# Allston Multimodal Transportation Project

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

# Overview

On Thursday, September 24, 2026, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation convened a hybrid (in-person and virtual) meeting of the Allston Multimodal Transportation Project Task Force. There were 54 attendees (18 in-person and 36 virtual). The meeting agenda is below.

## Agenda


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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 and asked Task Force members and elected officials in the room and on-line to introduce themselves.
- **Hung Pham (Pham), MassDOT,** gave a brief overview of the functions of the hybrid meeting and how online participants can provide comments.

## II. Independent Cost and Engineering Analysis

### PRESENTATION

- **Luisa Paiewonsky (Paiewonsky), MassDOT,** spoke about the Independent Cost and Engineering Analysis and the scope of work being performed by Arcadis, the Independent Review Consultant. Paiewonsky stated that Task 1 is now underway, which includes an evaluation of the project's scope, budget, and funding. Paiewonsky clarified that the funding

evaluation is an assessment of the funding that is currently available, not a search for additional funding sources. Arcadis will produce an updated project cost estimate for the current project scope. MassDOT expects this number to exceed previously reported estimates. Paiewonsky added that Arcadis is conducting their work through MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning , and the interagency group, which includes MassDOT and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, has not yet convened with the consultant.

- **Paiewonsky** stated that Task 1 includes the following work:
  - Review the existing project documents
  - Compare the current cost estimate for the project scope before the loss of the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant in July 2025 with the current available funding
  - Identify major cost drivers
  - Assess which cost drivers are essential components of the project
  - Conduct a component-level review of major project elements
  - Evaluate the impacts of cost escalation and inflation.
- **Paiewonsky** stated that towards the end of Task 1, Arcadis will be asked to prepare materials for MassDOT to share with the Task Force. Paiewonsky added that the MassDOT/MBTA Allston Multimodal Transportation Project team is not overseeing day-to-day progress but has received reports from OTP that the process is running smoothly.

## DISCUSSION

- **Fred Yaloris (Yaloris), Community Representative,** asked for more information about how the Independent Review Team is structured. **Paiewonsky** responded that the team is led by Arcadis, and Arcadis has several sub-consultants assisting them. Paiewonsky added that OTP selected Arcadis because of their extensive cost estimating and analysis experience.
- **Yaloris** asked if cost estimating is the primary goal for Arcadis. **Paiewonsky** responded that cost estimating is a significant part of their work, but they are also tasked with the engineering review, which includes project staging and implementation.
- **Tom Nally (Nally), A Better City,** asked what the expected duration is of the Task 2 engineering review. **Paiewonsky** said that she would get that information from OTP and provide it in the meeting notes. (NOTE: Task 2 is expected to begin winter 2026/2027 and take approximately six months.)
- **Fred Salvucci (Salvucci), Community Representative,** stated that he objects to starting the cost analysis before a decision on layover is made and emphasized the importance and benefits of advancing early action projects. **Paiewonsky** noted that layover was not included in the project price tag at the time of the RCN grant.

# III. Lincoln Street Noise Barriers

## PRESENTATION

- **Susan Harrington (Harrington), MassDOT,** said that the Lincoln Street Noise Barrier Project would be advertised for contractor bidding on September 26, 2026. The project will be funded by non-federal Fair-Share funds.
- **Harrington** stated that construction for the noise barrier project is expected to last two years. Early site preparation activities will begin in winter 2026 and continue into late spring 2027, at which point the contractor will begin relocating utilities. The contractor will relocate MassDOT's Intelligent Transportation System duct and construct the foundation and retaining walls throughout fall and winter 2027. By spring 2028, the construction crew will begin installation of the noise barrier. Construction completion is expected in the Fall 2028. MassDOT will continue to collaborate with the City of Boston and Eversource to facilitate the construction of the City's shared use path between the noise barrier and Lincoln Street after construction of the noise barriers.
- **Harrington** emphasized that the existing Black Lives Matter artwork that is on the fence between I-90 and Lincoln Street will be removed from the fence as part of the contractors work and kept in storage until the noise barrier is constructed, at which point the artwork will be reinstalled. The noise barrier will have a custom oak leaf pattern on the I-90 facing side which was chosen due to the proximity of the wall to Oak Square on the other side of I-90. The Lincoln Street side of the noise barrier will include public art at each intersection.

## DISCUSSION

- **Anthony D'Isidoro (D'Isidoro), Allston Civic Association,** noted that there is a development at 176 Lincoln Street that was recently approved by the Boston Planning Board. This development has been revised with a focus on including residential space. Additionally, there is another property directly across the street that has yet to be approved by the Boston Planning Board; however, the developers are hoping to begin construction potentially in 2027. Both developments would involve large demolition and construction efforts which could possibly overlap with the timeline of the noise walls. D'Isidoro stressed the importance of the projects being coordinated and recommended that the MassDOT project team and the contractor coordinate with both developers as well as the Boston Planning Department around the construction timelines to prevent conflicts. **Harrington** said that MassDOT is aware of these projects and will be coordinating.
- **Matthew Petersen (Petersen), City of Boston,** stated that the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) is working very closely with MassDOT and Eversource on the noise barrier and the potential shared use path, and with DCR at the western end of the corridor and eastern end at the Franklin Street footbridge. Additionally, BTD is working closely with the Boston Planning Department on the Transportation Access Plan Agreement (TAPA) for 176 Everett Street. He noted that the City is also working to clear up any issues with the curved brick wall located in front of 176 Lincoln Street.

- **Galen Mook (Mook), MassBike,** stated that he looks forward to the noise barriers project taking place. He asked if there were any options for the City to provide traffic calming on Lincoln Street and why the brick wall isn't being removed. **Petersen** responded that as part of Eversource's work, the City may ask them to construct three raised intersections along Lincoln Street at the intersections of Portsmouth Street, Everett Street, and Franklin Street. **Harrington** noted that the noise barrier limits are based on noise requirements and that based on those requirements a noise barrier is not needed at the location of the brick wall. She added that assuming the future development at 176 Lincoln Street becomes a permitted project and includes residential units, noise levels at that site would be reevaluated during the environmental evaluation phase of the greater Allston Multimodal Transportation Project.
- **Mook** emphasized that the community has been asking for traffic calming for a long time and would like to see some traffic calming as part of the noise barrier project rather than having to wait several years for the Eversource project to begin. Regarding the brick wall, although not needed based on current conditions, Mook conveyed that if 176 Lincoln Street was going to be redeveloped for housing, it seems short-sighted not to extend the noise barrier now to account for that. **Paiewonsky** responded that it's important for agencies to make decisions and move forward instead of constantly refining the work scope, The noise barrier project is meant to reduce noise levels and not add work to the project that is not needed. Paiewonsky added that there is no scope for traffic calming on Lincoln Street or building additional noise barriers for potential future benefited receptors in the scope of the MassDOT Noise Barriers project. MassDOT is focused on getting the project out to bid, advancing work and building momentum for the project.
- **Albert Ng (Ng), Harvard University,** asked whether a noise barrier could be provided in front of 176 Lincoln Street if that property is identified as a benefited receptor. **Harrington** confirmed that it would need to be evaluated and there would need to be an approved site plan, but there remains the possibility for a noise barrier to be installed at that location in the future. Ng asked if the $20M Fair-Share funding for the Noise Barriers project was from the $615 million Fair Share funding allocated to the overall Allston Multimodal Transportation Project. **Harrington** confirmed that is correct.

# IV. Boston Layover Study

## PRESENTATION

- **Paiewonsky** said that MassDOT continues to meet with the City of Boston and the MBTA regularly on potential layover locations. MassDOT has presented the City with several concepts to evaluate. The current focus is on Frontage Road near Widett Circle,. The MBTA and MassDOT's Rail and Transit Division have been conducting a detailed operational analysis to assess whether that the site works operationally. MassDOT and the City of Boston plan to meet to review the preliminary findings and confirm whether there is a viable path forward at the Frontage Road location. MassDOT and City of Boston engineers continue to work together to identify potential suitable locations to meet the layover track

requirements outside of Beacon Park Yard noting that it is not easy to find a location that satisfies operational goals.

### DISCUSSION

- **D'Isidoro** asked if the recent public meeting about Widett Circle was hosted by the MBTA or the City of Boston and what the objective of the meeting was. **Petersen** responded that it was an MBTA meeting that was supported by the City. Petersen added that the City of Boston has not yet transferred all the land to the MBTA at Widett Circle, and the City wants to make sure that residents around Widett Circle are aware of the work that is currently taking place and the work that is to be expected. The City is supportive of getting to the point where Widett is operational.
- **Larkin** reiterated that as the project stands, MassDOT is looking at viable options to move layover out of Beacon Park Yard. More information will be available once the analysis is complete.

## V. Allston-Brighton Open Streets Day

- **Larkin** announced that on October 4, 2026, the MassDOT/MBTA project team will have a table at the Allston-Brighton Open Streets Day. **Harrington** added that the project team has been working closely with the MBTA, and other MassDOT staff to prepare presentation materials to inform members of the public. The table will be staffed with members of the project team who will be available to discuss current project activities and share many of the same materials that were presented at the July Open House. Harrington noted the Lincoln Street Noise Barrier Project is one of the last two projects to be listed for contractor bids for the 2026 fiscal year. Harrington said that the MassDOT team is implementing recommendations from the Task Force about activities that can be set up to get the public engaged.
- **D'Isidoro** asked if MassDOT had coordinated with BTD to have their tables set up next to each other. **Petersen** confirmed that BTD will have a table set up at the event and they will be coordinating with MassDOT further.
- **D'Isidoro** asked if there is a project-specific email communication that could be used for advertising the event. **Harrington** confirmed that there is a consolidated email list for everyone who has registered on the Allston Multimodal Transportation Project website, but there has not been any communications to that group in a long time. **D'Isidoro** said that it would be important to restart public outreach, especially with the upcoming closures related to the Cambridge Street Bridge Preservation Project. Harrington noted that District 6 is putting together a flyer on the Cambridge Street Bridge Preservation Project. Harrington also mentioned that demolition planned as part of the Cambridge Street Bridge Preservation Project, initially anticipated for this summer, has been delayed to this fall due to the World Cup and Sail Boston 250.

- **Mook** asked if the project team would like help from the Task Force with the MassDOT Open Streets Day table. **Harrington** answered yes, the project team invites the entire Task Force to stop by their table on Open Streets Day.
- **Harrington** asked if Open Streets Day is a rain-or-shine event. **Petersen** answered that generally, if there is not a major storm, the event will continue through minor weather.

## VI. July 22 Task Force Open House Feedback

- **Larkin** mentioned that there was no Task Force meeting in August, and the next meeting will be held in Worcester on October 21, 2026. Larkin also recapped the Open House that MassDOT hosted at the Fiorentino Community Center in Allston on July 22, 2026, and asked the Task Force for their feedback on the format of that event.
- **D'Isidoro** stated that he was surprised by the low turnout for the meeting noting that public meetings in July and August tend to have lower turnouts. **Ng** stated that he was pleasantly surprised that as many people showed up as they did, given the time of year being slow for attendance. He also mentioned that the memorial for the late Louisa Gag, the BTD team member was a good way for colleagues to come together and a tribute.
- **Mook** asked how many attendees, excluding Task Force and project team members, attended the open house. **Larkin** answered that the total number of people who signed in was approximately 25 but that included some Task Force and project team members.
- **Salvucci** stated that he hopes that layover is resolved before the October Task Force meeting in Worcester. Salvucci added that he does not want layover to be a point of conflict between Allston and communities along the Framingham-Worcester Commuter Rail line.
- **D'Isidoro** advocated for advancing community engagement separate from the Task Force meetings, and reigniting public interest in the project. He noted there has been little interaction with the public and that public interaction is currently limited to Task Force meetings and getting into the weeds. He noted that there is a significant base of public interest in the project. **Harrington** agreed. **Petersen** agreed that it is important to engage the public and draw in a base of public interest but only once the project moves closer to public decision making. In the meantime, it would be worth looking at how the general public can be brought up to speed with the status of the project. **Paiewonsky** said that on the Sagamore Bridge Project there has been extensive public outreach focused on updating the public on project milestones. However, with the Allson scope uncertain, and hundreds of millions of dollars away from funding the entire project scope, the timing of the outreach is important. She added that the MassDOT/MBTA are committed to honest and factual public dialogue about the funding and status of the Allston project.
- **Salvucci** expressed concern that increasing project costs could lead to reductions in project scope. Salvucci stated that delays have resulted in increased costs due to inflation and called for a clear Commonwealth strategy to pursue additional funding. Salvucci stated that project decisions should be driven by public benefits rather than cost reduction alone and urged a balanced approach that preserves the project's full vision while securing the resources needed for implementation. **Paiewonsky** stated that the project remains a priority and that

MassDOT is taking a responsible approach to addressing a major funding cut, adding that there are still hundreds of millions of dollars in available funding. She also noted that there had been concerns among Task Force members about the misalignment between the project's scope and budget even before the grant was lost. **Petersen** stated that the City of Boston remains committed to preserving the public-benefit elements of the project. Petersen compared this project to the Central Artery project in Boston and said that the community-based elements of this project are not considered optional, and they are a significant factor. **Salvucci** thanked the City for its support and urged that key community benefits be advanced as early actions. He emphasized that implementing these elements early would help ensure they are delivered and reduce the risk of future scope reductions.

- **Yaloris** emphasized that major projects have room to include more community benefits later in the design phase and into construction. Drawing on his experience with the Central Artery project, he observed that many parks and public improvements were identified and incorporated after major infrastructure elements had been designed.

## VII. Looking Ahead

- **Larkin** reviewed the upcoming Task Force meeting dates planned for: October 21, 2026, November 18, 2026, and December Date TBD.
- The Task Force meeting location for October will be in the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission conference room at Union Station in Worcester.
- Potential topics at upcoming meetings include:
  - Worcester Regional Research Bureau (WRRB) Report Presentation
  - Chairman's Report: Worcester MBTA Working Group
  - MBTA Rail Modernization Plan
  - Independent Consultant Review
- **Petersen** noted that a draft of the BPY Regional Plan and Allston Brighton Community Plan were being released for public comment.
- There was a request from multiple Task Force members for more information about the Cambridge Street Bridge Preservation Project as it relates to a subcommittee of Task Force members and stakeholders that met with MassDOT District 6.