



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, MPO Chair | Secretary and CEO, Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Tegin Leigh Teich, Executive Director, MPO Staff

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 9, 2025
TO: Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
FROM: Ethan Lapointe, Senior Transportation Planner and Transportation Improvement Program Manager
Adriana Jacobsen, Transportation Planner and Capital Programmer
RE: Revised TIP Project Rescoring Policy and Practice for Improved Program Decision-making

This memorandum discusses a proposed approach for improving the recency, completeness, and timeliness with which project information is shared with the Boston Region MPO Board to inform its TIP funding decisions. This approach was developed in collaboration with the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee across several meetings held between May and September 2025.

1 PROJECT RESCORING PROTOCOL FROM THE 2021 PROGRAMMING POLICIES TO ADDRESS TIP PROJECT COST INCREASES

1.1 Current Approach

The current approach to project rescoring is outlined as Intervention #3 in the staff memorandum to the MPO Board [“Programming Policies to Address TIP Project Cost Increases”](#) (TIP Project Cost Policies). The MPO Board adopted these policies in September 2021 alongside the development of the Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2023–27 TIP.

That intervention sought to establish a formal, fair, transparent, and consistent mechanism to reconsider projects with substantial cost changes to improve the MPO’s ability to support the program of projects.

The current rescoring policy follows a seven-step process that is outlined under Section 3.3: “Recommended Policy” in the [TIP Project Cost Policies](#).

1.2 Resulting Issues

Even with the TIP Project Cost Policies in place for four completed TIP development cycles, several issues persist and grow in severity.

Civil Rights, nondiscrimination, and accessibility information is on the last page.

Issue #1: Incomplete Project Information

The current policy does not establish a uniform set of information or materials that proponents should be required to provide to MPO members. Prior attempts at rescoring indicated substantial gaps in the quantity, quality, and recency of information provided by the proponents.

Issue #2: Insufficient Time to Take Action

The current policy relies on the MPO Board to react to cost increases reported after TIP Readiness Days in February. Even if the MPO Board immediately requests project rescoring for all applicable projects, there is insufficient time for thorough rescoring before the Board approves the final programming scenario in April 2026.

Issue #3: Time Constraints at MPO Meetings

The TIP Project Cost Policies states that if a project's cost increases by more than \$2,500,000 or 25 percent, its proponents must make a presentation (and provide supporting documentation) explaining the cause of the increase at an MPO Board meeting. Twelve projects exceeded these triggers in developing the FFYs 2026–30 TIP. There is insufficient time at both meetings of the MPO Board and the TIP Process, Engagement, and Readiness Committee to accommodate meaningfully informative presentations as agenda items under these conditions.

Issue #4: Narrow Scope of Review

The current policy of only rescoring projects that surpass cost thresholds in a given year and only with a vote from the MPO Board overlooks projects that are repeatedly delayed. Project cost increases typically emerge when a project achieves a design milestone. This means that projects that stall and do not meaningfully advance towards new design milestones are not re-evaluated, even though the criteria used to judge them are now substantially different from those applied to projects being evaluated today.

Issue #5: Need for a Fair and Objective Decision-making Process

To date, the MPO Board has never requested that a project be rescored. While the current policy aimed to reduce the potential appearance of having the MPO Board make a decision that was “arbitrary or unfair,” consultation between MPO staff, members of the Board, and project proponents indicated that existing policies do not dispel this anxiety. The policy's requirement for the MPO Board to select individual projects for rescoring raises concern that MPO members could be placed in a difficult position. Members, including those who represent communities that are also project proponents, have indicated a reluctance to

enforce a policy that does not insulate them from potential negative consequences.

2 RECOMMENDED POLICY UPDATE

2.1 Recommendation

MPO staff propose an update to the existing TIP Project Cost Policies that adds an automatic rescoring requirement for all currently funded TIP projects that were evaluated using outdated criteria (those established based on a Long-Range Transportation Plan [LRTP] that is five or more years old).

Requiring updated project information earlier in the TIP process allows more timely incorporation into TIP decision-making. This new approach also addresses concerns about unfair selection of projects for rescoring by applying consistent criteria for deciding which will be rescored. This leads to a more thorough and equitable evaluation for a broader set of projects that helps to empower project proponents to better navigate rescoring and set expectations for prospective proponents early in the TIP process.

Lastly, this requirement reinforces the ability for MPO staff to not only better understand and convey information to the MPO Board and members of the public as projects advance in design, but to better evaluate the broader impacts of TIP projects through Performance-Based Planning and Programming to inform the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and LRTP.

2.2 Ongoing Work

MPO staff are currently soliciting information to evaluate 13 currently funded projects as part of developing the FFYs 2027–31 TIP. These projects were identified as either having been scored under the FFYs 2021–25 and earlier TIPs, or as never having been scored. The solicitation commenced September 4, 2025, and will conclude at the end of the calendar year.

Staff will conduct project rescoring alongside new project evaluations and will present this information to the MPO Board in early spring 2026. This approach will empower the MPO Board in making informed, data-driven investment decisions around the entire program of projects and lay the groundwork for future efforts.

2.3 Proposed Approach and Timeline for Implementation

The proposed approach would require rescoring of TIP projects evaluated under criteria sets informed by LRTPs that are two cycles old. Automatic project rescoring of these projects would take place in the autumn to align with new

project solicitations and would be conducted once every four years with each LRTP update. The proposed timeline would change along with any change to the LRTP update cadence.

As of September 2025, MPO staff identified 14 projects that may be included in the second cohort of automated rescoring.¹ These projects were evaluated between the FFYs 2022–26 and FFYs 2024–28 TIPs. The criteria for scoring projects for these TIPs was informed by Destination 2040, the MPO’s prior LRTP. As a result, entire categories of project criteria were applied to earlier projects that are not applied to current ones, and vice versa (e.g., resilience criteria under Destination 2050). Staff will pursue a rescoring of the second cohort of projects when developing the FFYs 2029–33 TIP in September 2028 alongside the next LRTP update.

3 NEXT STEPS

This policy reinforces existing policies around TIP project rescoring and other readiness factors and establishes a data-driven, fair, and consistent approach to project scoring. Should the MPO choose to adopt this policy, a vote may be taken at the October 9, 2025, MPO meeting. This policy will be effective for the development of the FFYs 2027–31 TIP; further automatic rescoring would not take place until the FFYs 2029–33 TIP. Over the next three years, the MPO may elect to make further modifications to this policy or other rescoring elements or interventions outlined in the TIP Project Cost Policies.

¹ This is subject to change depending on the quantity of projects that successfully advertise for construction prior to development of the FFYs 2029–33 TIP.

CIVIL RIGHTS NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Welcome. Bem Vinda. Bienvenido. Akeyi. 欢迎. 歡迎



You are invited to participate in our transportation planning process, free from discrimination. The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is committed to nondiscrimination in all activities and complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency). Related federal and state nondiscrimination laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, disability, and additional protected characteristics.

For additional information or to file a civil rights complaint, visit www.bostonmpo.org/mpo_non_discrimination.

To request this information in a different language or format, please contact:

Boston Region MPO Title VI Specialist

10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150

Boston, MA 02116

Phone: 857.702.3700

Email: civilrights@ctps.org

For people with hearing or speaking difficulties, connect through the state MassRelay service, www.mass.gov/massrelay. Please allow at least five business days for your request to be fulfilled.