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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 was released, go to www.bostonmpo.org or call 617.973.7100 (voice) or 617.973.7089 (TTY). A photo ID is required to access most meeting sites.

AT BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

March 7 (Thursday)

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization.
Braintree Town Hall, One John F. Kennedy Drive, Braintree. 10:00 AM

AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON

March 13 (Wednesday)

MassDOT and MBTA Board of Directors. Suite 3860. 1:00 PM

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A 'Way Forward' for the Transportation System

MASSDOT BOARD PROPOSES FUNDING PLAN FOR RESTORING A STATE OF GOOD REPAIR AND FOR TARGETED EXPANSION OF TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has proposed a 10-year investment plan for restoring the commonwealth's transportation system to a state of good repair and for expanding the system to support economic growth. In a report issued in January to the state legislature, the Board presented the case for raising a significant amount of new revenue for investments in the transportation system and options for doing so.

Although a number of cost-saving reforms have been instituted over the past several years – including the consolidation of the state's transportation agencies – significant financial challenges remain for MassDOT to be able to properly maintain the commonwealth's roads, bridges, and rail assets. In 2007, the Transportation Finance Commission, an

independent body formed to evaluate the financial condition of transportation agencies in the state, estimated that an additional \$15 billion to \$19 billion would be needed over 20 years to maintain the system.

MassDOT is now proposing an investment of \$13 billion over the next 10 years for maintenance and expansion projects. The agency's priorities for investment are outlined in its report to the Legislature, titled *The Way Forward: A 21st-Century Transportation Plan*. (See the article to the right for more details.)

Various options for raising the revenue to implement these priorities are presented in the plan. They include taxes (gas, sales, income, and vehicle-miles traveled), fees based on vehicle emissions, routine fare and toll increases, and new tolling mechanisms.

***The Way Forward: A 21st-Century Transportation Plan* is available on MassDOT's website, www.massdot.state.ma.us.**

MassDOT Outlines Priorities for Investment

Some proposals included in MassDOT's plan, *The Way Forward: A 21st-Century Transportation Plan*, are listed below. Please see the plan for more details.

ROADWAYS

- A new bridge program, modeled after the Accelerated Bridge Program, that would address regionally significant bridges and speed up repairs to local bridges
 - Programs that would improve safety, reduce congestion, and preserve highway facilities and systems
 - Construction of regional-priority highway projects, including the interchanges of Interstates 93 and 95 in Woburn and Canton
 - Dedicated funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities owned or managed by MassDOT or the Department of Conservation and Recreation
 - Additional Chapter 90 monies for municipalities
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The members of the Boston Region MPO: Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Cities of Beverly, Boston, Everett, Newton, Somerville, and Woburn, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board, Massachusetts Port Authority, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, Towns of Arlington, Bedford, Braintree, Framingham, Lexington, Medway, and Norwood

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March 13 (Wednesday)

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

March 18 (Monday)

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

March 21 (Thursday)

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization. Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 10:00 AM

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization: Unified Planning Work Program Committee. Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 1:00 PM

March 27 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA: Executive Board. Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 10:00 AM to 12:00 noon

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

March 28 (Thursday)

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization: Unified Planning Work Program Committee. MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 9:15 AM

April 4 (Thursday)

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization. Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 10:00 AM

April 10 (Wednesday)

MassDOT and MBTA Board of Directors. Suite 3860. 1:00 PM

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Transportation Project Evaluations to be Posted

EVALUATION RESULTS WILL INFORM TIP PROJECT SELECTION

The staff of the Boston Region MPO has completed evaluations of projects being considered for the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2014–17 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The results will be available on the MPO's website in early March in the Evaluation Results Table, which contains the total project rating for each project.

The MPO uses TIP project evaluation criteria to help determine which projects will most effectively attain the MPO's visions, while following the MPO's policies. For example, the criteria are used to evaluate how well each project would improve pavement conditions and traffic signals to advance the MPO's goal of maintaining a state of good repair. To support the MPO's goal of providing safe transportation in all travel modes, the criteria address how each project would improve safety for automobile drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians, and freight transport.

To support the goal of reducing greenhouse gases, the criteria are used to determine how well projects would reduce automobile dependency by providing improved

transit access or new pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The results of the evaluation process will help inform the TIP project selection process.

In early March, the MPO will receive its regional targets, which detail the amount of available federal funding over the next four years for priority projects. Based on the levels of available funding, the MPO staff will make a recommendation of currently programmed and new projects to be funded through the TIP. The evaluation ratings are a major consideration that guides the recommendation.

The MPO staff will also factor in projects that are programmed in the MPO's long-range transportation plan (LRTP) in order to implement the LRTP; consider geographic equity to help ensure that the set of projects addresses needs throughout the region; and account for costs to comply with the fiscal constraint requirement.

The MPO staff will present the recommendation for the draft TIP to the MPO board at its April 4 meeting. The recommendation and supporting materials are scheduled to be available on the Meeting Calendar section of the MPO's website a week before the meeting.

The TIP project evaluations will be available on the MPO's webpage, www.bostonmpo.org.

For more information, contact Sean Pfalzer at 617.973.7107 or spfalzer@ctps.org.

• *Way Forward continued from p. 1*

TRANSIT

- New buses for the MBTA and regional transit authorities (RTAs) and upgrades to RTA facilities
- Fabrication and assembly of new MBTA subway cars in the commonwealth
- Upgrades to MBTA power systems and other infrastructure necessary for train and bus operations
- Modernization pilot programs, including a focus on a new bus rapid transit system and the use of diesel multiple unit (DMU) vehicles

SYSTEM EXPANSION PROJECTS

- South Coast Rail – commuter rail service connecting Boston to New Bedford and Fall River
- Green Line Extension to Somerville and Medford
- South Station Expansion – to accommodate future expansion of South Side rail service and service in the Northeast Corridor
- Rail to Cape Cod – seasonal weekend rail service from Boston to Hyannis, on Cape Cod
- The Inland Route – passenger rail service between Boston and Springfield
- Berkshires to New York City – rail improvements in the Berkshires to support future passenger rail service to New York City

April 10 (Wednesday)

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

April 18 (Thursday)

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization. Conference Rooms 5 and 6. 10:00 AM

April 24 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA: Executive Board. Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 10:00 AM to 12:00 noon

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

April 29 (Monday)

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

The MPO complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and other federal and state nondiscrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. The MPO does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, English proficiency, income, religious creed, ancestry, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or military service. Any person who believes herself/himself or any specific class of persons to have been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI, ADA, or other

MPO Releases HOV Lane Planning Study

The high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes that are located on Interstate 93 north and south of downtown Boston have been effective in improving the level of service (LOS) of traffic on these congested corridors. They carry more vehicles per lane during peak periods than the parallel general-purpose lanes carry. With more vehicles, higher occupancies, and numerous regional buses, these lanes significantly increase the capacity of Interstate 93 to carry people into the urban core.

Because of the importance of the existing HOV facilities to the regional express highway system, the Boston Region MPO directed its staff to evaluate all of the region's express highways with the goal of identifying additional locations where implementation of an HOV lane would offer meaningful benefits. This study was documented in a technical memorandum titled *Screening Regional Express Highways for Possible Preferential Lane Implementation*, which was released in December 2012. (The study uses the term "preferential lane" to refer to HOV-type lanes.)

The study's screening analysis set a requirement that all users of an express highway should benefit if a preferential lane were implemented. Taking away an existing lane to create a preferential lane would not be considered unless negative impacts on traffic in the general-purpose lanes were acceptably small. No locations met this criterion; therefore so-called

"snatch-a-lane" strategies were not recommended.

For the express highway locations recommended for further study, all would share certain characteristics if a preferential lane were implemented:

- The preferential lane would be a newly constructed, reversible lane in the highway median, including room for breakdowns and enforcement.
- Extensive reconstruction of the associated general-purpose lanes would be required.
- A maximum of 1,500 vehicles per hour would be eligible to use the preferential lane.
- Regional buses using this lane would experience an LOS comparable to a bus-only lane.
- The associated general-purpose lanes would see a decrease in vehicles per lane per hour, but would still be more congested than the new preferential lane.

The study concluded that most express highways in the Boston region are unsuitable for preferential lane implementation, though several locations were identified for

further study in the future. These locations are Interstate 93 between New Hampshire and the existing HOV lane in Medford, the section of Interstate 95/Route 128 between Woburn and Waltham, and portions of Interstate 93, Route 24, and



Route 3 south of Boston that feed into the existing "zipper lane" HOV facility at the Braintree Split.

The section of the Southeast Expressway between the northern terminus of the zipper lane and the HOV lanes constructed as part of the Central Artery/Tunnel project also met the study screening criteria. That location had already been examined in a previous study, which was documented in the MPO report *Improving the Southeast Expressway: A Conceptual Plan*, released in February 2012. Therefore, it will not be included in Phase II of the HOV study, now underway, which is developing a conceptual preferential lane plan for Interstate 93 north of Boston.

The study, *Screening Regional Express Highways for Possible Preferential Lane Implementation*, is available on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org.

For more information, contact Bill Kuttner at 617.973.7132 or bkuttner@ctps.org.

nondiscrimination statute or regulation may, herself/himself or via a representative, file a written complaint with the MPO. A complaint must be filed no later than 180 calendar days after the date on which the person believes the discrimination occurred. A complaint form and additional information can be obtained by contacting the MPO (see below) or at www.bostonmpo.org.

Meeting locations are accessible to people with disabilities and are near public transportation. Upon request (preferably two weeks in advance of a meeting), every effort will be made to provide accommodations such as assistive listening devices, materials in accessible formats and in languages other than English, and interpreters in American Sign Language and other languages. Please contact the MPO staff at 617.973.7100 (voice), 617.973.7089 (TTY), 617.973.8855 (fax), or publicinformation@ctps.org (email).

Planning for Modern Roundabouts: New Screening Tool Available

NEW TOOL STREAMLINES PROCESS OF ASSESSING LOCATIONS FOR ROUNDABOUTS

The design features of modern traffic roundabouts are increasingly being viewed by planners and engineers in the commonwealth as a means of improving traffic safety while reducing roadway operational costs.

Because vehicles entering a roundabout are directed around a central island and must yield to traffic already in the roundabout, vehicle speeds are reduced and there are fewer and less severe crashes than at traffic signals. In addition, the one-way traffic circulation around a central island limits the number of conflict points and the potential for crashes more than at traffic signals. Roundabouts also have lower operational costs, since they are self-operating and do not require signalization.

They are not appropriate for all locations, however, and may even have adverse effects if installed for the wrong purpose or in an inappropriate location.

The Highway Division of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and the MPO evaluate requests for roundabouts from municipalities and conduct assessments of intersection improvement alternatives.

In response to municipalities' growing interest in roundabouts, the Boston Region MPO staff worked closely with an advisory task force to develop a screening tool for reviewing roadway sites where installing a roundabout

might be an option, and for assessing whether such an alternative would be feasible and worthy of further analysis and design.

Members of the advisory task force included staff from the MassDOT Highway Division, the MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.

The intention in developing the tool was to streamline and standardize the process of reviewing roundabout concepts and proposals and to forestall spending money on project design if a roundabout would not be suitable for a particular location.

The Roundabout Installation Screening Tool is available on the Boston Region MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org.

For more information, contact Seth Asante at 617.973.7098 or sasante@ctps.org.



BOSTON REGION MPO ACTIVITIES

NEW STUDIES

The Boston Region MPO gave approval for its staff to begin work on the following new work programs:

MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) Transit Planning Assistance: A service-planning study that will produce recommendations about potential changes or extensions to the MWRTA's bus routes.

Massachusetts Turnpike – Boston Ramps Study: Travel forecasting assistance in support of MassDOT's planning for the possible provision of additional ramps from the Massachusetts Turnpike to the Back Bay and Fenway areas of Boston and alternatives for grounding the Bowker Overpass.

FFY 2012–13 Interstate 93 North and Southeast Expressway HOV Lane Monitoring: The collection of data on travel times and vehicle occupancies on the Interstate 93 North and Southeast Expressway HOV lanes and associated general-purpose lanes for MassDOT's reporting to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

Modeling Support for MassDOT Environmental Impact Statement for the Interstate 93 and Interstate 95 Interchange Improvements: Travel modeling services in support of MassDOT's review of design alternatives for a new interchange at Interstates 93 and 95 in Woburn.

Regional HOV-Lane Systems Planning Study, Phase II: An examination of segments of Interstate 93 that were identified as potential candidates for preferential lane treatments and the development of conceptual designs. (See the article on page 3.)

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

At the Advisory Council's January meeting, Alicia Wilson of the MPO staff addressed the Advisory Council on the topic of transportation equity and discussed the Title VI and environmental justice demographic profiles of the Boston Region MPO area.

She reported that in 2013 the MPO's Transportation Equity Program will conduct outreach to environmental justice communities in the region to:

- Improve awareness of the MPO and its functions
- Improve awareness of the transportation-planning process
- Increase participation by populations of concern
- Increase awareness of

and participation in the Advisory Council's work

- Increase responses to the MPO's online Transportation Equity Survey

At the Advisory Council's February meeting, Bill Kuttner of the MPO staff presented the findings of Phase I of the Regional HOV Lane System Planning Study. (See the article on page 3.)

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

The members of AACT invited Margaret (Peggy) Griffin, Civil Rights Officer at Region 1 of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), to their January 23 meeting. Ms. Griffin discussed President Obama's Executive Order 12898, which requires federal agencies to develop environmental justice strategies that protect members of

minority and/or low-income populations.

She recommended that persons with disabilities – including those who are members of environmental justice communities – get involved with transportation projects early in the process, when it is easier to make adjustments to designs for accessibility.

Dr. Beverly A. Scott, MBTA General Manager, has reached out to AACT and will be attending AACT meetings on a quarterly basis beginning March 27.

OPPORTUNITIES

The following opportunities are available to AACT members and other MBTA customers:

Nominations for AACT Board and Officers Underway

The nomination process for active AACT members running for the 2013–15 term

began at the January 23 meeting and will close at the April 24 meeting. The election will take place on May 22 and the new board will be seated on July 1.

AACT Bylaws Committee Members Sought

The Executive Board of Directors of AACT is seeking members to serve on the AACT Bylaws Committee, which is responsible for updating and revising the bylaws that govern AACT. Interested members should contact Janie Guion, AACT Coordinator, at 617.973.7507 (voice), 617.973.7089 (TTY), or AACT@ctps.org (email).

MBTA Offers System Orientation Training

MBTA System Orientation Training will be offered on the first Thursday of every month. The next training will

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be held on March 7 from 9 AM to 12:30 PM at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston.

Interested customers may register by calling the MBTA System Orientation line at 617.222.5237 or emailing sysorientationtrain@mbta.com. Please leave your name, telephone number, and the best time for a representative to reach you.

MBTA Certifying Eligibility for THE RIDE

Persons interested in applying or recertifying for THE RIDE's ADA Paratransit service may call THE RIDE's Eligibility Center (TREC) at 617.337.2727 to schedule an in-person assessment with a Mobility Coordinator. (A relay operator is available at that number.)

During a confidential interview, the applicant's specific transit use skills, abilities, and limitations are identified and discussed. Disability alone does not determine ADA eligibility; the decision is based on a customer's ability to use the MBTA's general public



transportation services.

TREC is located in Hood Business Park, at 500 Rutherford Avenue, Charlestown. The MBTA offers free transportation on THE RIDE to and from the appointment for the applicant and one other person. Free parking is available to applicants arriving by car.

MBTA Offers Temporary Eligibility for THE RIDE

The MBTA now offers immediate, temporary eligibility for THE RIDE in cases of medical necessity. An individual may receive 30 days of service to deal with a medical emergency when requested by a health care provider, hospital, or treatment center.

For more information, go to www.mbta.com/theride.

Thanks to the MBTA Office of Transportation Access, the Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) is now featured on the MBTA's website, www.mbta.com.

Follow this link



on the MBTA website

to obtain more information about AACT meetings, AACT bylaws, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.