

Transportation

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council's staff of transportation planners regularly works with our communities on a variety of transportation-related projects, processes and funding issues. Some examples are listed below.

Regional Bike Parking Program

Under this innovative new program, MAPC communities, the MBTA, and DCR can purchase bicycle parking racks at a discount price from three approved vendors. Even better: eligible purchases are **100% reimburseable**, using funding provided by the Boston Region MPO, Executive Office of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration. The website for the program has all the information you need to participate:

http://www.mapc.org/transportation/bike_parking_program/intro.html.

Suburban Mobility

MAPC works through the Boston Region MPO to improve mobility in the region through the Suburban Mobility Program. This program supports projects in MAPC communities that are currently unserved or underserved by transit. Up to \$650,000 is available each year to fund two or more projects in the region. Eligible services include but are not limited to fixed-route services, demand response services, joint dispatch services, and hybrid fixed-route/demand response services. Transit services that feed commuter rail stations (or other bus stations), provide increased access to employment, and/or improve mobility for transit-dependent suburban residents are particularly encouraged. Seven projects are currently being reviewed for funding in FY2007



Framingham Suburban Mobility Project LIFT 9 liftoff: left to right, Susan Tordella, MetroWest Transportation Management Association; Dale Hamel, Framingham State College; Jim Cope, Executive Office of Transportation; Barbara Lucas, Metropolitan Area Planning Council and Boston Region MPO Suburban Mobility/Transportation Demand Management Subcommittee Chair; Paul Matthews, I-495 Arc of Innovation; Karen Spilka, State Senator; John Stasik, Framingham Board of Selectmen and MetroWest Growth Management Committee Chair; and Kathleen Bartolini, Town of Framingham.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Process

MAPC is a voting member of the Boston Region MPO, which programs state and federal transportation funds. For FY 2007, the Boston Region MPO programmed \$38 million in state and federal funds for six roadway projects in six communities. MPO programming decisions are based on TIP Criteria designed to evaluate the need for the project and the effectiveness of its design in meeting those needs. Communities should be receiving shortly from the MPO requests for updated or new project information forms to help with funding decisions for the FY2008 TIP. MAPC's staff is available to help your communities prepare TIP Criteria information forms for their new projects.

Regional Transportation Plan

The long-range (25 year) Transportation Plan for the Boston Region is currently being developed. Major capital investment projects and those that add capacity must be included in the Transportation Plan before they can be funded in the TIP. The Transportation Plan policies will set the framework for how all transportation funds will be spent in the region. A draft of the Plan will be released in mid-February, and public meetings and a public comment period will go on for a

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month after the release of the draft. Your comments will help shape the final Plan to be adopted in the spring.

Smart Growth Parking Toolkit

The MAPC transportation group is preparing a toolkit for municipal officials on sustainable transportation practices. The first section of this toolkit will address common parking issues and offer a variety of strategies for balancing the demand for parking against other important considerations, such as land for commercial development, preservation of open space, and storm water management. Many communities are concerned about the negative impacts of having too little parking - neighbors complain, shop owners worry about discouraging patrons, drivers waste time hunting for parking spaces, etc. Recently, though, some communities have begun to realize that too much parking can be as detrimental to the community as too little, increasing development costs and traffic and damaging the environment. Some have taken steps to reduce parking requirements and improve the efficiency of existing parking. The parking toolkit will describe parking best practices, give local examples, and help communities decide what parking strategies will best serve their needs.

Transportation/Land Use Planning Projects

Planners on the Transportation Team help communities review the important interaction between land use and transportation decisions and the resulting outcomes. An example of this type of project is the Belmont, Lexington, Waltham sub-area Study. At the behest of the MPO, the transportation planning staff is working with the three communities to project the impacts of impending and potential developments and to develop alternative land use scenarios for the study area. More information on the study is available at <http://www.mapc.org/transportation/trapelo.html>

Transportation Enhancements Program

Transportation Enhancements (TE) activities are federally-funded, community-based projects that expand travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historic, aesthetic and environmental aspects of our transportation infrastructure. MAPC staff work with cities and towns to determine if a project is eligible for transportation enhancements funding and help to develop a strong proposal. We then work with the regional and the state review committees to develop projects that can be recommended for funding to the Boston Region MPO. TE projects must be one of twelve eligible activities and must relate to surface transportation.

Projects in the MAPC region funded through TE include: Assabet River Rail Trail, East Boston Greenway, Framingham downtown streetscape improvements, Waltham Downtown Riverwalk, Harborwalk at Children's Wharf, and the Milford Upper Charles Trail.

Contact MAPC for a complete list of eligible project types, application materials and guidelines, or visit our website at www.mapc.org.

Scenic Byways

MAPC works with interested groups of communities in the region to help them take advantage of the resources available through the National Scenic Byways Program. This program enables communities to work together to preserve and enhance the character of a roadway having unique qualities and regional significance. MAPC works with communities to develop proposals for scenic byway designation and to prepare program applications for funding. After a road has been designated as a scenic byway at the state level, the sponsoring agency can apply for funds from the Federal Highway Administration to protect historic, cultural, scenic, and environmental resources and maintain their unique character.

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