for giving the City of Boston the opportunity to present and acknowledged the years of work that went into the BPY Plan. D'Isidoro stressed that it is never too early to start good planning and that the BPY Plan is a living document of what can be accomplished at BPY. He underscored the importance of advancing the project so its complementary benefits can be realized. D'Isidoro said there has been strong community participation in BPY Plan activities across both in-person and virtual formats. D'Isidoro noted that Allston is undergoing rapid change which can be unsettling for some members of the community, and that part of his role as a civic leader is to help residents navigate this change. He reminded the Task Force that the work being done is intended to benefit future generations.
- **Zunkeler** thanked D'Isidoro and Nally for their contributions. He explained that the planning team used a co-design approach throughout the process, developing the plan collaboratively with residents and regional partners who helped shape each component. He noted that a group of regional coalition partners, including representatives from the Task Force, played an important role in grounding the vision in practical realities to guide future decision-making. Zunkeler added that MassDOT's infrastructure project is important for the goals expressed in the BPY Plan.
- **Zunkeler** explained that BPY Plan is part guidebook and part workbook. The guidebook begins with seven guiding principles:
 1. Create Accessible and Reliable Multimodal Connections Regionally
 2. Develop with the City
 3. Connect to the Charles



4. Improve the Pedestrian and Cyclist Experience in and around Allston
5. Amplify Allston's Creative Capital
6. Invest in Community Anchors
7. Employ Nature-Based Solutions

These guiding principles were used to develop the following applied principles.

Cultural Assets and Natural Systems, which focuses on strengthening connections to a West Station Cultural hub and a waterfront cultural hub at the Charles River and major open spaces at the river's edge,

Transportation and Infrastructure, which focuses on reconnecting communities; aligning investments in transportation, public realm, and resiliency; and multimodal connection to the riverfront, and

Land Use and Opportunity, which supports high density around West Station early on in development, a mix of uses across the site, and economic inclusion of existing civic buildings and open spaces.

- **Zunkeler** spoke about the workbook part of BPY Plan which presents three different scenarios of development that balance multiple key elements and tradeoffs.
 - 1) The hubs scenario concentrates height and density around West Station with a human-scale east-west connection through the site, a strong north-south multimodal link, and two major activity hubs that mix living, working, and open-space uses.
 - 2) The corridors scenario prioritizes large open space by the river, shifts height and density toward the waterfront, and creates multiple circulation pathways including a central, east-west green spine and new pedestrian connections.
 - 3) The gateways scenario distributes smaller open spaces and mixed-use clusters at entry points from surrounding neighborhoods to improve connections while also exploring resiliency.

Zunkeler noted that at the City's workshop events, attendees and stakeholder groups were encouraged to plan out their own vision for Beacon Park Yard in an activity called "Beacon in a Box."

- **Zunkeler** explained that there were nine recommendations for things to consider that apply to each scenario. He distributed a Draft BPY Recommendations Matrix dated 03.20.2026 to Task Force members that will be used to identify key elements that will be examined more closely at future Beacon Park Yard workshop sessions.
- **Zunkeler** summarized the presentation by reiterating that the guidebook, the seven guiding principles, represents the City's overarching vision. The workbook, the three scenarios, offer alternatives for achieving the overarching vision. He added that when making decisions in the future it's important to be reminded that this is not just about infrastructure, or land use or the Charles River, but that these are all interconnected, and that the recommendation matrix can help to inform the best possible future.
- **Zunkeler** concluded by stating that the City's goal is to release the draft plan this summer and that there would be a comment period once the draft plan is released.



DISCUSSION

Larkin asked if any Task Force members, who are also coalition partners, wanted to add anything. **Albert Ng (Ng), Harvard University**, expressed appreciation for the efforts that went into the development of this report and that he is looking forward to working with the City and MassDOT in figuring out how the vision that the City has outlined matches up with the infrastructure that is going to move forward.

- **Fred Yaloris (Yaloris), City of Cambridge**, asked for clarity on how MassDOT plans to move forward jointly with the City on their plan and how the City's design and planning will be integrated into the discussion. **Paiewonsky** expressed her appreciation for all the visioning and planning work. She noted that MassDOT meets with the City on an ongoing basis to make sure the City's goals and MassDOT's transportation goals can be integrated to the extent possible. She reiterated that MassDOT has multiple goals for their investment including improved access between Allston and the surrounding transportation network in the Charles River, improved access west to east, with a particular focus on rail access between parts west and the City of Boston and facilitating the future redevelopment of BPY. She noted that the City of Worcester and the City of Boston are both invested in the project and that MassDOT will balance among the varying goals set by municipal and institutional partners.
- **Thompson** thanked the City for the clarity of the materials provided. She stressed the importance of planning toward what is possible and identifying potential pitfalls. She asked what are the "must-haves" such that if they don't happen the City's vision cannot occur. She specifically referenced layover and decking for future air rights. **Zunkeler** stated that all three scenarios rely on the Allston Multimodal Transportation Project moving forward. Additionally, the nine recommendations rely on many different elements of the project that will be addressed in more detail in future workshops. **Petersen** emphasized that the City would continue to work collaboratively with state partners on layover and the rest of the rail and highway program as well, including alignment and cross-sections. He stated that layover should be resolved first and progressively take issues off the table to move the project forward. **Paiewonsky** stated that MassDOT shares the goal of moving layover facilities out of Beacon Park Yard. She reiterated the need for layover to support the state's expansion of rail service and west-east rail and that so long as an acceptable location in the City can be identified it could be relocated from BPY. She added that MassDOT will continue to work with the City to resolve layover and advance a solution that supports the project goals. **Laura Gilmore (Gilmore), MBTA**, added that the MBTA had a productive workshop with the City where they reviewed these materials in advance to focus on where the dependencies are. **Thompson** stated that her goal for the April 28th Task Force meeting would be for MassDOT to be confident enough to say that layover can be eliminated from the project.
- **Fred Salvucci (Salvucci), Community Representative**, stated that the biggest threat to the project is delay and inflation, as well as tariffs. He noted that the entirety of the project can't move forward until the environmental documents are approved and the delay in filing



the documents is adding cost to the project due to inflation. He added that he hopes a decision on layover could be made in a month so that the project can move forward. Salvucci then discussed the delay of benefits to the City, region and state. He stated that project benefits cannot be fully realized until the infrastructure is done. He referenced the Innovation District as an example of only becoming a reality once the infrastructure was in place. Salvucci noted that early action projects are a point of optimism and suggested that some early actions, particularly on the south side of the project area that are not environmentally complex could advance without additional environmental analysis and could begin to make real the economic opportunities. He said that early actions can help limit inflation-driven cost increases and reduce the impact of delaying the more visionary elements of the project. Salvucci also cited past projects in which there were disconnects between environmental commitments and what ended up being constructed, specifically along the Rose Kennedy Greenway. He stated that opportunities can be limited with bad design. Salvucci closed by saying that the decision to move layover out of Allston should have been made a long time ago and he expressed his hope it gets made by the next Task Force meeting.

- **Paiewonsky** shared Salvucci’s concern about the impact of inflation and tariffs on the cost of the project and shared the desire to have early actions. She stated that the Governor and Lt. Governor remain committed to this project and advancing neighborhood projects through early action. She noted that “momentum builds momentum” and that early actions are contributing to that momentum. On layover, Paiewonsky clarified that in the next month or two MassDOT and the City would present to the Task Force ideas to get to resolution on layover, not that it would be solved in a month or two. She noted that while the issue of layover is important, the environmental documents are not being held up for lack of agreement on layover, rather they are being held up because of the very large mismatch between the prior project scope and available funding. She added that entire purpose of the independent study, along with continued engagement with the Task Force, is to keep the project moving forward.
- **Petersen** commented about aligning the environmental filings and the independent review process with current available funding and referenced other large projects in the Commonwealth where environmental filings reflected project scopes beyond available funding. Petersen used an analogy of a multi-layered cake to describe the project. If the project team is not thoughtful about the scope, then layers of the cake that people really want might be cut off, and then the public is left with a plain, single-layered cake with no frosting. He suggested thinking strategically about which slices of the whole cake make sense to advance with the money that’s available.
- **Paiewonsky** reiterated that MassDOT supports the vision for the project and that the independent review will help to determine what the options there are.
- **Salvucci** emphasized that the \$327 M federal grant being pulled was unprecedented. He stated there’s likely to be a future reauthorization bill and the state needs an aggressive



federal strategy so that whole layers of the cake aren't being thrown away because we're living within artificial constraints caused by unprecedented action by Congress. He suggested working backwards from the soonest date when the reauthorization may occur so that the project is ready and MassDOT can capitalize on the additional funding.

- **D'Isidoro** added that early action projects could be thought of as a scoop of ice cream on the side.
- **Seth Gadbois (Gadbois), Conservation Law Foundation**, stated that Paiewonsky's comment on momentum building momentum and Salvucci's comment that you can kill progress with bad design resonated with him. Gadbois conveyed his concerns about there being too big a distance between the Task Force and the strategic review process and his fear that progress will be halted with a bad design. He stated that keeping the Task Force at arm's length injects the risk of delay since if the draft is too far afield from constituent organizations or constituent members of the community, that presents an opportunity to fight the draft and further delay the project. Gadbois again requested greater integration with the independent consultant. **Paiewonsky** responded that MassDOT is not going anywhere and would be updating the Task Force on a regular basis as the independent consultant progresses its independent review. She stressed that MassDOT will keep the Task Force up to date and that MassDOT will relay to the independent consultant input the Task Force thinks is important for the independent consultant to know.
- **Larkin** clarified that the "draft" documents that Gadbois was referring to were the draft environmental documents and not draft documents being prepared by the IRC. Larkin asked MassDOT to clarify the roles of the consultant teams.
- **Paiewonsky** stated that the independent consultant will perform the review and the existing project team will continue to advance early action projects, and when the time comes to revisit environmental filings, the same project team that has been working with MassDOT to create the original draft environmental documents will develop the updated SDEIR and DEIS. She noted that there will be many inputs into the path forward, including input from the independent review team, the Task Force, municipal and institutional partners and interagency team members. She added that there will be multiple sources of advice, information and recommendations, including from the Task Force.
- **Thompson** stated the reason for the request for more direct engagement with the project consultants is that MassDOT does not always accurately reflect Task Force input, thereby does not fully trust MassDOT to convey exactly what the Task Force wants the consultant to know.
- **Petersen** noted there is a technical process and a political process to this project, and that if they are too far apart it may result in a delay in the environmental process. He added that there is a need to instill confidence in the process going forward.
- **Zunkeler** closed by reiterating that the City would be reaching out regarding the scheduling of a separate workshop to advance the City's BPY Regional Framework.



IV. Next Steps

- Proposed Upcoming Task Force Meeting Dates
 - April 28, May 28 and June TBD

(NOTE: Subsequent to this Task Force meeting, the April Task Force meeting was postponed and the May meeting scheduled for May 20.)
- Potential topics at upcoming Task Force meetings discussed included
 - More substantive layover update
 - Independent Review scope and when deliverables are due
 - Progressive Design-Build