

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**SOUTH WEYMOUTH
NAVAL AIR STATION
CERTIFICATE**

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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.boston.mpo.org or call (617) 973-7119.

**AT THE STATE
TRANSPORTATION
BUILDING, 10 PARK
PLAZA, BOSTON****September 18 (Tuesday)**

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

September 20 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. Conference Room 4. 10:00 AM

September 26 (Wednesday)

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

October 4 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. Conference Room 4. 10:00 AM

October 10 (Wednesday)

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Freight Committee. Boston Region MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 1:00 PM

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

October 18 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming
Calendar continued on p. 2

MPO Adopts Program of Transportation Projects

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) approved the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2008–2011 Transportation Improvement Program and Air Quality Conformity Determination (TIP) at their August 16 meeting. The TIP approval is a culmination of a nine-month process of gathering project information, evaluating projects, and

conducting extensive public outreach.

The new TIP document, which contains a compilation of state and federally funded highway projects and federally funded transit projects, lists over \$2.4 billion worth of projects for the Boston region in FFYs 2008 through 2011.

Approximately \$1.1 billion

The MPO is planning Walkable Community Workshops for September and October in Framingham, Hudson, Lexington, and Norwell. See page 2 for details.

will fund transit projects, \$561 million will fund road, highway, and bridge con-

• TIP Adoption *cont. on p. 3*

Transportation Finance in Massachusetts: An Unsustainable System

The second report from the Transportation Finance Commission will soon be released, detailing the painful steps necessary to fix our crumbling transportation infrastructure. The first report was sobering. It identified:

- An estimated shortfall of \$10.5 billion over the next 20 years for highways, bridges, and local roads
- A shortfall estimated to range from \$4.8 billion to \$9 billion over the same period for MBTA operations and capital expenditures
- The expectation that our revenues will decline from current levels, in dollars or real value or both

Trying to fix these gaps through current funding mechanisms isn't working. For example, the past three MBTA fare increases do not begin to close the gap in T funding, and the planned increases in tolls for the Metropolitan Highway System will not generate enough money to pay the debt service and also operate and maintain the critical roadways included in this system. Revenue shortfalls for transportation infrastructure exist across all modes and impact every community in the region.

The public can see high-profile examples of the maintenance crisis at the Long-fellow Bridge and Storrow

Drive and is already experiencing its impacts in the form of potholes and deteriorating pavement on local roads. In the meantime, other states have learned to their sorrow the cost of deferred maintenance.

The members of the MPO are painfully aware that adequate funding to maintain and operate our existing transportation system is an essential but missing component of the commonwealth's well-being. At the current rate of implementation, many projects currently in design may not be completed for 20 years or more. These delays result in project costs' increasing through

• Financing Crisis *cont. on p. 4*

The members of the Boston Region MPO: Executive Office of Transportation, Cities of Boston, Newton, Salem, and Somerville, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board, Massachusetts Highway Department, Massachusetts Port Authority, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, Towns of Bedford, Framingham, and Hopkinton

Environmental Certificate Granted for South Weymouth Naval Air Station Redevelopment

The project for the redevelopment of the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station cleared a regulatory hurdle this summer when the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) determined that

areas, and school and community facilities.

The project, which has been designed to minimize environmental impacts, has been accepted as a pilot project under the Leadership in

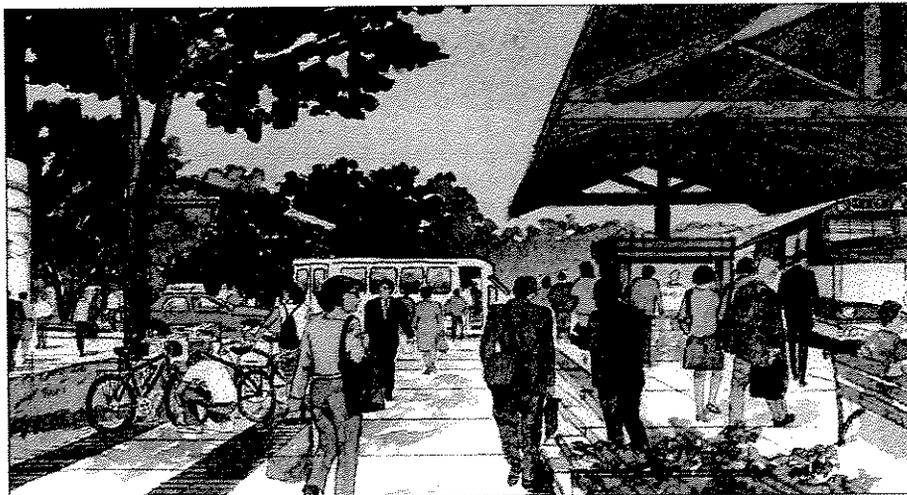
pedestrian paths have also been incorporated into the design to make nonvehicular travel more appealing to residents.

Highway improvements are also being planned to improve roadway access to SouthField. Route 18 will be widened between Route 3 in Weymouth and Route 139 in Abington, and a new roadway, the East-West Parkway, will be constructed to connect Route 3 to Route 18, the north-south highways on either side of the development.

Originally planned as a four-lane roadway, the Parkway has been redesigned as a two-lane road to reduce impacts to nearby wetlands.

MassHighway will be requesting that the developer investigate incorporating multiple roundabouts into the roadway design to decrease travel speeds and improve safety on the roadway.

The realignment of the Parkway may require the relocation of the MBTA commuter rail station and parking lot. Two of the conditions on the certificate issued by EOEEA on the project's final environmental impact report are that SSTTDC must perform additional analysis of poten-



Artist's rendering of the Naval Air Station development project's Transit Village

the project complies with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and outlined the next steps that the developer must take to advance the project.

The South Shore Tri-Town Development Corporation (SSTTDC) and its consultant, LNR South Shore LLC, are planning to convert the closed military base—located in the towns of Abington, Rockland, and Weymouth—into a transit-oriented community founded on the principles of smart growth.

SouthField, as the proposed 1,450-acre development will be called, will consist of 2,855 residential units, a Village Center, two million square feet of commercial and industrial space, an 18-hole golf course, recreation

Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Neighborhood Development program. The LEED program certifies projects that meet high standards for smart growth and sustainable design.

Providing access to public transit is a key element of the project design. Plans include the expansion of the South Weymouth commuter rail station, on the Plymouth Line, into a new multimodal transportation center, providing a 20-minute trip to Boston's South Station. SSTTDC has agreed to run a shuttle service to the transportation center and incorporate other measures to reduce single-occupant-vehicle traffic coming from the development. Bicycle and

Calendar cont. from p. 1

Committee. Conference Room 4. 10:00 AM

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

September 17 (Monday)

Boston Region MPO Walkable Community Workshop. Hudson Town Hall Auditorium, 78 Main Street, Hudson. 4:30 PM*

September 19 (Wednesday)

Urban Ring Citizens Advisory Council. A Better City Conference Room, Second Floor, 75 State Street, Boston. 4:00 PM

September 21 (Friday)

Move Massachusetts. Brown Rudnick Berlack Israels, Eighteenth Floor, One Financial Center, Dewey Square, Boston. 8:10 AM

September 26 (Wednesday)

Boston Region MPO Walkable Community Workshop. Cary Memorial Library, Function Room, 1874 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington. 8:30 AM*

September 27 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Walkable Community Workshop. Framingham Town Hall, Memorial Building, 150 Concord Street, Framingham. 8:30 AM*

Essex County Forum: Historic Preservation and Smart Growth. Gould Barn, One Howlett Street, Topsfield. 7:00 PM

October 10 (Wednesday)

Boston Region MPO Walkable Community Workshop. Norwell Town Hall, Osborne Room, 345 Main Street, Norwell. 4:00 PM*

October 11 (Thursday)

Safe Routes to School Forum. Bentley College, Waltham. 9:00 AM-2:00 PM. RSVP by September 28 to: davda.eisenberg@eot.state.ma.us or by phone at (617) 892-6096.

* For possible schedule changes or further information about the workshops, contact Cathy Buckley Lewis at (617) 973-7118 or walkable@bostonmpo.org.

tial solutions to the problem of limited station parking, and how the transit system will manage the extra parking demand created by the development.

In addition to fulfilling EOEEA requirements, the project must still undergo state, federal, and local permitting.

MPO List of Obligated Projects Available

The Boston Region MPO has posted on its Web site a list of all projects for which federal funds were obligated in federal fiscal year 2006 within the MPO area. Developed in accordance with federal regulations, the Annual List of Obligated Projects increases the amount of information available about transportation projects and strategies. It may be viewed at www.bostonmpo.org. For more information, contact Hayes Morrison, Transportation Improvement Program

Come See Us at the AltWheels Festival!

More than 40,000 attendees are expected to participate in the fifth annual AltWheels festival in Boston, at City Hall Plaza, September 28-29. The festival, which is free of charge, is the largest of its kind on the East Coast. The event will showcase the latest in clean transportation alternatives and energy technologies, such as solar- and hydrogen-powered cars, vehicles that run on vegetable oil and biodiesel, cus-

tom bikes, pedicabs, and more. Demonstrations, interactive exhibits, test rides, workshops, prizes, and children's activities promise to make it a fun-filled and informative event. MPO staff will be on hand for both days of the event to talk with participants about recent MPO initiatives for improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities, encouraging transit use, and improving air quality. We hope to see you there!



• TIP Adoption *cont. from p. 1*
struction, and the remainder is allocated to the Central Artery/Tunnel project. Approximately \$62 million will be funded through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) for projects that will help the region reduce pollution from vehicle emissions.
In addition to the approval of the new TIP, the MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee also voted to release an amendment to the FFYs 2007-2010 TIP. This amendment removes several projects, adds three bridge projects, and redistributes National Highway System
• TIP Adoption *cont. on p. 4*

Boston Region MPO Activities

BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

Upon the recommendation of the MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee, the Boston Region MPO approved an amendment to the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2007-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) on August 2 and adopted the FFYs 2008-2011 TIP on August 16. In addition to developing recommendations to the MPO, the Committee approved: the distribution of an additional amendment to the FFYs 2007-2010 TIP for public review (see page 1 for details); a work program for the Route 60, West Malden and East Medford; Pedestrian Mobility and Traffic Improvements Study; and the Route 2/Route 16 (Alewife Brook Parkway) Eastbound; Traffic Patterns and MBTA Alewife Station Parking Garage Survey.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

At the Advisory Council's August meeting, members heard briefings by staff on the status of the draft FFYs 2008-2011 TIP, a proposed amendment to the FFY 2007 element of the current TIP, and the draft FFY 2008 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Discussion included the Regional Household Travel Survey, an endeavor that the MPO expects to begin in 2008.

Carl Martland, a senior research associate at MIT, presented a summary of a co-authored white paper: "Rail Freight As a Means of Reducing Roadway Congestion: Feasibility Considerations for Transportation Planning." According to Martland's research, increased rail freight could reduce traffic congestion, thus improving air quality, and reduce highway use and highway maintenance costs. He promoted the use of public-private partnerships to fund capital projects.

Lastly, Advisory Council member Marilyn Wellons presented updates about the Storrow Drive project and discussed the Council's Storrow Drive Tunnel Committee's preference for Option A, rebuilding the tunnel using the existing configuration, and constructing a new footbridge at Clarendon Street.

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

At the August AACT meeting, Office for Transportation Access (OTA) staff introduced three new staff members. The

new personnel were hired to address a need identified in a recent assessment of THE RIDE program's operations and performance.

OTA staff also announced that the MBTA Board of Directors has authorized the purchase of 84 new lift-equipped vans for THE RIDE program. Approximately 70 of the new vans will replace vehicles scheduled to be retired later this year. The remainder will be used to accommodate an anticipated growth in ridership.

• Financing Crisis *cont. from p. 1*
inflation, deferred maintenance, or redesign. Delays in implementation also reduce mobility, increase freight costs, affect delivery of emergency services, and result in low-cost maintenance tasks' becoming high-cost reconstruction projects. Solving the problem will be difficult and expensive, and it will only get worse the longer we wait.

The focus throughout the Finance Commission's first report is on maintenance; none of the identified shortfalls takes into account any of the expansion projects that supporters are clamoring for across the commonwealth.

From a transportation, economic, or even an environmental point of view, it is critical that the system we have operate at maximum efficiency. That means we need to have a strong commitment to maintenance. But, while we are debating the range and scale of funding increases that such a commitment requires, we also need to be aware that expanding and enhancing

MassHighway Launches #321 Hotline

The Massachusetts Highway Department has established a 24-hour hotline for reporting locations of concern on state roads.



People are encouraged to use the #321 system to call in concerns about catch basins, manholes, and other critical issues on highways throughout the commonwealth.

The #321 hotline is staffed at all times through MassHighway's Traffic Operations Center. People can also call in their concerns by dialling (888) 359-9595. If the location identified by the caller does not fall under MassHighway's jurisdiction, the information will be forwarded to the appropriate state or municipal agency. For making calls

the transportation system are critical to growing our economy, increasing mobility, connecting thriving communities, and promoting a wide range of public-policy goals.

from the highway, drivers are advised to pull onto a roadway shoulder, completely out of travel lanes, before making a call.

Concerns about roadway conditions may also be reported through the feedback page on MassHighway's Web site, www.mass.gov/mhd. This page is accessed by clicking on "Contact Us."

• TIP Adoption *cont. from p. 3*
funding in the 2007 annual element. It also reflects the addition of one earmark project that was not previously included in the TIP. The MPO formally adopted the amendment on September 6, following a two-week public comment period. For more information regarding either of these documents, contact Hayes Morrison, TIP Manager, at hayes@ctps.org or (617) 973-7129.

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