

TRANS REPORT

TRANSPORTATION NEWS FROM THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MPO Steps Up Its Bicycle/Pedestrian Activities

Spring is in the air, not only outdoors but also at the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization, as the staff prepares to resume the MPO's popular Walkable Community Workshops program and to launch a new bicycle/pedestrian study.

Creating a better environment for walking is an important aspect of improving community livability, which in turn is related to the community's economic vitality. Both the physical health of individuals—people walk more when the environment is safe and pleasant—and the economic health of the community benefit.

A Walkable Community Workshop starts with a presentation on techniques that make a community more walkable. Participants then go out and look at a site in their community. In the final portion of the program, attendees discuss what was viewed on the walk and ways to implement possible improvements.

The workshops, which last approximately two and a half hours, are open to all those with an interest in improving walkability: elected officials, residents, and professionals in the fields of planning, engineering, law enforcement, and education.

To date, MPO staff have held Walkable Community Workshops in Arlington, Belmont, Maynard, Rockport, Saugus, Scituate, Wellesley, and Wrentham. For more information, please call Cathy Lewis at (617) 973-7118 or Jonathan Church at

(617) 973-7090, or e-mail walkable@ctps.org.



Paul Dudley White Bike Path

Work is also getting underway on the Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvements in Town Centers study, which is expected to be completed in the fall. The recently approved work program for the study reflects the MPO's goal of improving nonmotorized access,

both in suburban corridors and in town centers.

The study team will examine up to six town centers in the MPO region where walking or bicycling is a difficult, uncomfortable, or unsafe activity, and will recommend specific strategies for improving pedestrian and bicycle access and safety.

The site-selection process will focus on small towns that have not yet hosted a Walkable Community Workshop. The study team will work with local officials from the selected communities to explore options for potential improvements, such as modifying traffic signals, enhancing sight distances and lighting, and adding bike lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks, street furniture, bicycle parking, and signage.

The findings from the study will be available in a final report, which will provide a menu of options for implementing improvements. It is expected that the recommendations will also be useful to other MPO municipalities seeking to enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Reminder to MPO Cities and Towns

Nomination papers for the MPO election to be held in May are due on May 3. For more information about the election process, click on the MPO Election button on our Web site at www.bostonmpo.org.

TRANSREPORT will publish statements from candidates in its May issue. To reserve space, contact Mary Ellen Sullivan at (617) 973-7119 or mesullivan@bostonmpo.org by April 10.

Mapping Mobility: Peak Spreading on Regional Express Highways

Most commuters know that congestion on our express highways has increased over the last two decades. National statistics show that the amount of lost productivity for the American worker stuck in traffic equals 440 hours every year, or the equivalent of 11 work weeks.

To better understand this trend, MPO staff analyzed the phenomenon of increasingly long peak periods of congestion—known as peak spreading—in the Boston region. The analysis included an examination of express highway hours of congestion and how they have changed since the late 1980s. The maps on page 3

■ Mapping Mobility *cont.* on p. 3

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TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

The Boston Region MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee has given the go-ahead for MPO staff to begin two new work programs: the Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvements in Town Centers study (see the related article on page 1) and the Route 2/Route 16 (Alewife Brook Parkway) Eastbound: Traffic Patterns and MBTA Alewife Station Parking Garage Survey. In addition, the committee approved the report *I-93/Southeast Expressway/Route 3 (Braintree Split): Operational Assessment and Potential Improvements*, which will be the subject of a featured article in the May issue of *TRANSREPORT*.

Other March MPO activities included the third open house held for *JOURNEY TO 2030*, the MPO's long-range transportation plan, with presentations on regional equity and first-round travel modeling results.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

At their March meeting, Advisory Council members were briefed on four topics: a publication in the Federal Register of January 16, 2006, entitled *National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter*; a citizen's perspective on the impacts of transportation on air quality and public health; proposed improvements to the intersection of Routes 126 and 135 and the CSX railroad crossing in Framingham; and a proposed amendment to the MPO's current Transportation Improvement Program.

In April the Council is tentatively scheduled to hear presentations on a comprehensive diesel strategy being developed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the recently approved report on the Braintree Split. See page 4 for details on this meeting and on the April meeting of the Freight Committee.

AACT Chair Sets Agenda for Upcoming Year



Philip J. Beaulieu, the recently elected chairman of the Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT), has clear goals for this

200-member consumer organization, whose mission is to work closely with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to ensure that its system is accessible, in addition to being safe and efficient.

He is looking forward to AACT's participation in improving THE RIDE (the MBTA's paratransit program) and MBTA fixed-route services. AACT will also be involved in the development of accessibility plans and vehicle procurements. In addition, there will be more presentations at meetings on projects under design. Furthermore, Mr. Beaulieu would like to increase AACT membership to get more people participating in accessible transportation issues.

He is pleased with the progress made by the MBTA in providing for the needs of people with disabilities and notes that the MBTA has improved the service of THE RIDE, a fact which is measurable by the reduction in the number of complaints. When he first became involved, the number of complaints about THE RIDE was "staggering." After AACT worked with MBTA paratransit administrators and THE RIDE contractors to set up a complaint monitoring and tracking system, the number of complaints decreased significantly and there is ongoing improvement.

There are still many issues to be addressed, such as late pickups, no-shows, and on-time performance. According to Mr. Beaulieu, "We plan to cover a lot of ground. I feel that we are not working only for people with disabilities. When the MBTA makes an improvement for us, it improves service for all."

TOD Webinar Series Gets Underway

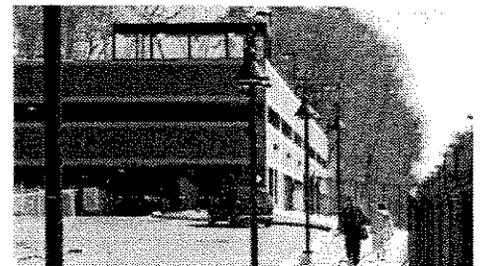
Smart Growth America and Reconnecting America, in partnership with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, have begun a three-part series of webcast seminars about the ins and outs of transit-oriented development (TOD), a planning practice that focuses on the creation of neighborhoods around transit centers.

The first session, held on March 2, covered the basic principles of TOD. The second session, scheduled for April 4, will examine how TOD can be pivotal in place-based economic recovery, particularly in revitalizing neighborhoods for people of all income levels. The third session, scheduled for May 3, will feature examples of TOD being implemented in communities across the nation. All webcasts begin at 2:00 P.M. For more information, visit the Local Initiatives Support Corporation's Web site at www.lisc.org.

MPO Agency Notes

From the MBTA

The opening of a 550-space parking garage at Woodland Station in March marked the completion of the first stage of a transit-oriented development project



Woodland Station parking garage

in Newton. The next stage will be the construction of a 180-unit housing development, called Arborpoint, on the site of the MBTA's previous 450-space parking lot at that station. The new development, which will feature an outdoor swimming pool, an indoor workout facility, and underground parking, is expected to be completed in the summer of 2007.

From Massport

Massport and the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce released the results of *Massport Connecting*, a report that

■ *Massport Connecting cont. on p. 4*

JOURNEY TO 2030

Transportation Plan of the
Boston Region Metropolitan
Planning Organization

IN THIS EDITION

MPO Land Use Policy
Sustainable Development
Coordinated Planning
Share Your Ideas

WHY IS LAND USE IMPORTANT TO METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING?

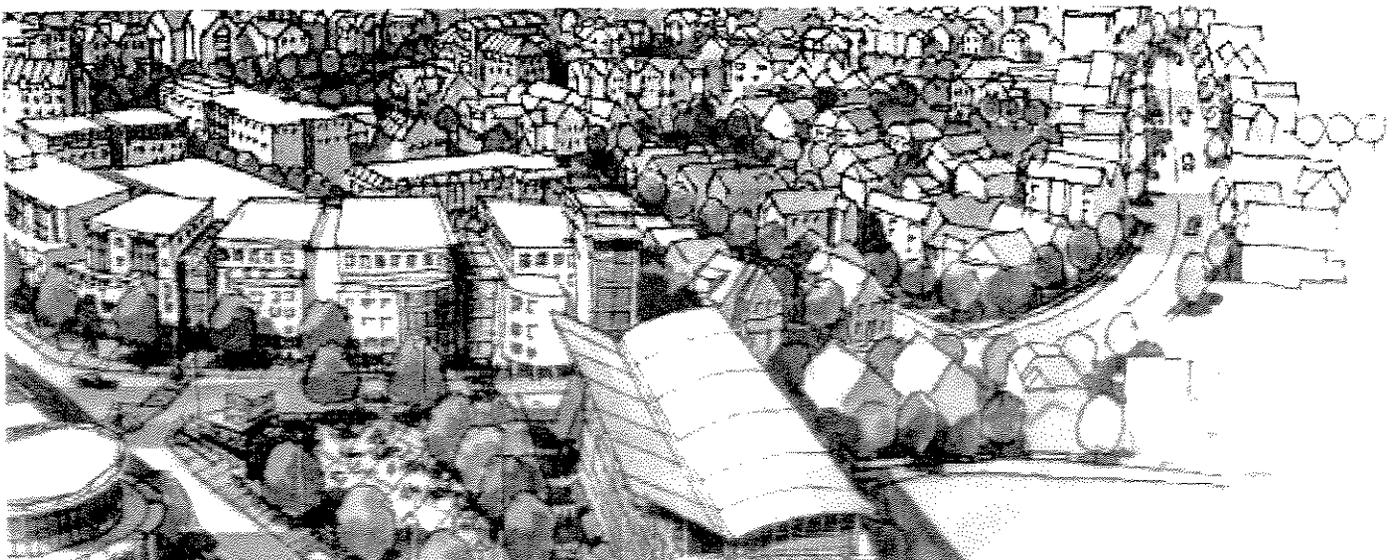
Transportation investment is an influence in the shaping of communities and the determination of land development potential. Reciprocally, land use decisions influence travel patterns, the use of transportation facilities, and decisions about expansion of the transportation network. This JOURNEY TO 2030 insert in *TRANSPORT* focuses on the integration of transportation planning and land use planning.

As the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization develops JOURNEY TO 2030, the region's long-range Transportation Plan, its guideposts will include its policy on land use and economic development and the related objectives it has established. The policy and objectives are as follows:

In order to promote the integration of land use planning, economic development planning, and transportation planning—so as to achieve efficiencies; benefits for mobility and the environment, including sustainable communities and transportation; and stronger economic opportunities—the MPO will:

- A. Link transportation planning with land-use and economic-development plans, particularly in areas identified for economic development by state, regional, or local planning.
- B. Make transportation investments where existing or planned development will encourage public transportation use, walking, and bicycling.
- C. Give priority to projects in areas identified in local and regional plans as being suitable for concentrated development and/or redevelopment, including brownfield redevelopment; support initiatives that increase sustainability.
- D. Consider both existing development and high densities in transportation decision-making and give priority to projects that support them.
- E. Consider the appropriate use and maintenance of transportation rights-of-way to maximize public benefits.
- F. Put priority on transportation investments related to existing centers of economic activity, or to areas with adequate water and sewer infrastructure, or to municipal centers or areas targeted for economic development.
- G. Support, through planning and programming, transportation improvements that provide transportation links for economic activities such as freight movement.

To see all of the MPO policies, visit www.bostonmpo.org and click on JOURNEY TO 2030.



WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Sustainable development, or “smart growth,” is development in and around city and town centers, in other previously developed areas, or near transit stations. A key strategy for attaining sustainable development is the coordination of transportation planning and land use planning. It benefits communities and protects the environment, making use of existing infrastructure and utilities and facilitating pedestrian access to schools, civic facilities, retail or employment centers, or other destinations.

The Boston region has many assets that support sustainable development, such as the tradition of New England town centers, many cultural and historical resources, and an extensive transit system.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Compact and clustered land use
- Connectivity to the transportation network
- Transit-oriented development
- Pedestrian-friendly features
- Mixed-use development
- Mixed housing types
- Redevelopment or reuse of sites
- Preservation of open space

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Sustainable development has many benefits when compared to sprawl development. The cost of infrastructure to support low-density, dispersed development is higher per capita than for compact development. There are also social, economic, and natural resource costs associated with the development of open space as opposed to investment in previously developed areas.

In addition, sustainable development principles can accomplish transportation objectives by helping to shape land use patterns. These objectives include:

Reductions in vehicle miles of travel (VMT), pollutant emissions, and energy consumption

Development that is concentrated and contiguous and that mixes residential and commercial land uses makes it possible for households to meet their daily needs with short automobile trips or by walking, bicycling, or taking transit. This reduces VMT, congestion, and energy consumption, and improves air quality.

Increased transit use and potential

Clustering high-density development around transit facilities increases the number of destinations—commercial, residential, governmental, cultural—that can conveniently be reached by transit, which in turn leads to higher ridership, cost-effectiveness, and potential for investment in enhanced transit service.

Walkable communities

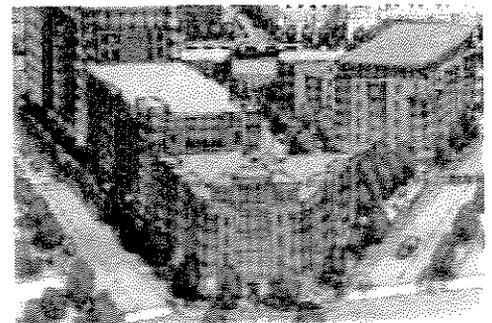
Concentrated, mixed land uses coupled with pedestrian-friendly site design not only facilitate the use of alternatives to automobile travel within a community, but also encourage their use for travel to the community. The knowledge that no car will be needed after arriving at one's destination diminishes the perceived need to use a car to get there.

MASSACHUSETTS “SMART GROWTH” TOOLKIT

The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, under the direction of the Office of Commonwealth Development, developed the Massachusetts Smart Growth Toolkit to inform local officials, developers, and citizens about techniques for developing in ways that protect and restore critical natural resources and encourage new residential and economic growth.

The Toolkit presents information on 12 different planning, zoning, and subdivision techniques. It provides model zoning bylaws, case studies, and slide shows explaining each of the methods in further detail. The techniques include transfer of development rights, transit-oriented development (TOD), low-impact development, and district improvement financing (DIF).

Workshops about the Toolkit are scheduled around the commonwealth. These workshops focus either on the Toolkit as a whole or on one or more specific smart growth techniques. To access the Toolkit or see a list of upcoming workshops, visit www.mass.gov/envir/sgtk.htm.



HOW WILL THE MPO ASSESS THE INTERACTION OF TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS WITH LAND USE?

An important part of the MPO's process for selecting projects for the JOURNEY TO 2030 Transportation Plan is the development of several possible future scenarios that include population and employment projections and transportation projects. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the regional planning agency for metropolitan Boston, recently completed a "baseline" population-and-employment projection based on past trends. MAPC, in consultation with the MPO, will develop a second land-use projection, one in which trends shift, in some measure, in the direction of sustainable development. This second projection will be informed by values emerging from the MetroFuture initiative (see below).

The group of projects chosen to be included in the Transportation Plan will be analyzed, in the context of population and employment projections, for its effect on air quality and on the provision of transportation serving low-income and minority populations.

METROFUTURE: THE BOSTON REGION'S LAND USE PLAN

MAPC's MetroFuture initiative is a comprehensive plan to develop a vision for the future of the Boston region.

This initiative includes the projection of future demographics, and it is assisting the MPO in long-range planning by providing information for use in developing the JOURNEY TO 2030 Transportation Plan. The MetroFuture projections of population and employment cover 164 cities and towns in eastern Massachusetts. They offer a picture of demographic change in metropolitan Boston, including the population, number of households, changing age groups, and the number of jobs by sector.

The "baseline" projection, which extends current trends to 2030, estimates that the region will add 465,000 people and 240,000 jobs by that time. In terms of percentage gain, the fastest-growing communities will be suburbs along I-495, where there is abundant land for development. These towns are projected to grow 20 percent or more over 30 years. In absolute terms, the largest population gains are projected to be in urban centers and in half a dozen suburban communities with large housing developments on the horizon.

MetroFuture is currently hosting briefings throughout the region to share further findings about the region's future. Visit www.metrofuture.org to see the schedule for upcoming briefings and learn more about the initiative.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE I-495 CORRIDOR

Ongoing land-use changes in the I-495 corridor are a good example of the relationship between transportation and land use.

TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT

The six-lane outer circumferential highway of the Boston metropolitan area, I-495, was constructed from 1958 to 1982.

LAND DEVELOPMENT

During the past three decades, the I-495 corridor has been the fastest-growing area in Massachusetts: the population has increased 39 percent. Between 1971 and 1999, 85 square miles of residential land, 5 square miles of commercial land, and 10 square miles of industrial land were developed in communities along I-495 in the MPO region.

TRAFFIC

As land parcels developed, more vehicles were put on the roadways. Since 1970, traffic on I-495 has increased 300 percent at Route 2 in Littleton, 500 percent at Route 9 in Southborough, and 850 percent at Route 1 in Wrentham.

CONTINUED GROWTH

Population growth is expected to continue in the towns along I-495. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council's "baseline" projections show 20 percent growth over the next 30 years. According to the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, if all the development allowable under current zoning in this area were to occur, it would add about 300,000 new residents.

In recognition of these trends, the 495/MetroWest Corridor Partnership, the MetroWest Growth Management Committee, and other groups in the I-495 corridor are encouraging collaborative planning for sustainable development. The MPO is funding an I-495 Circumferential Transit Study and providing support to the Executive Office of Transportation's I-495 Corridor Transportation Study. Coordinated transportation planning and land use planning will be important in addressing future mobility in the I-495 corridor.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What ideas do you have for integrating transportation planning and land use planning in your community?

KEEP UP-TO-DATE

- YES! I would like to receive additional information about events, documents, and meetings related to the Transportation Plan. *(Please provide contact information below.)*
- YES! I am interested in inviting the MPO to learn about my organization's transportation needs and views. *(Please provide contact information below.)*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

(Please provide your e-mail address if you would prefer to receive information electronically.)

E-mail address _____

INVITE US OVER!

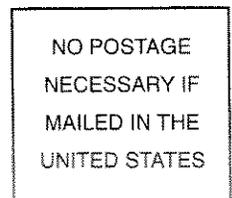
The MPO wants your involvement in shaping the region's new Transportation Plan. To that end, we are asking you to add JOURNEY TO 2030 to your meeting agenda. We want to attend your meetings to learn about your transportation views.

Though the Plan will not be consolidated into a draft document until June, important decisions will be considered throughout the process: engage early-on while JOURNEY TO 2030 takes shape!

DETACH AND FOLD IN THIRDS TO RETURN COMMENTS



POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE



CENTRAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING STAFF

10 PARK PZ STE 2150

BOSTON MA 02116-9776



■ Mapping Mobility *cont. from p. 1*

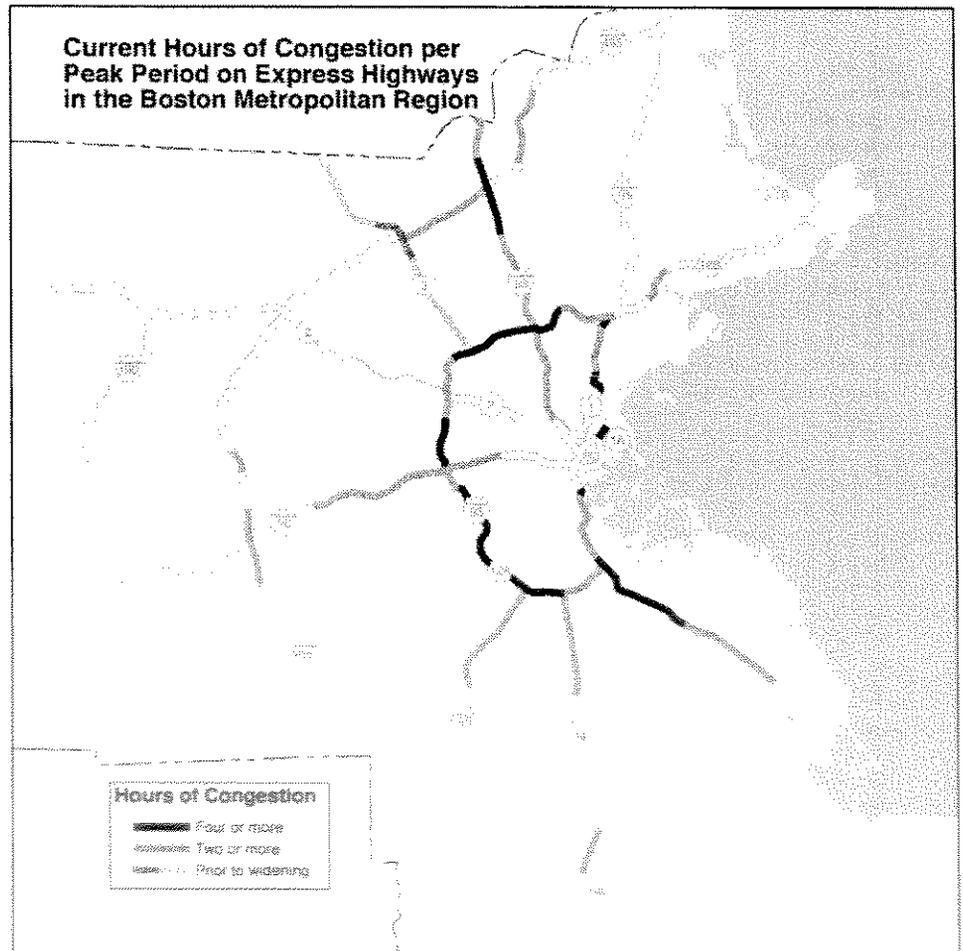
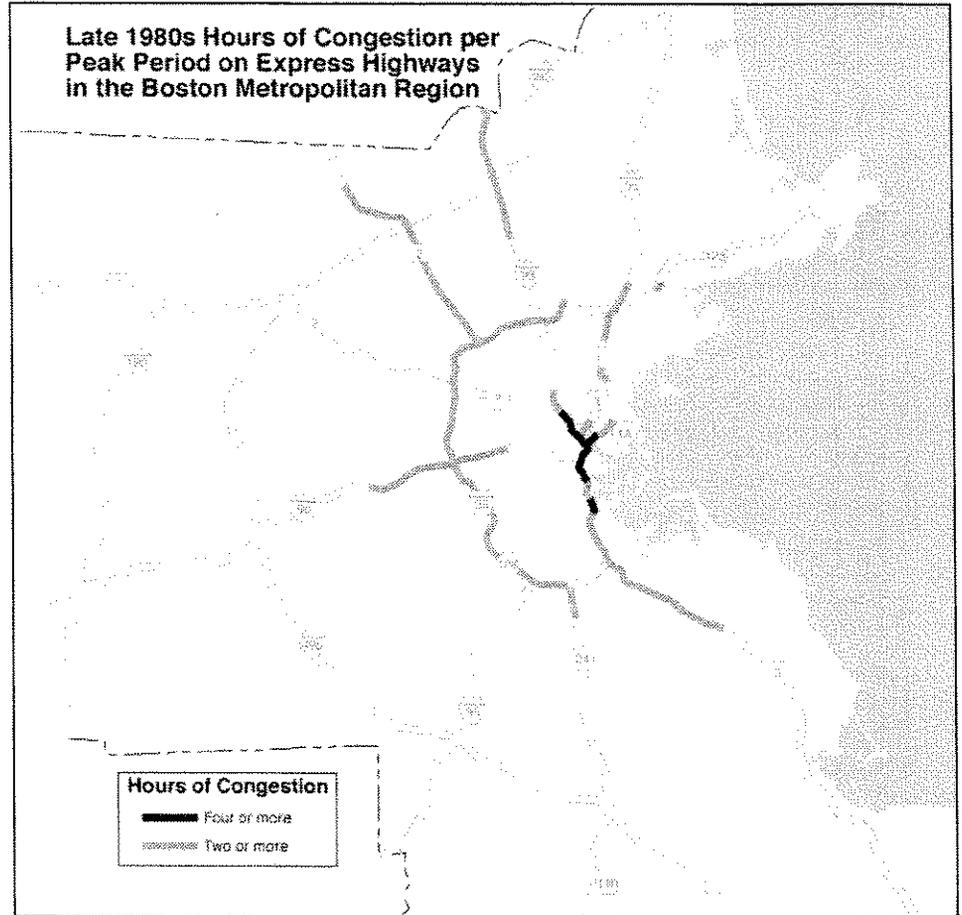
show where congestion occurred in the late 1980s and where it occurs today.

During the late 1980s, 96 miles of express highway were operating at or near capacity for two or more hours per peak period each day; 9 of those miles experienced four or more hours of congestion during one or both peaks. Today, 157 miles of express highway have two or more hours of such congestion per peak period, of which 57 are congested for four or more hours during one or both peaks. Since the late 1980s, congested highways have experienced about one additional hour at or near capacity during both the A.M. and P.M. peaks.

Before construction began on the Central Artery/Tunnel (CA/T) project, almost all of the express highway miles with four or more hours of congestion during each peak were in the CA/T project area. Some Central Artery locations had 14 continuous hours of congestion, from 6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. Today, the CA/T express highways experience no significant congestion. This is because the Central Artery and the harbor tunnels are no longer the bottlenecks in the system—they can now accommodate all of the traffic that the radial highways can deliver.

From the analysis, several conclusions may be reached:

- Congestion is a fact of life on many express highways in the region and the number of hours that a highway operates with volumes at or near capacity during peak periods is increasing over time.
- Undertakings such as the CA/T project can contribute significantly to reducing the number of congested hours on our regional express highways.
- Planning for future express highway improvements can benefit from viewing roadways in terms of numbers of congested hours.



MEETING CALENDAR

The public is welcome to attend the following transportation-related meetings. A photo ID is usually required for access to meeting sites.

AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON

Thursday, April 6
**Boston Region MPO
 Transportation Planning and
 Programming Committee** 10:00 A.M.
 MPO Conference Room
 Suite 2150

Wednesday, April 12
**Regional Transportation
 Advisory Council Freight
 Committee** 1:00 P.M.
 MPO Conference Room
 Suite 2150

**Regional Transportation
 Advisory Council** 2:00 P.M.*
 Conference Room 4
 (*Please note the earlier-than-usual
 starting time)

Monday, April 24
**MBTA Rider Oversight
 Committee** 4:15 P.M.
 Conference Rooms 1, 2, and 3

Wednesday, April 26
**Access Advisory Committee
 to the MBTA, Spring Party** 11:00 A.M.
 To RSVP, contact Janie Guion by
 April 12 at (617) 973-7507 (voice),
 (617) 973-7089 (TTY), or aact@ctps.org.

**Access Advisory Committee
 to the MBTA** 1:00 P.M.
 Conference Room 2

Thursday, April 27
**Transportation Improvement
 Program, Municipal Input Day** 9:00 A.M.
 Conference Room 4

Thursday, May 5
**Boston Region MPO
 Transportation Planning and
 Programming Committee** 10:00 A.M.
 Immediately followed by:
**Transportation Improvement
 Program Agency Input Day**
 MPO Conference Room
 Suite 2150

Call (617) 222-5179 for date
MBTA Board of Directors 1:00 P.M.
 Conference Rooms 2 and 3

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

Monday, April 3
**MBTA Public Meeting:
 Readville Yard Site Clean Up Plan** 7:00 P.M.
 St. Anne's School
 20 Como Road, Readville

Thursday, April 6
**MassHighway Public Hearing:
 Proposed Fountain Street Bridge
 Replacement in Framingham** 7:00 P.M.
 Framingham Town Hall
 Albondi Room
 150 Concord Street, Framingham

Tuesday, April 11
**Transportation Summit:
 Gridlock or Green Light** 8:00 A.M.
 Fidelity Investments
 400 Puritan Way, Marlborough

**National Institute of Standards
 Forum: Rethinking Transportation** 5:30 P.M.
 Boston Public Library
 Mezzanine Conference Room
 700 Boylston Street, Boston

Tuesday, April 25
**JOURNEY to 2030 Regional
 Equity Forum** 6:00 P.M.
 Boston City Hall, Room 801
 One City Hall Plaza, Boston

Tuesday, May 2
**Charles River Basin Citizens
 Advisory Committee** 4:00 P.M.
 (For confirmation and location information,
 contact Charlotte Fleetwood at (617)
 951-6440 or cxfleetw@bigdig.com.)

Meeting dates and times are subject to change; please
 call (617) 973-7119 for confirmation. Additional
 transportation meetings open to the public are listed
 on the Boston Region MPO Web site, www.bostonmpo.org.

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

Planning Director Town of Acton
 472 Main St.
 Acton MA 01720

■ Massport Connecting *cont. from p. 2*
 assesses the impact of Massport's trans-
 portation facilities and economic devel-
 opments on the regional economy and
 industries.

A key finding of the report is that Mass-
 port employed 18,462 people as of 2004
 (the latest year for which data is avail-
 able) at its airport, waterfront, and ship-
 ping facilities, which is slightly more
 than the total number of people who
 worked for the four largest employers in
 the greater Boston region, or at all 20 of
 the area's top biotechnology firms. To
 view the report and other key findings,
 go to [www.massport.com/about/pdf/
 connec.pdf](http://www.massport.com/about/pdf/connec.pdf).

TRANSREPORT

PRODUCED BY THE CENTRAL TRANSPORTATION
 PLANNING STAFF

Editors
 Mary Ellen Sullivan
 Jonathan Church
 Sean Daly

Contributors
 Janie Guion
 Thomas Lisco
 William Moore

Photography
 Kenneth A. Dumas

Graphics
 Kenneth A. Dumas
 Kate Parker-O'Toole

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 METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

John Cogliano, MPO Chairman
Kenneth S. Miller, P.E., Chair, and Barbara G. Lucas,
Vice Chair, Transportation Planning and
Programming Committee

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 Transportation Planning Staff Certification
 Activities Group at (617) 973-7119 (voice),
 (617) 973-7089 (TTY), (617) 973-8855 (fax), or
publicinformation@bostonmpo.org (e-mail).

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