

Massachusetts Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Notes
Wednesday, May 27, 2026, 1:00 – 3:00 PM
Salem City Hall Annex

Welcome & Introductions: Pete Sutton, ex-officio, called the meeting to order and called roll

New Member Spotlight: Karl Alexander Karl serves as the Senior Manager for Greenways at the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA). Their mission is to protect and restore the Mystic River and its tributaries, which feed into Boston Harbor from the northwest of downtown. MyRWA defines greenways as places for walking, biking, and rolling, connecting people to places, nature, and each other – eventually connecting 25 miles of off-road shared use paths from the Mystic Lakes to Boston Harbor. Karl also has background as a planning and design consultant for mobility and placemaking projects. He's worked with the City of Salem on their traffic calming program, and before that worked for Zagster - managing the Salem Bike Sharing Program

Discussion & Brainstorm for 2027 Strategic Highway Safety Plan & Vulnerable Road User

Assessment: Bonnie Polin, MassDOT Highway Division's State Safety Engineer provided an overview (attached) on updates to the MA Strategic Highway Safety Plan – required to be updated every five years and scheduled for release in 2028. The latest version will also require a vulnerable roadway user (VRU) assessment that has previously been a separate initiative. VRU are defined by law as either a pedestrian, a bicyclist, another cyclist, or a person on a personal conveyance (such as a wheelchair). Development of the SHSP will include:

- Historic data and analyses
 - Overall Trends – Who, What, Where, When
 - Process / consultation
 - Strategies
 - Implementation
- VRU focus backed by data
 - VRU definition/restrictions/education
 - Lighting
 - Speed
 - Vehicle Design including e-bikes/e-mobility

Input was sought from MABPAB on what to focus on, what new items to include and best paths to implementation. A crowdsourcing app was also used to facilitate discussion and generate the most popular ideas and topics for consensus including:

- Accounting for unreported VRU incidents (such as crashes and near misses)
- More accurate data collection
- Speed management (the single most powerful lever for VRU safety)

Questions and comments included:

- When we talked about focusing on communities, are we talking about geographic communities or communities of motorcyclists or cyclists?
 - Both – it is open to interpretation
- Regarding the issue of the under-reporting – that may change depending on what happens with the new micromobility bill. If the bill passes, there will be a new section in reporting that deals with not just a crash that involves a VRU with a motor vehicle, but VRUs in general. A good example would be dooring of a cyclist which previously was not part of a crash report, because it did not involve an operated motor vehicle - it would have to be captured now. There's a lot more incidents that will be captured in the future
- Regarding the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), there are reasons that people are left out of the data reporting, including if a person passes away more than 720 hours (31 days) after a crash; or if it's an intentional act, which is not in the definition itself, or which might change if there is not a vehicle involved
- There were at least 10 or 11 of these types of pedestrian fatalities last year that are not listed in the data. I really think that we can try to reflect that here in MA, even if we don't submit that to the feds, so we can be aware of those crashes and make our roads safer
 - Noted. Also, fatalities along private ways are currently not reported that should be included in the future

- With regards to more accurate data, I recently attended the Lifesavers Conference, and saw a presentation by Laura Hamm from Virginia Tech, and she had a presentation on correcting and collecting more accurate VRU data over just using vehicle crashes as our default data collection. The program has 12 cyclists - various types of bikes, various types of riders that are outfitted with LiDAR cameras. They're able to record the near misses, the speeds, and it's capturing a lot more data other than what we would expect with self-reporting or just vehicle crash data
 - MassDOT is starting to use near-miss information in a lot of the road safety audits that we're doing. There are still some questions on the way some of the near-miss crash data are being collected and are being defined. All this new info is very helpful because we have relatively few of these kinds of crashes documented - we're not capturing the true danger of when they're occurring
- Brockton Police released a report last year stating there were 5,583 crashes of all types within the city: that's about one every 90 minutes. That's helpful for our advocacy, because we get to put a number on it, but also gives a reason why are folks' insurance is so high. There was a fatality yesterday in a bike-motorcycle accident and we also had a pedestrian killed crossing the block on a MassDOT roadway May 1st
- The Brockton City Council has a public safety subcommittee that have not met in a year. The new chair, convened the committee and discovered in our ordinances that the police must issue an annual report, so there came the data, which we, by the way, think is undercounted
- One of the things we are missing from the data set is local EMS and fire department. If a crash happens on the Shining Sea Bikeway, Falmouth Fire Department or EMS might respond, but it doesn't get reported. If someone simply goes to the hospital, this is another data set that's missing. The data doesn't get reported. "You know, I was clipped on a road and broke my arm". It doesn't get reported.
- It would be great to pull in those data sets so we have a more accurate look. Are there other states that do an addendum to FARS that is more state-specific - maybe we're not reporting it to the feds because they're non-FARS crashes, but we still want to be able to report on it holistically?
 - I know North Carolina was doing something for a while, and I think Oregon was doing something, and they stopped - I don't know why, but that's something we can try and find out. Always good practice to see what other states are doing
 - Getting information on public health, EMS and hospital is key. MassDOT did have a really good linkage project that was done through Department of Public Health: they can actually pull up the actual health records and the crash records to link them, not probabilistically, but actual linkage, deterministically. And, and it was great to see under-reporting levels and certain fields that were under-reported
- There is road that is posted 40 mph per MassDOT. The city lowered the speed to 30 on another portion, and so the warning was, if this is granted, that will trigger sort of a review by MassDOT, and MassDOT will order the City to make it for the entire roadway. It's a complaint in the sense of where does Safe Streets, and Vision Zero and arterial roads - how do those work together?
 - MassDOT has taken a different turn from before when we based setting speed limits based on the 85th percentile. We're now taking more into account with context, road users, land uses, there's a lot that comes into play when setting a speed limit. It's not just based on 85th percentile anymore. That being said, I can't speak to the specific road, and what the speeds are on the road, and what the land uses are. Just lowering a speed limit in itself is not going to bring the speeds down. It's even questionable whether it's enforceable
 - The focus should be not just on speed limits, but also on the infrastructure and what could be done to address the speeding without just changing speed limit signs. There are a few token speed management projects that we're doing at MassDOT to try and test some of these things out to see - can we lower the speed based on narrowing the lanes, and putting some things out there, and making the driver feel as if it's a road that deserves to be driven slower?
- One strategy for the Strategic Highway Safety Plan probably would be putting in the language related to the updates from the most recent MUTCD. As Bonnie mentioned, we walked away from the 85th percentile, and there's a whole lot more that would make that example of - if you turn this data over to MassDOT, the speed limit's going to go up, where that doesn't exist anymore really, because it says the 85th is just one piece of information in a broader scheme of everything else that Bonnie was talking about. Even just getting word out about the change in the law, I think, would be a real sort of concrete, good next step, something that could be done pretty quickly
 - The 85th percentile is the speed at which 85% of the vehicles are traveling at or below the posted speed limit

- I think what is really missing is sort of user-end survey, because we're trying to collect data after the fact. I know that serious bike accidents, for example, or speed issues - nobody's collecting that data. I'm not reporting if I've got a concussion from an accident, or if I'm in an incident with, let's say, people on e-bikes. I think that, in addition to doing the sort of the usual data sources and trying to expand upon that, I really do think citizen surveys are important to sort of understand where the gaps in data is, what user-end experience is, versus our ability to sort of match and keep up with that on our end as data collectors
- Two recent pieces of legislation from other states brings attention to stopping super speeders, which takes into account repeat offenders, and I would like to recommend that future editions of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan and Vulnerable Road User Assessment either access this data if it exists, or calls for the collection of data on repeat offenders for speed violations
- Would love to see more community engagement on that process, or victim and survivor outreach on the topic of super speeders, particularly for people who've been involved in those types of collisions, to see what type of data they'd want collected, before doing so, or putting it in the report
 - Jaclyn Youngblood and her team at MassDOT have been great about testing out some technology that might be able to be paired with some of these super speeders, so it could be good looking down the road as well
- This is regarding gaps between posted speed, design speed, and also municipal citywide ordinances in a local context. Somerville has adopted 25 mph citywide limit, though the most dangerous roadways are the state-owned roadways, which are not subject to that citywide ordinance. There's a gap in safety or speed-based ambitions there, so you end up having kind of a negotiation with every project, like Alewife Brook Parkway or McGrath Boulevard, or Mystic Ave - where the city desires to post it to 25 mph, but then you see on the design plans recommending a 35 mph limit, and then you just have that for the next 50 years. I don't know what the solution is to that, how can a review of local speed guidance inform state projects?
 - If you look at MassDOT's newly updated Project Development Design Guide (PDDG), there's new target speed setting, and that's at project initiation. So, presumably, when the communities are meeting with the state early on in the project, they discuss what should the target speed of the roadway is. That sets what the design speed is, and what you're trying to strive for
 - Also new to the PDDGG, we have a whole section on roadway classification. We're no longer using the federal functional classification of just our interstate, arterial, collector, local - it's broken down into 9 categories really trying to understand the context, and then setting the speed limit - the target speed based on that
- One of the items in a recent law passed in 2022 was setting up a process where municipalities could petition MassDOT to lower speed limits on state roadways - to address the issue a city that adopted a 25 mile an hour citywide speed limit, but there were certain state roads where that didn't apply. And Mystic Avenue (Route 38) in Somerville was one of them. I'm curious if any cities or towns have actually done that process, and if MassDOT has actually reduced any speed limits, through that petition process?
 - Route 10 in Easthampton also was successful in adoption
- Especially in eastern Massachusetts, a lot of the dangerous roads are under DCR jurisdiction - I don't know if DCR engineering is held to the same standards as MassDOT Engineering. I think that there is a disconnect. We've done a lot of good work, MassDOT has done a lot of good work, especially the speed management guidelines. Actually, through MABPAB, too. But to expand upon the state control and really focus on DCR parkways, because typically in the Greater Boston area, those are the fastest and most dangerous roads and aren't held to the same engineering standards
 - A new set of complete streets design standards should be applied to anything that you put your state dollars to. I wonder if the Parkway Resilience Improvement and Safety Modernization (PRISM) funding for DCR roads funding program, maybe there could be some clause or condition in there where they have to uphold
- In the 2023 SHSP, there was a mention of wanting to proactively, rather than reactively, identify high-risk areas - they mentioned a lot about internal models, but I was curious if there was, or if there was going to be a way for general members of the public to say - I know a high-risk area, maybe it's an area where anecdotally, I've almost gotten in a collision, and I could report that?
 - MassDOT approached our legal department with the idea of having self-reporting - you can put on the map where you have an issue. And at the time, our legal staff was a little bit skeptical of that. I don't know if that can take place or not. It hasn't been brought back, but I

think it's worth a discussion, just having that reporting mechanism. It can help with maintenance as well. Proactive risk models - that's in our IMPACT crash system

- Is past history a good predictor of future crashes for vulnerable road users? Have you found that's an accurate tool?
 - Depends, which is why we have both the risk models, which are not based on crash, and the crash data. MassDOT looks at both. Yes, there's exposure, there's land use, there's environmental justice part of that, there's education in there. There's a whole bunch of other pieces in there as well
- A partnership with an existing user contribution system could allow people to very quickly add data points on their app - maybe they have Strava running when they're riding their bike, private GPS, Waze in the car. Just tap and say an incident happened here
- Vision Zero defines high injury networks and high-risk networks. We have to find high-risk networks in Falmouth as a result of the Cape Cod Commission's work to bring Vision Zero to Cape Cod. And that's a great place to start as well
 - MassDOT currently intakes all Waze data. We also have access to hard braking and a whole bunch of other data points from Telematics that can be used as well

Discussion on MassDOT Complete Streets Guide: Francisco Lovera, MassDOT's Deputy Director of Highway Design provided some background and purpose (attached) for updating MassDOT's 2015 Separated Bicycle Lane and Planning Design Guide (SBLPDG) into a more comprehensive Complete Streets Guide. The SBLPDG has become a nationally recognized, widely cited resource that set the standard for separated bike lane design across the U.S. with the best practices at that time. However, over the past decade, and after several implementations across the Commonwealth, the design practice, legal landscape, and community needs have evolved significantly, requiring a comprehensive update. New accessibility and design standards, coupled with emerging e-mobility and transit integration are driving this initiative. The Complete Streets Design Guide will set a new standard — a groundbreaking, high-impact resource that positions Massachusetts as a national leader for years to come. Input was sought by the MassDOT team on potential stakeholder partners as well as the general approach, plan and process of the update. Questions and comments included:

- English as a second language, in terms of equity focus; publishing meeting materials or providing opportunity for translation and interpretation; having a stakeholder organization that directly serves immigrant populations would be really critical and important. Not just a translated flyer when you attend, but also making sure that they can show up and be represented
- I know that's it's hard, especially when you're reaching across transportation-minded organizations, but I think it's important from an equity perspective
 - I think since we're early enough in the process, as Francisco just laid out in the timeline, I think we have time to build that in. Sometimes you think about it at the last minute, which is not the right time, then people try and rush and do the flyer thing, so hopefully we can incorporate that.
 - With that said, do you have any organization in mind that can help?
- Lower Mystic area community groups in Chelsea and Everett; Malden Chinese Cultural Commission; the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians
- Brockton Workers Alliance - they're a partner with Brockton Bikes and WalkMass; Brockton Transportation Safety Coalition. There are as many people on bikes in Brockton as there are what we might think of as cyclists, and they just go on to work, and they don't have helmets, and we've tried, and we're just going to continue to be intentional about trying to integrate and educate; Brockton Area Transit for better and safer bus stops
 - Can you just talk a little bit more about the bus stops, person on bike, or other mode? Things that you've seen in Brockton, because I know that was a big part of how we got to needing to do a Complete Streets Guide, is specifically the transit component and person on bike, not a cyclists per se
- Is this a Complete Streets guide, or is it specifically about that area of interaction between the bike lane and where the bus has to pull over, and the passengers?
 - The intent is for the guide to be a complete street, to address all the modes. One of the genesis of this need for an update was the fact that the MBTA took our guide and crossed out the constrained bus stop, because they have had instances where the riders are reporting the hazard or potential hazard of a collision of someone on a bike riding in the bicycle lane with a person that is getting on or off the bus
- We just discovered that Brockton passed a complete streets ordinance 10 years ago. The ordinance has great language in it and actually won an award from Smart Growth America. It very

clearly says every decision in Brockton should be done with the complete streets in mind. They in no way do that. They send you all the list of the priority projects, but other than that... so I guess my question related to this would be: would this guide be - If the ordinance says every project should be reviewed with complete streets in mind - what they review it against?

- To a certain extent, yes. Within MassDOT's Project Development and Design guide, we already have specific direction about incorporating different modes as every project that comes through MassDOT. We have to document the different control criteria in which three of them - the most critical ones that we review - are the amenities that are provided for people walking, biking, and transit
- Every single project that MassDOT is involved with documents the ability or inability based on technical concerns, of why we are or are not providing those amenities
- To be clear, on the MassDOT-funded projects, Brockton has followed CS guidelines, such as new bike lanes on Warren St, but overall generally inconsistent
 - Ultimately, the guide is something that a designer, whether it be a consultant firm hired by the municipality, or DPW, town city engineer, should be able to make their decisions based on this guide
- But it's not a requirement?
 - It depends - the municipality or agency that owns and provides the funding is the one who has the control of that. But the guide is a good way, or would be a good way, for the advocacy teams, for the community, to hold our state and local officials accountable to do that. There is something that you can base your decisions on
- Focus on youth. I see a lot of aging on here, but I don't see a lot of youth. That's going to be tricky, every community's got its own, but you can get into school systems. If you think of the City of Boston, for instance, a lot of the high schoolers. I think about the idea that, for instance, the city of Boston high schoolers use the bus, they're transit users inherently. So how do you figure that into this conversation? Every community is going to have a different way in to reach youth
- if you're thinking of the new modes of micromobility, you're probably not going to get a lot of counseling on aging scooters, but you are going to get a lot of Gen Zers out there, so getting that perspective in is key
 - MassDOT is following the 8 to 80 design mentality – good design should work for everyone of all ages
- I think what we're going to see is that youth, especially with micromobility, are taking new forms of transportation that we've not designed for yet
 - Agreed
- Onerous costs and design standards are always top of mind for municipalities – a couple of examples are train platforms and intersection upgrades. Cheaper, more accessible and approachable concepts would be welcome
 - MassDOT supports demonstration projects or temporary installations as a way to build to a final implementation.
- Are there any Complete Streets design requirements tied to the state's Chapter 90 funding?
 - It's hard to monitor. I think if you read the actual legislation - the local aid. When cities and towns sign for the money, they're certifying that their work is in conformance with MassDOT standards. But beyond that, there's not a lot of oversight in check-in. A lot of Chapter 90 work is paving. A lot of communities don't use their Chapter 90 money to make complete streets improvements. Some communities will hire designers with their Chapter 90 money, and in that case it's expected that the project the company is designing will be built by MassDOT, so you have to conform with MassDOT requirements
 - Legally, they're supposed to conform, but it's very hard because we're not overseeing everything that's done on every Chapter 90 budget. It's intentionally pass-through money so that the cities can be a little more flexible with it, and they don't have to go through all the requirements that MassDOT has
- Can you spell out the following agency acronyms that are being consulted for this new guide?
 - AASHTO - American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
 - NACTO – National Association of City Transportation Officials
 - PROWAG - Public Rights-of-way Accessibility Guidelines
 - NCHRP - National Cooperative Highway Research Program
- Can MassDOT weigh in on Chapter 90 funding, as Tom mentioned, with enforcement to actually say that if you're going to do this project, that it does meet some requirements for the best accommodation? A lot of times, it's not just cost, but it's just putting in that stripe, which is a minor cost, so it's more political than cost-effective

- In terms of scenic narrow roadways in more rural areas, consider not using center lines - it's better to not channelize traffic, to have the traffic more in the middle where possible in that pedestrian zone
- Are MA Municipal Association on the stakeholders list? DPWs are a major stakeholder, so I think bringing them into the conversation earlier is a good idea
 - MassDOT will consider this agency in addition to selecting various DPW staff from around the state
- I really think the lobbying effort for this should be not to force the requirement, but to fund it, and do as much as possible - maybe it's the Chapter 90 hook, or maybe it's a reframing of how we're doing it, but as you know how competitive the program is, it's just not enough that's going out for the need that's there. And they're not going to do it by being required to. They're really only going to be able to do it by being funded to do so
- A design exception process for these smaller local roads projects that don't meet all the MassDOT guidelines
 - The guide will continue to emphasize context-sensitive solutions through sensitive environmental areas, such as tree removal or why is it that we are not providing bicycle lanes in that particular roadway due to other constraints

Other Announcements

- On Thursday, the Massachusetts legislature will host a public hearing to discuss Senate Bill 3077 Governor Healey's proposed legislation to better define, classify, and regulate small electric vehicles. The legislature's Joint Committee on Transportation will conduct a public hearing for the legislation on Thursday starting at 1 p.m. in Hearing Room 1-A
- Pete recognized MassDOT's Tom Dipaolo for his 22 years serving on MABPAB and wished him well in his retirement this summer
- Next MABPAB meeting: July 22 (virtual) 1-3 pm
- List of board members in attendance (see below)
- Other attendees:
 - Lorenzo Varone (MassDOT)
 - Barbara LaChance (MassDOT D5)
 - Michael Knodler (UMTC)
 - Zach Ward (MassDOT)
 - Phil Goff (VHB)
 - Chris Sorensen (MassDOT D1)
 - Nick Daigle (MassDOT D3)
 - Kyle Mowatt (OCPC)
 - Nick Russo (BRPC)
 - Cheryl-Ann Senior (MassDOT D5)
 - Adam Wriggins (CMRPC)
 - Tom Ruta (MassDOT D2)
 - Sarah Freeman (Boston)
 - Max Rasbold-Gabbard (DPH)
 - John York (Bourne)
 - Mike Murphy (MassDOT)
 - Colleen Medeiros (CCC)
 - Kyle Casiglio (CTPS)
 - Betsy Johnson (Walk/Bike Springfield)
 - Alexis Hosea-Abbott (MassBike)
 - Michael Pezullo (FHWA)
 - Scott Mullen (A Better City)
 - Joyia Smikle (CCC)
 - Violet Wilkins (MassDOT)
 - Pedro Hernandez (MassDOT)
 - Jon Gray (SRPEDD)
 - Christian MilNeil (StreetsBlog Mass)
 - Grace Belmont (MRPC)
 - Michelle Danila (Toole)
 - Iolando Spinola (WalkMass)
 - Jonny Gomez-Pereira (WalkMass)

- David Loutzenheiser (MAPC)

MA BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD

Board Member Sign-In Sheet

May 27, 2026 – Salem City Hall Annex

Member Name	Attended	Notes
Tom DiPaolo MassDOT-Highway	yes	
Matt Warfield MBTA	no	
Pete Sutton MassDOT-Planning	yes	
Kurt Gaertner EOEEA	yes	
Gerald Autler DCR	yes	
Jaclyn Youngblood MassDOT	yes	
Kirby Lecy DPH	no	
Charlie Ticotsky MOTT	yes	
Lt. Sean Reardon EOPSS	yes	
Jeff McCollough MARPA	yes	
Amanuel Regassa MARPA	yes	
Jackie Jones MARPA	yes	
Mary Beth Ellis – public member	yes	
Nathan David Obeng-Amoako – public member	yes	
Galen Mook – MassBike	yes	
Bonnie Roalsen – public member	no	
William Gousios – public member	yes	
Katherine Jansen - public member	yes	
Jed Hresko – public member	yes	
Kristine Acevedo – public member	yes	
Brendan Kearney – WalkBoston	yes	
Mike Brousseau - public member	yes	
Eleni Christofa – public member	yes	
Alexa Gomberg – public member	yes	
Chery Pavlik – public member	yes	
Karl Alexander – public member	yes	