



A BETTER CITY LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

MONDAY, JULY 20, 2026

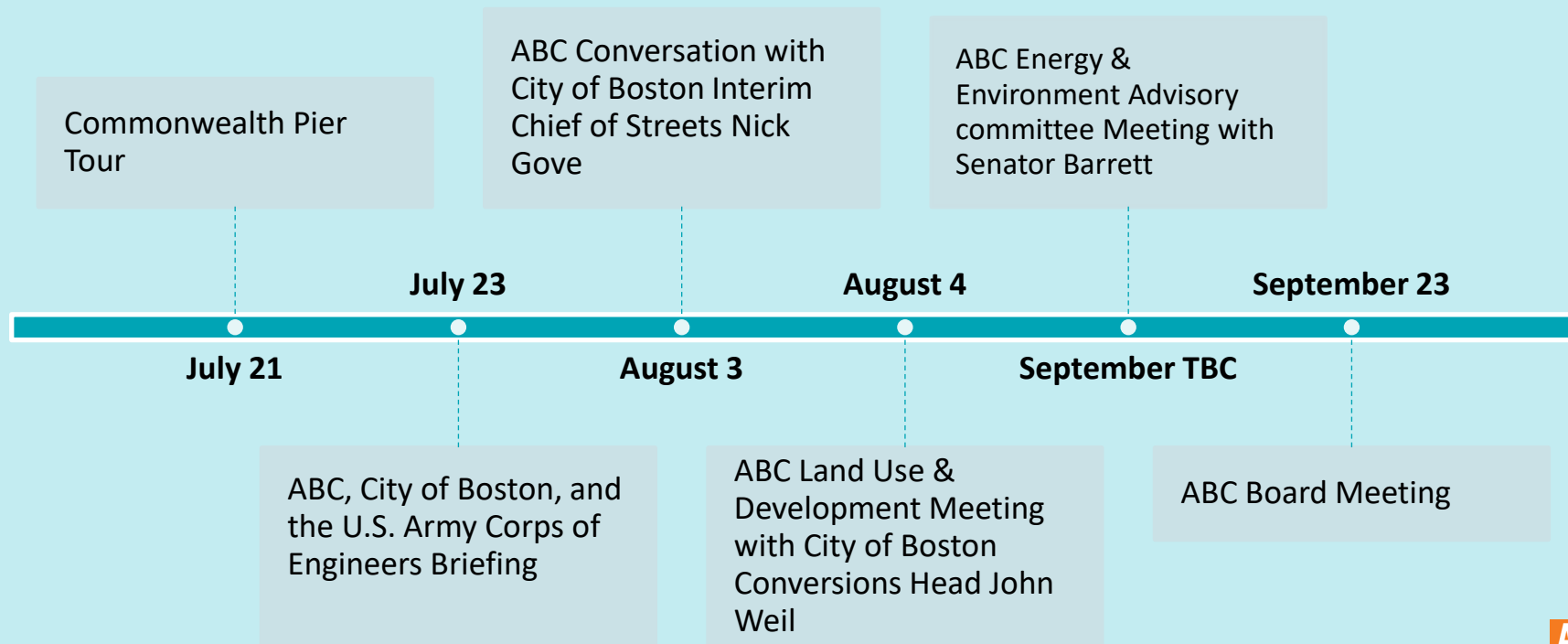
TOM RYAN

SENIOR ADVISOR ON POLICY, GOVERNMENT, & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

WELCOME & OVERVIEW

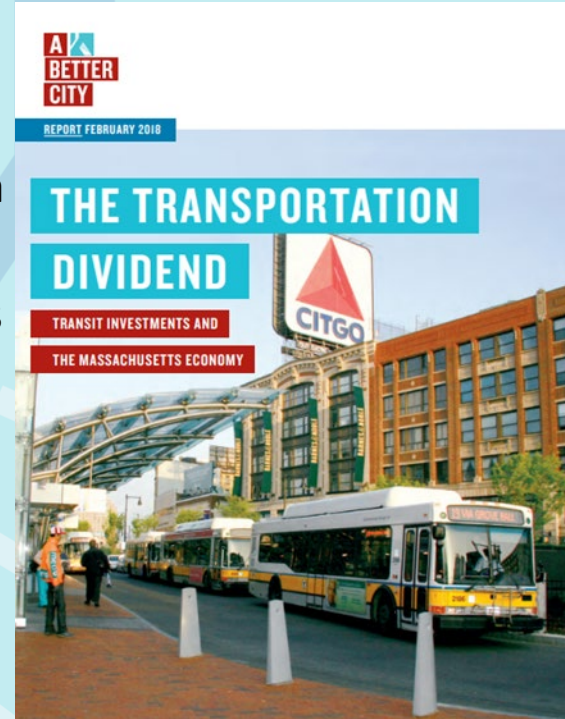
- Update On A Better City's Recent Work
- Overview of the “Big Legislative Issues” Happening in State Government
- Feedback and Comments from Members

UPCOMING EVENTS



TRANSPORTATION DIVIDEND REPORT

- A Better City's 2018 Transportation Dividend Report found that the MBTA generates \$11.4 billion per year in economic benefits—which is a 5x return on our investment.
- We are now working with AECOM to refresh this analysis with an additional focus on jobs, induced benefits, and development.
- This work is supported by Arnold Ventures, the Barr Foundation, The Boston Foundation, and the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce.



COMMONWEALTH PIER OPENING



BIG ISSUES AT THE STATE HOUSE



BALLOT QUESTION OVERVIEW

Ballot Question	Status
All party primaries	Certified on 7/17
Election Day registration	Certified on 7/17
Gun law repeal	Previously certified
Natural resources conservation fund	Certified on 7/17
Public defender unionization	Certified on 7/17
Public records law	Certified on 7/17
Recreational cannabis repeal	Certified on 7/17 State Ballot Law Commission decision on 7/22
Starter homes	Certified on 7/17
Tax cap rewrite	Certified on 7/17
Legislative stipend reform	AG/SOS removed from ballot
Rent control	SJC removed from ballot
State income tax reduction	SJC removed from ballot

STATE LEGISLATION TRACKER

Bill	Status
State Budget	Signed into law
Economic Development Bill	Senate to finish their version this week
Micromobility Bill	Included in both House & Senate Econ Development Bills
Offsetting Cuts To Federal Research (Higher Education)	Partially funded by House & Senate in Econ Development Bills
MBTA Permitting Reforms	Bill is at Senate Ways & Means Committee
Energy Affordability Bill	In Conference Committee
Environmental Bond Bill	In Conference Committee

JULY 31 DEADLINE

- The MA House & Senate legislative rules declared July 31 to be the end of “Formal Sessions” for bills
- After July 31, they can hold a formal session to vote on bills in a conference committee formed before July 31

BILLS ALREADY “IN CONFERENCE”

- An Act relative to benefits for teachers
- An Act enhancing child welfare protections (establishing a new unit in the Dept of Children & Families)
- An Act establishing the Massachusetts data privacy act
- An Act to promote student learning and mental health
- An Act promoting rule of law, oversight, trust and equal constitutional treatment (state role in immigration issues)
- An Act to save people money, repair the climate, and grow the economy
- An act to build resilience for Massachusetts communities

Healey signs \$63.4 billion budget with no vetoes

Budget arrives nine days into new fiscal year as federal changes threaten benefit programs

Alison Kuznitz Jul 9, 2026



FY27 STATE BUDGET SUMMARY

- No new taxes, fees or vetoes from the Governor
- 3.9% spending increase over FY 2026
- Spends **\$2.7 Billion from Fair Share Surtax**
 - (64% for Education & 36% for Transportation)

FAIR SHARE SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET

- In June, Gov. Healey signed the “Fair Share surtax” supplemental budget
- Spends **\$1.35 Billion** from Fair Share Surtax
 - (42% for Education & **58% for Transportation**)
- This bill, which has been a top A Better City priority, is another major victory for public transit, because it provides over \$600 million to the MBTA

FAIR SHARE OVERVIEW

- Overall, between the FY27 Budget & Fair Share Supplemental, transportation is getting **43% of the Fair Share surtax** this budget cycle

Category	Total from Two Bills (in millions)	% from Transportation dollars
MBTA	836	48%
MassDOT	649	37%
RTA	145	8%
Municipal Transpo	120	7%
Total	1,750	

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BILL

- Governor's bill was called “Mass WINS Act”
- Building on the progress of the 2024 Mass Leads Act, the Mass Wins Act seeks to maintain and expand Massachusetts' leadership in emerging industries like artificial intelligence, quantum, climatetech, defense, and robotics
- House passed bill on July 7th
- Senate votes on their version this Wednesday

HOUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BILL

- Borrowing authorizations for existing grant programs
- Allows tenants of multifamily buildings the right to first refusal when their property is up for sale
- Allows religious organizations to build multi-family housing, by right
- Allows simulcast centers to take bets on "historical horse races" on electronic terminals
- Creates a tax credit for digital game development companies
- **Micromobility Bill language included in this bill**

SENATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BILL

- Borrowing authorizations for existing grant programs
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—
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- ~~• Creates a tax credit for digital game development companies~~
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SENATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BILL

- Borrowing authorizations for existing grant programs
- **Calls for AI safety guardrails, creates a AI commission and gives new powers to Attorney General to enforce law if AI companies violate safety rules**
- **Allows two-family homes on all residentially-zoned lots in the state**
- **Gives control over Bar and Restaurant Alcohol Licenses to municipalities**
- Micromobility Bill language included in this bill

A BETTER CITY'S REQUESTS TO SENATE

- Incorporate Senate bill to expedite permitting rules for the MBTA on maintenance repairs and tree management near commuter rail lines
- Increase amount of Fair Share funding that can be leveraged for transportation infrastructure projects

MICROMOBILITY (“THE RIDE SAFE ACT”)

- Scott Mullen served on the **Special Commission on Micromobility** that produced recommendations that became the Governor’s bill
- Encouraging to have House & Senate **both** put the core language into their economic development bill
- Only minor differences between House / Senate on this topic

MICROMOBILITY (“THE RIDE SAFE ACT”)

- Classification of devices, **based vehicle speed capacity**
- Device requirements: lights, brakes, speedometers, etc.
- Travel Allowances, to outline where devices of each tier may operate
- Operational Requirements, which consider age, helmets, education or licensing issues, & insurance

OFFSETTING FEDERAL RESEARCH CUTS

- Gov proposed the “Mass DRIVE Act” to use \$400 million of state funds for to high education and hospitals doing research work
- House & Senate have different ways of funding this concept and at lower levels. Both do this in their Econ. Development bill
- House wants to transfer \$200 Million from existing state funds
- Senate wants to use \$100 Million from Fair Share

ENERGY AFFORDABILITY BILL

Governor filed original bill in Spring 2025; House passed theirs in February 2026; Senate passed their version in July 2026

- House bill claims **\$9B in savings, including \$1 billion cut to MassSave** program, changing to Alternative Compliance Payments (ACP), and enabling Inspector General review of Mass Save, and other measures
- Senate bill claims \$14B savings over 10 years while retaining Mass Save funding but increasing oversight by DPU and DOER, customer bill transparency, including securitization, enabling on-bill financing, incentivizing data centers to leverage renewable energy, phasing out the Gas System Enhancement Program, freezing building permit compliance at time of permit approval, and establishing emergency shutoff protections during periods of extreme heat
- Both bills enhance consumer protections, encourage microgrids and virtual power plants, and provide pathways for Mass Save investigations or audits

ENERGY AFFORDABILITY BILL

- Senate plan passed in July 2026
- Senate bill claims **\$14 Billion in savings over 10 years**
- House – Senate conference committee established: Representatives Cusack, Jones, and Michlewitz; Senators Barrett, Creem, Tarr

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE ENERGY BILL · S.3143

Where the \$14 billion in savings comes from

Each block sized by its share of the estimated 10-year ratepayer savings. One provision — cheaper utility borrowing — is nearly half the plan.



Total estimated savings: more than \$14 billion over 10 years

Buckets group the bill's 15 measures; shares are of the ~\$15.2B arithmetic sum. Source: Mass. Senate fact sheet for S.3143, June 24, 2026. The News Service used AI to build this chart, which is based on information provided by the Senate president's office.

ENVIRONMENTAL BOND BILL ("MASS READY ACT")

- **\$3-3.6B Environmental Bond Bill** with funding authorizations focused on climate resilience, including authorizations for the Municipal Vulnerability Program (MVP) (Senate: \$500M vs. House/Governor: \$315M)
- Includes policies addressing permitting backlogs for resilient infrastructure projects: A Better City is listed in the proposed "Special Commission to Enable Resilient Urban Coasts"
- Invests in critical infrastructure upgrades including stormwater infrastructure, as well as resilient coastal and other infrastructure via ResilientCoasts and ResilientMass authorizations
- Includes new resilience seats on the Board of Building Regulations and Standards
- **House – Senate conference committee established: Representatives Finn, Barber, and Sweezey; Senators Cyr, Durant, and Rausch**

SUMMARY SLIDE

- Complex Energy & Climate bills will likely be resolved in the fall
- Economic Development bill may get done this month
- This is an election year for Governor and all members of legislature

Healey touts the 'vibe,' wants later bar hours to stick around

Sam Drysdale · 4 hrs ago



OF INTEREST

[SWM Eco-Dev Bill Fact Sheet](#)

[SWM Economic Development Bill](#)

[Fiscal 2027 Budget Conference Report](#)

[FY 2027 Budget Outside Section Agreements](#)

[FY 2027 Budget Spending Agreements](#)

[Walsh Decision](#)

[Manning Martin Decision](#)

[SJC Rent Control Decision](#)



BILL TRACKER

2025-2026 Legislative Session



WE'RE
MAKING IT

Easier,
Fas**T**er
& More
Affordable

TO GET WHERE
YOU'RE GOING.

An aerial night photograph of a city, likely Boston, showing a river, a large stadium (Fenway Park), and a dense urban area with many lights.

DISCUSSION

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CITY