

MMA | Massachusetts Municipal Association

Legislative Breakfasts

Fall 2026

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Today's Agenda

- MMA PSAs
- Revenue & State Budget
- End of Session Recap
- What to Watch
- The Road Ahead
- Comments & Questions

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Connect 351 Registration Now Open!

CONNECT 351

- The MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show has a new name. Registration is open!
- **Jan. 21-23**, at the Menino Convention & Exhibition Center in Boston
- The largest conference for municipal officials in the state features Workshops, Speakers, Trade Show, & more!
- Please visit: connect351.org

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Look out for MMA's Legislative Alerts!



Legislative Alert

Massachusetts Municipal Association

ACT NOW

CONFERENCE COMMITTEES TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES IN BILLS IMPACTING MUNICIPALITIES

Please Ask Your Legislators to Protect Local Decision-Making and Support Municipal Priorities

September 3, 2026

Dear Member,

In the coming weeks, several House-Senate conference committees will continue to meet to resolve differences in legislation with significant implications for cities and towns across Massachusetts.



Legislative Alert

Massachusetts Municipal Association

ACT NOW

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September 3, 2026

Dear Member,

In the coming weeks, several House-Senate conference committees will continue to meet to resolve differences in legislation with significant implications for cities and towns across Massachusetts.

These bills include the **economic development bill (H. 5576 / S. 3228), the environmental bond bill, known as the Mass Ready Act (H. 5518 / S. 3064), and**

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Upcoming Legislative Breakfasts



Great Barrington & Leicester

Needham & Westport

Northampton & Lowell

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End of Session Recap

- State Revenue
- FY27 State Budget
- Fair Share Supp
- Transportation Bond Bill
- PROTECT Act
- Recent Regulations



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State Revenue

FY26 Revenue

$45.542 billion total collections

- 4.2% more than FY25
- 4.4% above the annual benchmark
- $3.38 billion surtax revenue
  - $2.4B included in FY26 budget = **nearly $1B surplus surtax**

FY27 Revenue Forecast

$44.9 billion estimated
to be collected in FY27

- serves as foundation for the FY27 budget
- includes $2.7 billion in surtax revenues from the Fair Share Amendment
- FY28 Consensus Revenue Forecast to be discussed in December - January

FY27 Revenues

$11.7 billion
year-to-date collections

- 16% more than actual FY26
- 1.3% above the year-to-date benchmark

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FY27 Budget Highlights

$63.4 Billion Budget – Key Investments

- **UGGA -** $40 million increase from FY26, total of $1.363 billion
  - $30 million will be distributed based on population
  - Remaining amount distributed as it has been in the past
- **Ch. 70 Aid -** $7.66 billion in public education aid
  - Min Per-pupil aid set to $160
- **Special Education Circuit Breaker -** Increase to $654.6 million
  - Will be paired with $152 million from the “Fair Share” supplemental budget
- **Rural School Aid -** $16 million + $4m in Surtax Supplemental

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FY27 Budget

FY27 Budget Policy

- **Local Permitting Changes:** “non-conforming” properties; timelines for projects to proceed under existing zoning rules; and modifying the variance standard
- **Local-option COLA** for eligible long-term retirees
- **SPED Transportation** Costs Reporting, Contract Database, Marketplace Study
- **Foundation Budget Review Commission** to reconvene

👋 **NOT INCLUDED** 👋

- Changes to Motor Vehicle Excise Tax “Marking System”

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FY26 “Fair Share” Supplemental Budget

$1.41 billion FY26 Surplus Surtax Supplemental Budget

- $152 million for extraordinary **SPED Circuit breaker** reimbursements
- $8 million in **rural school aid**, half will support FY26, the remaining half will go towards FY27
- $3.75 million for **unpaved roads**
- $100 million **Winter Relief for cities and towns**
  - $80 million distributed based on road miles
  - $20 million allocated to communities that experienced extraordinary costs due to extreme weather
- & more!

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Transportation Bond Bill

$300M for Chapter 90, matching last year's increased funding

- $200M through the traditional formula | $100M distributed by road mileage

$1.4B transportation bond package includes:

- $500M for MassDOT's Bridge and Pavement Lifecycle Asset Management Programs
- $200M for transportation improvements that support housing development
- $200M for the new Parkway Resilience Improvement and Safety Modernization (PRISM) program
- $200M for the MBTA's Rail Reliability Program

$3.2B in reauthorizations of programs from the 2022 transportation bond bill

One-year authorization only, not the multi-year bill the Governor proposed

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PROTECT Act

- Aimed at keeping federal immigration enforcement out of “sensitive places” such as:
  - Courthouses
  - Schools
  - Childcare Centers
  - Healthcare Facilities
- **Prevents** federal officials from conducting warrantless arrests in these locations
- **Codifies** SJC “Lunn” decision
- **Requires** schools to create written emergency response plans related to the appearance of law enforcement agents before the first day of school/Sept. 1
    - DESE has created guidance for school districts

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Recent Regulations

- **Clean Energy Siting & Permitting**
  - October 1, 2026: new consolidated clean energy permitting process took effect
  - Applies to:
    - Generation facilities under 25 megawatts
    - Storage facilities under 100 megawatt hours
    - Certain small transmission and distribution facilities
  - Municipal governments must issue a single, consolidated permit decision within 12 months
    - A ‘local government representative’ is key!

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What to Watch

- End of Session Push:
  - 12 Active Conference Committees
    - Economic Development
    - Environmental Bond
    - Energy Affordability, and more!
  - Supplemental Budget(s)
- Key 2026 Ballot Questions



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Economic Development Bond Bill

- **Many proposed authorizations and provisions** for cities and towns, including:
  - $25M for **Downtown Vitality Fund**; $25M for **Creative Economy and Cultural Infrastructure**
  - $50M for **grants/ support** for Commercial Conversion program

- **Municipal Modernization**
  - **Municipal control** for liquor licenses (restaurants)
  - **Codifying options for remote and hybrid meetings**
  - **Municipal and Public Safety Building Authority** Commission
  - **Easing** alcohol laws
  - **Double poles** working group/pilot
  - **Micromobility** updates

- **Land Use/Housing**
  - Yes in God's Backyard (YIGBY) and duplex **by-right provisions**
  - **Site plan review** standardization
  - **Modernizing 40R**
  - "**Preference Modifiers**" for Discretionary and Competitive Grants
  - **Opt-in programs** for commercial conversions, Tenant Right of First Refusal

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Environmental Bond Bill

- **Many proposed key bond authorizations** for cities and towns:
  - **Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program**
  - New **resilience revolving fund**
  - **Clean Water Trust**
  - **PFAS remediation** projects, and much more!

- **Various proposed policy provisions**:
  - Statewide **paint and mattress recycling programs**
  - **Non-flushable wipes** labeling requirements
  - Updates to the **public shade tree law**
  - **New requirements** for combined sewers, lighting fixtures
  - Possible "**grant preference modifiers**" that would attach grant eligibility or favor to "housing friendly policies"

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Energy Affordability Bill

- Varied approaches to **remove costs** from utility bills, **find savings** for residents
- A **number of policies** relevant to local governments:
  - Allows a city or town to **prohibit third-party competitive energy suppliers,** marketers, or brokers from executing or renewing contracts in their municipality
  - Addresses the 10 megawatt **municipal net metering cap**
  - Allows cities and towns to utilize **Section 53G consultants** in the new consolidated local permitting process for clean energy infrastructure projects
  - Would require the use of an **automated, online permitting platform for residential solar projects**
    - Does not require any manual review beyond final inspections

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Closeout Supplemental Budget

- **House passed version of the bill on 10/21; Senate poised to act next week.**

- **Some highlights of ~$2.48 billion SWM proposal:**
  - **Procurement Modernization**
    - single procurement for broadband design and installation
    - 30B and 39M (construction) threshold updates
    - allowance for cooperative purchasing agreements for goods and services
    - elimination of COMMBUYS requirement
    - snow hauling and removal exempt from 30B (aligned with snow plowing)
  - **Update to Massachusetts' wage equity reporting**
  - **Smart Growth Education Payments**
  - **COVID-19 deficit amortization**

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Key Ballot Questions

QUESTION 7



“Starter Homes”

QUESTION 4

Election Day Voter Registration

QUESTION 5

State Revenue Growth Limits

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The Road Ahead

- **Ongoing priorities in 2026 conference committees**
- **Impact of 2026 Ballot Questions**
- **Federal Policy**
  - 21st Century ROAD to Housing
  - OMB Conditions & Census
- **Legal Action & Ongoing Work**
- **Planning for the 195th General Court**



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View from the State House & City/Town Halls

Comments from Legislators, Local Officials, and General Discussion



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Additional Resources & Links

- Connect 351 registration
- FY27 Budget
- FY26 Surplus Supp
- Ch. 90/Transportation BB
- PROTECT Act
- Clean Energy Siting
- Conference Committee Updates
- FY26 Closeout Supp
- Ballot Questions
- Economic Development Bill Letter
- Environmental Bond Bill Letter
- Energy Affordability Bill Letter
- SJC Municipal Land Use Decision
- 21st Century ROAD to Housing

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