

# Meeting Minutes

## **AIA Massachusetts – Government Affairs Committee (GAC)**

**Date:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026

**Location:** Virtual (Zoom)

**Topic:** March 11, 2026 GAC Meeting Minutes

**Chairs:** Russ Feldman, AIA; Larry Spang, AIA

**Staff:** John Nunnari, Executive Director

**Attendance:** Approximately 40 participants

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Co-Chairs Russ Feldman and Larry Spang called the meeting to order at approximately 8:32 AM and welcomed attendees.

Mr. Feldman noted that the meeting would begin with a guest presentation from the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office (SDO), followed by updates on legislative and regulatory developments, the Commonwealth's recently released Climate Progress Report Card, and updates from the Historic District and Embodied Carbon working groups.

### **Guest Presentation – [Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office \(SDO\)](#)**

**Presenter:** [Meghan Costa](#), Construction Programs Lead, Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office.

Ms. Costa provided an overview of the Commonwealth's supplier diversity programs and compliance requirements related to public design and construction projects.

#### **Key Program Overview**

The Supplier Diversity Office works to promote participation by diverse and small businesses in state contracting opportunities through certification programs, outreach efforts, and compliance monitoring. She also provided a slide presentation with links to SDO resources that can assist practitioners in compliance. A link to this presentation is available at the end of these minutes.

#### **Programs discussed included:**

##### **State Assisted Affirmative Marketing Program**

- Applies to vertical building design and construction projects valued at **\$150,000** or more.
- Establishes project-specific participation goals for Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) and Women Business Enterprises (WBE).

##### **Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE) Program**

- Establishes a **3%** participation goal for veteran-owned businesses on applicable public projects.

Ms. Costa noted that the SDO has only recently begun outreach to candidate VBE firms and acknowledges that achieving participation goals may be difficult. These goals may be adjusted depending on project circumstances, provided that project teams demonstrate good-faith outreach efforts to certified firms.

##### **Supplier Diversity Hub**

Ms. Costa also introduced the Supplier Diversity Hub, a new online platform designed to:

- Connect project teams with certified businesses
- Advertise contracting opportunities

- Track outreach and participation
- Generate compliance documentation

### **Discussion**

Participants raised several questions regarding implementation, including:

- Limited availability of certified Veteran Business Enterprises within certain design disciplines.
- Capacity constraints among smaller firms already working on multiple public projects.
- Opportunities for networking events and outreach initiatives to better connect design firms with certified businesses.
- It was observed that VBE firms have traditionally been involved with the federal Veterans Affairs Department, which engages firms in larger projects than Massachusetts is likely to commission.

Ms. Costa noted that SDO continues to explore outreach opportunities, including potential networking events across the Commonwealth. Mr. Nunnari mentioned that AIA MA might have access to venues in Central and Western Massachusetts and offered to assist the SDO in arranging events around the Commonwealth.

## **Legislative and Regulatory Status Review – High-Level Update**

Mr. Nunnari provided a brief overview of legislative and regulatory developments since the February GAC meeting.

### **Legislative Environment**

Several policy issues continue to shape the legislative landscape:

- Affordability concerns, particularly related to housing and energy costs.
- The early stages of the **FY27** state budget process, with the Governor's proposed **\$63.3 billion** budget currently under legislative review.
- Increasing public attention to energy affordability, particularly in response to higher winter utility costs.
- Ongoing tensions between the Legislature and State Auditor Diana DiZoglio regarding legislative audit authority and public transparency.

### **Housing Policy**

The MBTA Communities Act remains the subject of litigation before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court regarding whether the statute constitutes an unfunded municipal mandate.

### **Ballot Initiatives**

Legislative committees are expected to begin reviewing several potential **2026** ballot initiatives, including proposals related to:

- Legislative leadership stipends
- Expanding public records requirements to the Legislature and Governor's Office
- Same-day voter registration
- Others not mentioned but included here for completeness:
  - Rent Control, etc.

### **Regulatory Activity**

Several boards relevant to the design and construction sector remain active, including:

- **Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS)** – continuing work on updates to the Massachusetts Building Code.

- **Board of Registration of Architects** – recently considered licensing and enforcement matters.
- **Board of Elevator Regulations** and the **Plumbers and Gas Fitters Board** – reviewing variance requests and safety compliance issues.
- **MassDEP** – preparing updates related to PFAS testing requirements.
- **Department of Energy Resources (DOER)** – advancing regulations related to clean energy siting and permitting.

Mr. Nunnari noted that legislative and regulatory developments will continue to be monitored closely as the session progresses.

### Massachusetts Climate Progress Report Card

Mr. Nunnari provided an overview of the Commonwealth’s recently released [Climate Progress Report Card](#), which evaluates progress toward statutory greenhouse gas reduction targets.

#### Climate Targets

Massachusetts has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions:

- **50%** below **1990** levels by **2030**
- **75%** below **1990** levels by **2040**
- At least **85%** below **1990** levels by **2050**, with a goal of achieving net-zero emissions by mid-century.

#### Current Progress

Statewide emissions are currently approximately **26%** below **1990** levels, indicating meaningful progress but also highlighting the additional reductions required to meet the Commonwealth’s **2030** targets.

#### Building Sector Highlights

The report identified several developments relevant to the design and construction sector:

- More than **133,000** households have installed heat pumps through the Mass Save program since **2020**.
- Installation rates slowed somewhat in **2025**, though the state remains committed to reaching approximately **500,000** heat pump installations by **2030**.
- Additional progress has occurred through municipal adoption of the specialized stretch energy code.

Participants discussed the broader policy implications of the report, including:

- The relationship between climate policy and energy affordability.
- Potential adjustments to Mass Save program funding and incentives.
- The pace at which additional emissions reductions will need to occur to meet statutory targets.

### Historic District Legislation – Working Group Update

Mr. Nunnari provided an update on the Historic District Legislation Working Group, which met in February to begin a focused discussion on AIA Massachusetts’ historic district modernization proposal.

The working group included architects, preservation professionals, municipal policy leaders, and individuals with experience serving on local historic commissions. The session reviewed the intent of the legislation and gathered practitioner-level feedback on both the proposal’s substance and stakeholder perceptions.

Key themes included:

- The legislation was designed as a toolbox approach to provide municipalities and historic commissions with clearer statutory language and additional tools to support preservation decision-making.
- Some preservation stakeholders have interpreted the proposal as potentially weakening historic district protections, though working group members emphasized that this was not the intent.
- Participants noted that the technical nature of the bill may have contributed to stakeholder misunderstandings.
- Discussion highlighted ongoing challenges at the local level, including confusion about statutory authority and inconsistent interpretation of enabling legislation across municipalities.

Members also discussed expanding outreach to preservation organizations and practitioners to clarify the proposal and gather additional feedback.

### **Embodied Carbon / ECICC – Working Group Update**

Mr. Nunnari also provided an update on the Embodied Carbon Working Group and ongoing discussions related to embodied carbon policy development.

Discussion focused on industry readiness and practitioner education, particularly as embodied carbon analysis becomes more prominent in public policy discussions and potential procurement requirements.

Participants noted that while some sustainability-focused firms are familiar with life-cycle assessment (LCA) tools, many firms – particularly smaller practices – are still developing familiarity with embodied carbon analysis.

Key topics discussed included:

- The need for accessible training and educational resources for practitioners.
- How embodied carbon requirements may appear in RFQs, RFPs, and consultant contracts.
- The potential role of state agencies as early drivers of embodied carbon implementation through public projects.
- Opportunities for the design community to assist agencies in developing appropriate reporting frameworks and documentation standards.

Members also discussed gathering data regarding the time and cost associated with life-cycle assessments, including the possibility of conducting a practitioner survey.

### **New Business**

No additional new business was raised.

### **Next Steps and Adjournment**

- Staff will continue monitoring legislative and regulatory developments.
- Meeting materials, including the [presentation](#) from the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office and the [Climate Report Card summary memo](#), will be posted on the [GAC webpage](#).
- A [recording](#) of the meeting will also be made available online.

The meeting adjourned at approximately **9:55 AM**.