JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2011

TRANSREPORT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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Preparation of Next Transportation Improvement Program Begins

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is beginning the process of developing the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2012–15 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the four-year plan for investing federal transportation dollars in the Boston region.

This year the MPO is modifying its approach to collecting information for the development of the TIP and will not be holding its annual Municipal TIP Input Days. This is largely due to consideration of the fiscal constraints on available federal funds for transportation projects and the resulting limits on the number of transportation projects the MPO can reasonably expect to fund in the upcoming TIP cycle.

Instead of asking municipal staff to devote time and other resources to TIP Day involvement, this year the MPO will ask municipalities to place emphasis on updating their Project Information Forms (PIFs). The MPO will use this

• TIP *cont. on p. 2*

MPO Staff Director Retires

After a 40-year career in transportation planning, Arnie Soolman retired in December from his position as Director of the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), which is the staff to the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Mr. Soolman worked at CTPS for 35 of those years and was the director for the last 29 years.

Under Mr. Soolman's leadership, CTPS earned a reputation for providing high-quality, cost-effective planning

• Retirement *cont. on p. 2*

MEETING CALENDAR

For the most recent information on the following public meetings and others that may have been scheduled after TRANSREPORT *went to press, go to www.bostonmpo.org or call (617) 973-7100. A photo ID is required to access most meeting sites.*

AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON

January 6 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3.* 10:00 AM

January 10 (Monday)

Accelerated Bridge Program Council. *MBTA Board Room, Suite 3910.* 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

January 12 (Wednesday)

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Freight Committee. *Conference Room 4.* 1:00 PM

Regional Transportation Advisory Council. *Conference Room 4.* 3:00 PM

Calendar continued on p. 2

Transportation Improvement Program Building Workshops

FEATURED TOPIC AT THE MPO'S BOSTON OPEN HOUSE ON FEB. 16

Peabody	Framingham	Boston	Hingham
Tuesday, February 8	Tuesday, February 15	Wednesday, February 16	Tuesday, February 22
9:00 AM	9:00 AM	1:00 PM (afternoon session) 6:00 PM (evening session)	9:00 AM
Peabody Library South Branch 78 Lynn Street	Framingham Town Hall Blumer Community Room 150 Concord Street	State Transportation Building* MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150 10 Park Plaza **A picture ID is required to enter the State Transportation Building.*	Hingham Public Library Whiton Room 66 Leavitt Street
Accessible via MBTA bus Route 435	*Accessible via the Framingham/Worcester commuter rail line (Framingham Station)*	*Accessible via Silver and Orange Line (Tufts Medical Center Station), Green Line (Boylston or Arlington stations), and MBTA bus Routes 43 and 55*	*Accessible via MBTA bus Route 220*

The members of the Boston Region MPO: Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Office of Planning and Programming, cities of Boston, Braintree, Newton, and Somerville, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board, MassDOT Highway Division, Massachusetts Port Authority, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, towns of Bedford, Framingham, and Hopkinton

Soolman Retires after 35 Years with the Boston Region MPO

• Retirement *cont. from p. 1*

support to the MPO and its members, which include the agencies in the commonwealth that implement surface transportation projects and municipalities in the MPO region.

Over the course of Mr. Soolman's career, the staff of the MPO grew from 28 to more than 60 employees as federal requirements for MPO activities increased and CTPS's planning work expanded in scope and technical complexity. In 1997 the MPO expanded its membership from mostly state-level agencies and entities and the City of Boston to include additional municipal members that now weigh in on transportation plans for the region and contribute to the decision-making process for funding transportation projects. Today, the Boston Region MPO is a state-of-the-practice leader in many aspects of metropolitan transportation planning.

The staff and members of the Boston Region MPO, and others who know and worked with Mr. Soolman, join in wishing him the very best in his future endeavors.

Arnie Soolman, retired director of the Central Transportation Planning Staff

New Approach to TIP Development

• TIP *cont. from p. 1*

information when it evaluates projects and makes decisions about prioritization.

The criteria used for project evaluations are consistent with the MPO's visions and policies, which the MPO has adopted as a guide for selecting projects for funding. The visions and policies focus on the need to support projects that maintain or modernize the transportation system; improve mobility, safety, and security for users of the system; enhance livability; better serve environmental-justice areas; and minimize environmental impacts.

Projects that align best with the MPO's priorities and can be made ready for project advertisement in a given federal fiscal year will be strong candidates for inclusion in the MPO staff's recommendation for the TIP. The MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee will consider the staff recommendation when deciding which projects to fund through the TIP.

The staff will also provide a first-tier list of projects—those projects that meet many TIP criteria, but may not meet fiscal-constraint or immediate-readiness criteria—for the Committee's consideration. Projects from that list may be programmed for funding in the event that monies become available as a result of any programmed projects that cannot be advertised in the expected time frame.

The staff recommendation and the list of first-tier projects will be presented and discussed in an open forum at one of the Committee's meetings. Municipalities will be notified in advance and will be welcome to participate.

In order to make sure that the MPO and its staff are receiving accurate and timely information regarding projects, and to discuss any questions project proponents may have, the MPO will host TIP-Building Workshops on February 8, 15,16, and 22 (see page 1 for meeting times and locations). The MPO strongly encourages all municipalities seeking federal funding for transportation projects to attend at least one of these workshops.

Please visit the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org, for more information regarding these adjustments to the MPO's TIP development process.

If you have any questions, please contact Hayes Morrison, TIP Manager, at hayesm@boston mpo.org or 617-973-7129.

Calendar cont. from p. 1

January 20 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3.* 10:00 AM

January 26 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3.* 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

January 27 (Thursday) ***Tentative***

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150.* 10:00 AM

January 31 (Monday)

MBTA Rider Oversight Committee. *Conference Rooms 1, 2, and 3.* 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

February 3 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3.* 10:00 AM

February 16 (Wednesday)

Boston Region MPO Open House. *MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150.* 12:00 noon to 2:00 PM (afternoon session) and 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM (evening session)

February 17 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3.* 10:00 AM

February 28 (Monday)

MBTA Rider Oversight Committee. *Conference Rooms 1, 2, and 3.* 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

March 3 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Rooms 5 and 6.* 10:00 AM

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

January 13 (Thursday)

MassDOT Highway Division: Public Meeting on the Fore River Bridge Replacement Project. *Fore River Clubhouse, 16 Nevada Road, Quincy.* 6:30 PM

Upcoming MPO Workshops

Please see pages 1, 4, and 5 for the times and locations of the MPO's TIP-Building Workshops, Regional Transportation Needs Assessment Workshops, and Environmental-Justice Forum.

Meetings sponsored by the Boston Region MPO are conducted in accessible locations, and materials can be provided in accessible formats and in languages other than English. If you would like accessibility or language accommodation, please contact the MPO at (617) 973-7100 (voice), (617) 973-8855 (fax), or (617) 973-7089 (TTY), or e-mail public information@bostonmpo.org.

Long-Range Transportation Planning: Assessing Needs in the Boston Region

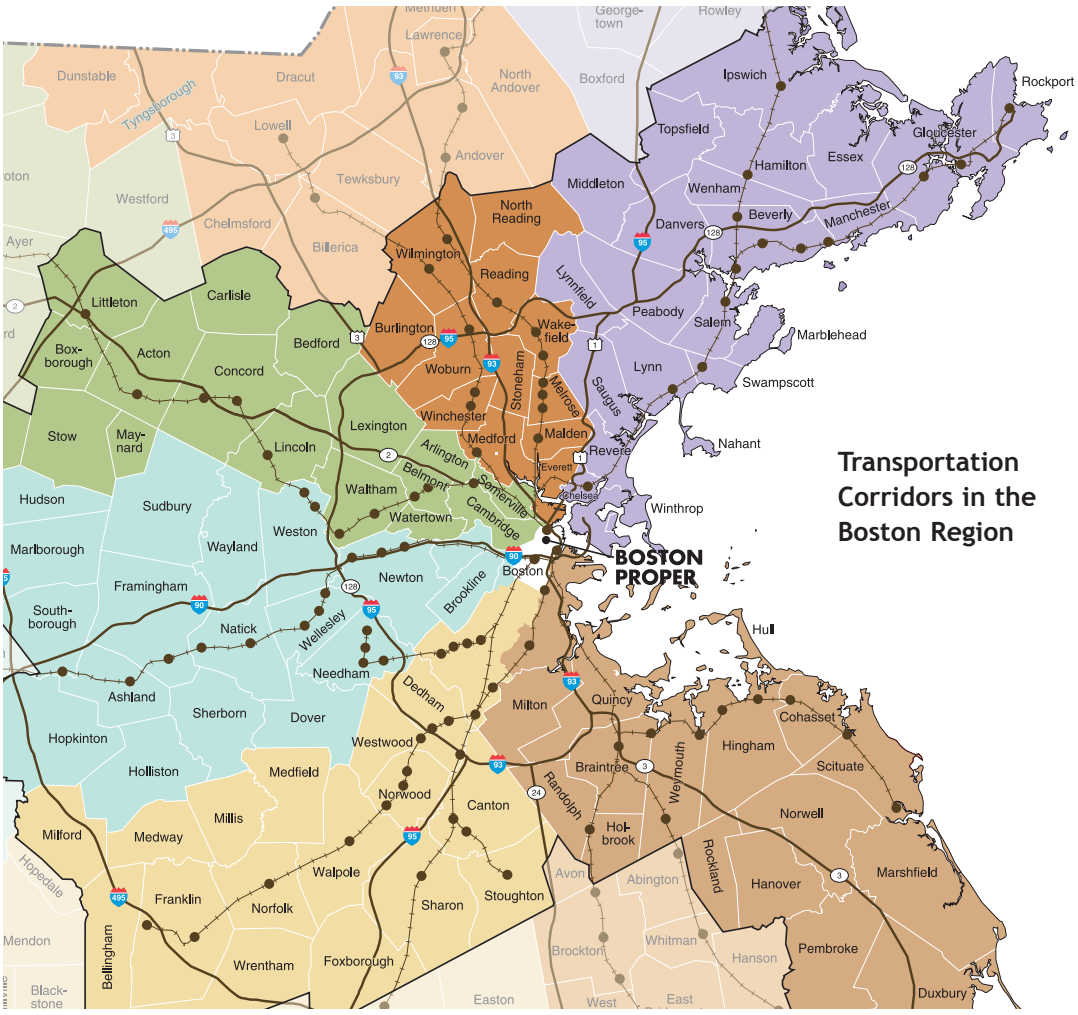
Last spring, the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) began laying the groundwork for the development of the next long-range transportation plan for the region. That work involved identifying visions and policies to guide the MPO when it makes decisions that will shape the region's transportation infrastructure over the next 25 years. A description of those visions and policies can be found on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org, under the Transportation Plan link.

The new plan will be called *Paths to a Sustainable Region* to reflect the MPO's overarching interest in investing in transportation infrastructure and programs that support sustainability in the region.

To better understand where investment in the system will be needed, the MPO is preparing a Needs Assessment, which will catalog existing transportation infrastructure and its condition, transportation services operating in the region, and data that provide insight into how people and freight purveyors use the system.

This Needs Assessment will identify problems within the system, such as the locations of traffic bottlenecks and congestion, locations where there is a high number of motor vehicle crashes, and transportation equity issues. To create the Needs Assessment, the MPO has used information about transportation needs from its ongoing programs and special studies, and from input provided by members of the public over the past several years and during the development of plans dating back to 2004.

The MPO's next step in the development of the plan is to release the Needs Assessment—which is organized based on radial and circumferential travel corridors—for public review. During the review period, members of the public will be invited to provide information to enhance the MPO's understanding of transportation needs in the region. The final version of the Needs Assessment will form the first volume of *Paths to a Sustainable Region*. The complete plan will include a list of proposed transportation projects and programs that might be able to meet the defined needs.



Transportation Corridors in the Boston Region

Did we miss anything?

The MPO expects to post the draft text of the Needs Assessment chapters of the long-range transportation plan on its website in late January or early February. We invite you take a look and let us know if there are areas of concern or needs that we may have overlooked in our assessment.

Visit **www.bostonmpo.org** to view the document and to submit a comment online.

You may also send your written comments by US mail or e-mail to:

U.S. mail
Boston Region MPO
Attn: Michael Callahan
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

E-mail
publicinformation@bostonmpo.org

Boston Region's Transportation Plan Will Support Commonwealth's Climate Initiatives

MPO TO SUPPORT GREENDOT POLICIES TO REDUCE GHG EMISSIONS

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) announced its plans earlier this year to become a national leader in promoting sustainability in the transportation sector by advancing policies that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, promote healthy transportation options, and support smart-growth development. As the entities that study transportation problems and make decisions about funding and prioritizing transportation improvement projects, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) a have a role in advancing those aims as well.

The next long-range transportation plans for the Boston Region MPO and the other MPOs in Massachusetts will set the stage for implementing programs and projects that will help the Commonwealth reach the GHG emission-reduction goals that are defined in the state's Global Warming Solutions Act. The Act, which passed in the summer of 2010, mandates reductions across all sectors of the state's economy. The transportation sector is the largest GHG emitter in the state, and its emissions are projected to increase if no action is taken to curb them.

As part of its GreenDOT policy, MassDOT will be setting statewide emission-reduction goals that will apply to the combined set of transportation projects and programs that the MPOs program each year in their long-range transportation plans and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs), and that will ultimately compose the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

MassDOT intends to incorporate emission-reduction strategies at all stages of the development and implementation of transportation projects—from project design through construction and operation. Projects with designs based on Complete Streets principles—an approach that accommodates all users of the transportation system (pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists)—and that incorporate green construction principles will be encouraged.

For more information on MassDOT's GreenDOT policy, visit www.massdot.state.ma.us.

Freight and Rail Planning in the Boston Region

Maintaining and enhancing the ability of the Boston region's transportation network to accommodate freight transport will be key considerations as the Boston Region MPO develops the next long-range transportation plan.

Two of MassDOT's transportation plans will provide input into the MPO's plan: the 2010 Massachusetts State Rail Plan and State Freight Plan. The rail and freight plans outline the Commonwealth's strategies for improving those systems and identify opportunities for investment.

The MassDOT plans incorporate MassDOT's GreenDOT policies (see the article above) and recognize that while 87 percent of freight in Massachusetts is moved by trucks, expanded use of rail could help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and roadway wear and tear.

For more information on the Massachusetts State Rail Plan and State Freight Plan, visit www.massfreightandrailplan.com.

Long-Range Transportation Plan

Needs Assessment Workshops

PATHS TO A 2035 Sustainable Region

Saugus

Thursday, February 10

5:30 PM

Saugus Town Hall
Auditorium
298 Central Street

Accessible via MBTA bus Routes 429 and 430

Needham

Tuesday, February 15

5:30 PM

Needham Public Library
Community Room
1139 Highland Avenue

Accessible via the Needham commuter rail line (Needham Heights Station) or MBTA bus Route 59

Boston

FEATURED TOPIC AT THE MPO'S BOSTON OPEN HOUSE ON FEB. 16

Wednesday, February 16

12:00 noon (afternoon session)
5:00 PM (evening session)

State Transportation Building*
MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150
10 Park Plaza

Accessible via the Silver and Orange lines (Tufts Medical Center Station), Green Line (Boylston or Arlington stations), and MBTA bus Routes 43 and 55

**A picture ID is required to enter the State Transportation Building.*

Clean Air and Mobility Proposals Due in February

The Boston Region MPO will be accepting applications until February 1, 2011, for transportation projects and programs that help improve air quality by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Approximately $1.8 million dollars in federal funding is available in federal fiscal year 2011 through the MPO's Clean Air and Mobility Program, which makes the grants annually.

Municipalities, regional transit authorities, transportation management associations, chambers of commerce, and nonprofit transportation advocacy groups in the Boston region are invited to apply.

Candidate projects may be those that provide new transit service to areas that are currently unserved or underserved by the existing transit system, that create improvements to infrastructure that benefit bicycle and pedestrian traffic, or that implement other measures that reduce emissions from transportation sources.

The proposed projects and programs must be federal-aid eligible and meet the requirements of the federal

● Clean Air *cont. on p. 6*

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization invites you to an Transportation Equity Forum

Wednesday, February 2
5:30 PM
Boston Public Library*
Conference Room 6
700 Boylston Street
Boston

Outreach to neighborhoods with high concentrations of low-income or minority residents is an important aspect of transportation planning in the Boston region.

Past outreach has helped the MPO understand the transportation needs of these neighborhoods and informed the development of the Needs Assessment for the MPO's long-range transportation plan (described on page 3).

This forum is an opportunity to review the Needs Assessment and to provide for consideration of transportation equity issues as the region's transportation plan is being developed.

**Accessible via the Green Line (Copley Station), Orange Line (Back Bay Station), and MBTA bus Routes 9, 10, 39, and 55*

Boston Region MPO Activities

BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee approved Amendment One of the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2011 element of the FFYs 2011–2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in December. The amendment added funding for bridge projects on Interstate 93 in Medford and on Pelham Island Road in Wayland, programmed a federal earmark for the design of the Adams Green Transportation Improvement project in Quincy, and adjusted the costs of three bridge projects. No projects were removed from the TIP as a result of that action.

Also in December, the Committee gave the MPO staff approval to begin working on the project Safety and Operations Analyses at Selected Intersections, FFY 2011. This project is the fourth in a series of analyses conducted since 2006 to evaluate selected intersections in the region for safety and operational improvements. These analyses are multimodal in nature, taking into consideration pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit operations.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

At its recent meeting, the Advisory Council received a presentation about the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding and spending between federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2008 and 2014. Hayes Morrison, TIP Manager of the MPO staff, explained how federal transportation funding works and how the funds are allocated to projects across Massachusetts and in the Boston region. She also explained how the funds were spent by project type and purpose in the region between FFYs 2008 and 2010.

The Advisory Council also discussed the MPO's Clean Air and Mobility Program, which funds transportation projects in the Boston region that improve air quality. (See the article above for more information about this program.)

The next Advisory Council meeting, on January 12, will include a presentation by MassDOT about the Transportation Enhancements Program.

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

The Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA did not meet in December. The next meeting is scheduled for January 26.

The Committee will be accepting nominations for the position of AACT chairman and for members of the Executive Board until April 27, 2011.

Nominations may be sent to Janie Guion, AACT Coordinator, at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116, or by e-mail at guion@ctps.org.

The election of officers will take place on May 25.

More Communities in the Boston Region Are Going Green

STEPS TOWARD ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY PAY OFF FOR MUNICIPALITIES

Twenty-seven municipalities in the Boston region have been designated as "Green Communities" by the Commonwealth's Department of Energy Resources (DOER) for their actions to improve energy efficiency and for transitioning to renewable energy sources in municipal operations, as well as for creating conditions that foster alternative energy use and development.

The designation makes those communities eligible for grants from DOER's Green Communities Grant Program that range from $125,000 to $1 million. These grants can be applied to renewable-power and energy-efficiency projects and initiatives. A total of 53 communities in Massachusetts have earned the designation since the Green Communities Grant Program began in 2010.

A municipality can qualify as a Green Community by meeting several criteria. It must establish programs for reducing energy use for municipal buildings, vehicles, and traffic lighting by 20 percent within five years, and commit to buying fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use. It must also adopt bylaws or ordinances that allow for "as-of-right" siting (allowing landowners or developers to build without obtaining special permits) for renewable or alternative-energy research-and-development or manufacturing facilities, and provide expedited application and permitting processes for those facilities. And lastly, it must set requirements to incorporate energy efficiency in new residential and commercial construction.

The following cities and towns in the Boston MPO area are Green Communities: Acton, Arlington, Boston, Cambridge, Dedham, Gloucester, Hamilton, Hanover, Harvard, Hopkinton, Lexington, Lincoln, Marlborough, Medford, Medway, Melrose, Milton, Natick, Newton, Salem, Scituate, Sudbury, Swampscott, Watertown, Wayland, Wenham, and Winchester.

The DOER will again be accepting applications for Green Community designations in 2011. For more information, visit the Green Community webpage on the Commonwealth's website, www.mass.gov.

Funding for CMAQ Projects Available

• Clean Air *cont. from p. 5*

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program.

For more information on the MPO's Clean Air and Mobility Program and links to sites with related federal guidance, visit the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org.

TRANSREPORT

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