



TRANSREPORT

MAY/JUNE 2011

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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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

May 5 (Thursday)

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

Boston Region MPO. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3. Immediately following the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee meeting.*

May 11 (Wednesday)

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

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

May 19 (Thursday)

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

May 23 (Monday)

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

May 25 (Wednesday)

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

May 26 (Thursday)

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

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MPO's Guiding Document Gets Update

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is in the process of updating its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which establishes the membership of the MPO and guides some aspects of how the federally required transportation planning process is conducted in the MPO area.

The proposed changes to the MOU were released for a 30-day public review period in March and April, at which time the MPO received comments indicating public interest in issues associated with the structure and operation of the MPO. As a result, the MPO held three workshops to provide an opportunity for members of the public to discuss these issues further.

A key area of interest for commenters and for MPO members has been the composition of the MPO membership. Currently, MPO members include the representatives of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, the Massachusetts Port

• MOU *cont. on p. 4*

Public Review Period for TIP Amendment Open

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has released a proposed amendment to its four-year transportation funding plan for public review. The MPO will vote on Amendment Four to its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) on May 19, following the public review period, which closes on May 17. The proposed changes pertain to dollars programmed to be spent during the 2011 federal fiscal year.

In this amendment, funding is allocated for projects within the MPO's Clean Air and Mobility Program. These projects will help reduce negative air quality impacts from transportation by providing alternatives to single-occupancy-vehicle use or by contributing to reducing emissions from vehicles.

• TIP *cont. on p. 4*



UPCOMING PUBLIC REVIEW PERIODS



This spring the MPO is working on the development of the next 25-year Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Paths to a Sustainable Region*. The MPO's annual documents—the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which describes the transportation planning studies to be implemented in FFY 2012, and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which lays out the projects and programs to be implemented from FFY 2012 to FFY 2015—are also in the works.

The MPO expects to announce the release of these plans for public review in late June (for the LRTP) and in early July (for the UPWP and TIP). The documents will be available on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org, or by contacting the MPO. (See page 4 for ways to contact the MPO.)

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



The project to replace 14 deteriorating bridges on Interstate 93 in Medford is underway, with construction activities requiring lane closures at certain times. MassDOT's plans for this project are intended to minimize disruptions to motorists while expediting the construction. The latest information about closures is available at the project website, www.93Fast14.com.

(See the article on the I-93 "Fast 14" Bridge Replacements in the March/April 2011 issue of *TRANSREPORT*.)

New Bike-Sharing and MBTA Programs Boost Bicycling in Boston

The events of the annual Bay State Bike Week get underway the week of May 14–20, with activities ranging from group bicycle rides to bicycle maintenance classes to art shows scheduled across the commonwealth. Bicycle riders in the Boston region have added reasons to celebrate this year, as two new programs are making bicycling easier and more practical in Boston.

This summer, the City of Boston will launch the Hubway bike-share program, which will provide bicycle rentals from 61 bicycle stations in the city. The pro-

gram will start by offering 600 rental bicycles. Plans are already underway to expand the bike share program beyond Boston's borders to Brookline, Cambridge, and Somerville. The Hubway program is partially funded by the Boston Region MPO through its Clean Air and Mobility Program.

The MBTA is also launching a six-month pilot project to allow bicycles on the Blue Line. This project stems from a response to requests from cyclists in East Boston for improved bike access on the Blue Line, since the roadway tunnels connecting that neighborhood to downtown Boston do not accommodate bicyclists. While this program is operating, restrictions on bicycle access to the Blue Line will apply during peak travel hours (going inbound in the morning and outbound in evening). The MBTA is launching this project in partnership with the Chelsea Creek Action Group and MassBike.

For more information about Bay State Bike Week activities, visit baystatebikeweek.org.

Safe Routes to School: Walk/Bike to School Day

On May 4, the fourth annual Massachusetts Walk and Bike to School Day was held to celebrate the changes happening at hundreds of schools in the commonwealth that are part of the Safe Routes to School program and that are implementing programs and activities to encourage kids to get to school using their own two feet.

Walking and biking are fun and healthy ways for kids to start their day. Besides, kids who get to school without relying on someone to drive them are helping the environment – their trips produce no pollution from vehicle emissions.

You can join the effort in your community by holding an event to encourage kids to

walk or ride their bikes to school. Lead a "walking school bus" or get more ideas by visiting the *MassRIDES* website, www.commute.com/schools. Guidelines on how to organize and publicize a Walk or Bike to School event are also available on links from that site.



Calendar cont. from p. 1

June 2 (Thursday)

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

June 8 (Wednesday)

MassDOT and MBTA Board of Directors. *Offices of the Board, Third Floor. 1:00 PM*

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

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

June 16 (Thursday)

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

June 20 (Monday)

Judge Patrick King's Update on MBTA/BCIL Settlement Agreement. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM*

June 22 (Wednesday)

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

June 27 (Monday)

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

TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED MEETINGS

May 19 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Unified Planning Work Program Subcommittee. *MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 1:00 PM*

June 9, 23, and 30 (Thursdays)

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

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

May 10 (Tuesday)

MassDOT: Public Meeting on the Roxbury/Dorchester/Mattapan Transit Needs Study. *Mattapan Branch Library, 1350 Blue Hill Avenue, Boston. 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM*

May 18 (Wednesday)

MassDOT: Public Meeting on the Casey Overpass Project. *Agassiz School's Community Center, 20 Child Street, Boston. 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM*

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 publicinformation@bostonmpo.org.

Metro Boston Consortium Invites Project Ideas

A diverse partnership of municipal, state, community, academic, and business groups with a shared interest in advancing sustainable development in the Boston region have come together to form the Metro Boston Consortium for Sustainable Communities. After holding its inaugural meeting in April, the consortium kicked off its activities with a request for proposals.

The consortium, which is led by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), aims to advance Metro-Future, a smart-growth plan for the region, and to implement sustainable development strategies through local planning and zoning efforts, the development of new tools and policies for implementing smart growth, and local leadership. These activities are supported by a grant

from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Following the first meeting of the consortium in April, MAPC issued a request for project ideas that could be supported by the grant and help define the consortium's three-year work plan. Topics related to transportation that could fall within the parameters of the grant program might include projects having

to do with transit-oriented development, transportation demand management plans, or bicycle and pedestrian planning.

For more information, visit the MAPC's website, www.mapc.org/metrofuture/sustainable-communities. Project ideas may be submitted by May 13 to Jessie Grogan, MAPC, at jgrogan@mapc.org.

Boston Region MPO Activities

BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

This spring, the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee approved and released the Safety and Operations Analyses at Selected Intersections study, the third in a series of studies that the MPO staff is conducting to analyze safety and operational deficiencies at intersections in the region and to recommend improvements.

The Committee also addressed proposed revisions to the MPO's Memorandum of Understanding (see the article on page 1) and the development of the next Long-Range Transportation Plan, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*. It also gave MPO staff approval to begin two new projects. One project, for the MassDOT Title VI Program, will assist MassDOT's Office of Civil Rights to develop a program for demonstrating its compliance with the Federal Highway Administration's Title VI requirements. The other, the Roundabout Installation Screening Tool project, will focus on developing a set of guidelines that can be used when evaluating intersection design proposals or evaluating unsignalized intersections for traffic control.

Additionally, two transportation planning documents were amended this spring: Amendments 2 and 3 of the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2011 element of the FFYs 2011–14 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and an amendment to the FFY 2011 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Most recently, in April, the Committee released Draft Amendment 4 of the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2011 element of the FFYs 2011–14 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for a 30-day public review period. (See the article on page 1.)

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

The Advisory Council learned about changes to MassDOT's Transportation Enhancements Program at their meeting on April 13. Among the 12 types of projects and programs eligible for Transportation Enhancements funds are bicycle and pedestrian facilities, safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists, scenic beautification, historic preservation, and wildlife protection.

MassDOT has streamlined the application process for

these funds, and will provide a \$1 match for every \$2 that an MPO programs for Transportation Enhancement purposes. More information about the Transportation Enhancements Program can be found at www.enhancements.org.

The next meeting of the Advisory Council is scheduled for May 11. On the agenda is a panel discussion on Positive Train Control.

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

At the April AACT meeting, Christine Bond, Assistant Director of Education and Development for the MBTA,

and representatives of the "How can I help you today?" customer service program gave a presentation about the MassDOT Customer Service training initiative that is given to all MBTA and MassDOT frontline staff people.

Also at that meeting, Christine Newhall, Deputy Director of Transportation for the Executive Office Health and Human Services (EOHHS), and Joanne Champa, MassDOT Transportation Coordinator, gave an overview of Governor Patrick's Executive Order #530: Establishing a Commission for the Reform of

Community, Social Service and Paratransit Transportation Services in the Commonwealth.

The purpose of the commission is to develop detailed recommendations for reform and the introduction of efficiencies in the provision of community and social services transportation. The commission will conduct a comprehensive review of the MBTA's THE RIDE and other paratransit and demand responsive services, and social services transportation in the state.

New FFY 2011 TIP Projects

• TIP *cont. from p. 1*

Funding would be provided to the following projects:

- MetroWest Regional Transit Authority, to operate Saturday service on its Route 7 bus line
- Town of Acton, for a shuttle service to the South Acton commuter rail station
- Town of Hull, for a summer ferry service
- Cape Ann Transportation Authority, for its Stage Fort Shuttle service
- MBTA, for diesel retrofits on commuter rail locomotives
- 128 Business Council, for software to make its bus service more efficient and to coordinate transit service in the 128 corridor
- The Cities of Boston and Cambridge and the Town of Brookline, for bike-sharing programs

Other changes included in the amendment include the addition of funds for the following projects:

- Design of the Trapelo Road project in Belmont

- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities for the Boston Harbor Islands
- Ferry boat service between Salem and Baker Island
- Facility maintenance and modernization for the Cape Ann Transportation Authority
- Upgrades to Lechmere Station, as part of the Green Line Extension project

The amendment also enumerates changes in the cost of one project and the year of implementation for several others.

The amendment is available on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org, and can also be obtained by contacting MPO staff via the addresses and methods listed below. Comments will be

accepted in writing at the address below before the close of the public comment period and at the meeting of May 19.

MOU Revisions

• MOU *cont. from p. 1*

Authority, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the MBTA Advisory Board, the City of Boston, and six elected municipalities.

Under current rules, the six elected municipal members must include three cities and three towns. The proposed changes to the MOU would eliminate the distinction between cities and towns in order to encourage more municipalities to seek MPO membership. Commenters have also suggested that the MPO increase the number of members.

As of press time, the MPO is scheduled to discuss all comments received and to take action on the revisions to the MOU at its meeting on May 5.

Contacting the MPO

State Transportation Building Voice: (617) 973-7100
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150 Fax: (617) 973-8855
Boston, MA 02116-3968 TTY: (617) 973-7089

Online: www.bostonmpo.org

E-mail: publicinformation@bostonmpo.org

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Jeffrey B. Mullan,
MPO Chairman

David J. Mohler, Chair
Marc Draisen, Vice Chair
Transportation Planning and
Programming Committee

EDITORS

Maureen Kelly
Mary Ellen Sullivan

CONTRIBUTORS

Michael Callahan
Janie Guion

GRAPHICS AND PHOTOS

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Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

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