

Joint Meeting of Climate & Clean Energy Committee & Passenger/Regional Rail Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

- A. Call to Order:** Passenger/Regional Rail Committee Chair Rob Scherer (Ashland) and Climate & Clean Energy Committee Vice-Chair Susan Barrett (Lexington) called the committee to order at 2:02 PM via Zoom.
- B. Fall/Winter Schedule Updates:** Michael Muller (MBTA Executive Director of Commuter Rail) and Alana Westwater (Keolis Commuter Services Chief of Staff) presented fall/winter schedule updates to commuter rail schedules.
- a Susanne Rasmussen (Cambridge) asked about the need for the later Rockport train. M. Muller answered that these changes often come from local demand for coordinating schedules with other lines.
- C. Electrification & Climate Updates:** Alistair Sawers (MBTA) joined for a presentation on the MBTA's Regional Rail Electrification plans.
- a Bruce Leicher (Harvard) asked how the segmented catenary routes work. A. Sawers answered that overhead catenary will charge the battery-electric trains while they are moving so they can then travel off-wire in areas where catenary cannot be installed. R. Scherer asked about the

schedule for construction. A. Sawers answered mid-2030s. As battery capacity improves with new technology, the need for catenary goes down. S. Rasmussen asked about the lines without proposed charging stations. A. Sawers answered that the termination of these lines would struggle to get power for a charging station. Trains will be charged at a low-voltage or have the capacity to make the full trip without a charging station. Steve Olanoff (Westwood) thanked A. Sawers for his work and complimented the choice of the Fairmount Line. Corey Evans (Cohasset) asked where the renewable diesel fuel used in the pilot program is manufactured. A. Sawers answered that currently, it is manufactured in refineries in the mid-west and California. Long-term, it will hopefully be closer. C. Evans commented that Cohasset is grateful for the focus towards electrifying the train system. Logan Casey (Marblehead) asked how long the renewable diesel pilot program would run for and if there is any potential for expansion to other lines. A. Sawers answered that the MBTA hopes to work with the state on a contract so that other entities and transport providers can access the resource. B. Leicher asked if there were any considerations for maintaining car charging stations at MBTA parking lots. R. Scherer added considerations of solar panels. A. Sawers answered that the current carmen's contract will determine the division of responsibility around parking lot maintenance. John added that a consideration for parking lots is whether additional infrastructure will be needed to accommodate increased capacity. S. Rasmussen asked about the timeline

of the project and asked about short-term mitigation of emissions and disruptions during layovers. A. Sawers answered that the renewable diesel pilot is intended to address those concerns. Regarding noise, the oldest vehicles in the fleet are also the loudest and will be the first to be replaced by the electrified fleet. The timeline of the project delivery depends on funding. L. Casey asked if there would be opportunities for municipalities to be involved in state conversations about the renewable diesel initiative. A. Sawers answered that the region is putting together a consortium to disperse information across MassDOT, RTAs, Massport etc.

D. Fare Gate Installation Updates: John Kilean (CEO & GM Commuter Service at Keolis) introduced himself to the committee and presented on commuter rail performance, ridership recovery, and an update on fare gate installation. M. Muller provided an update on the 30-minute service frequency for the Framingham/Worcester Line which is planned for the end of 2026.

- a R. Scherer welcomed J. Kilean to the role. R. Scherer asked what the impetus was for increased service on this line. M. Muller answered that the project is a “no-regrets investment” for the regional rail program where targeted upgrades can be made to infrastructure that are known constraints for capacity on the system. There is a list of these upgrades for every line.

E. Next Meeting Dates: November 12 at 3PM (Climate), November 19 at 2PM (Passenger Rail).

F. Adjourn: The Zoom meeting closed at 3:00 PM.

The Passenger/Regional Rail Committee voted to approve these minutes at their 2/11/2026 meeting.

Attendees:

Climate & Clean Energy Committee Members:

Cambridge	Susanne Rasmussen
Cohasset	John DePriest
Marblehead	Logan Casey
Natick	Morgan Griffiths
Scituate	Jamie Gilmore
Wellesley	Shiela Page
Westwood	Steve Olanoff

Passenger/Regional Rail Committee Members:

Ashland	Rob Scherer
Brockton	Alan Castaline
Cambridge	Andy Reker
Harvard	Bruce Leicher
Natick	Morgan Griffiths
Wellesley	Sheila Page
Westwood	Steve Olanoff



Quincy

Frank Tramontozzi

MBTA Advisory Board Staff:

Brian Kane

Hanna Switekowski

Isabella MacKinnon

Executive Director

Deputy Director

Budget & Policy Analyst

MBTA & Keolis

Alistair Sawers

Michael Muller

Alana Westwater

John Killeen

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