



TRANSREPORT

FEBRUARY 2009

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MASS. PLANS FOR ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Page 2

STIFF FINE FOR PARKING IN A BUS STOP

Page 2

MPO ACTIVITIES

Page 3

MPO TRIVIA

Page 4

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) 973-7119. A photo ID is required to access most meeting sites.

AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON

February 5 (Thursday)

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

Boston Region MPO Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Subcommittee. MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 1:30 PM

February 11 (Wednesday)

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

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

February 19 (Thursday)

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

February 23 (Monday)

MBTA Rider Oversight Committee. Conference room to be announced. 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

February 25 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee to the Calendar continued on p. 2

Newton Corner Rotary Report Released

SECOND PHASE OF STUDY EVALUATES POTENTIAL ROTARY FIXES

Last month, the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) released the Newton Corner Rotary Phase II study. The purpose of the study was to explore long-term improvements to relieve congestion in the vicinity of Interchange 17 on the Massachusetts Turnpike, also

known as the Newton Corner Rotary.

This interchange is unusual in that its ramps are fully and directly integrated into the local roadway system and a dense commercial and residential environment. During weekday peak traffic hours, the rotary is congested with regional and local traffic approaching from and exiting in numerous directions, thus performing frequent

• Rotary cont. on p. 3

TIP Criteria Updated

The Boston Region MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee recently voted to update the project evaluation criteria for its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). These updates reflect the MPO's commitment to linking project need and project design effectiveness in MPO-funded



• TIP cont. on p. 4

MPO Reviews Suburban Mobility Concepts

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS TO BE CONSIDERED NEXT

The MPO received 20 letters of interest proposing projects for funding from the MPO's Suburban Mobility Program. The goal of this program is to provide start-up funds for transit services in unserved and underserved areas of the MPO region.

The MPO's subcommittee for the program met in early

• Proposals cont. on p. 2



THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION INVITES YOU TO A TRANSPORTATION OPEN HOUSE

DATE: Tuesday, February 24

MIDDAY SESSION: 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM

EVENING SESSION: 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM*

LOCATION: MPO Conference Room Suite 2150
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza, Boston

PRESENTATION TOPICS

Newton Corner Rotary Study, Phase II
MBTA Transit Signal Priority Study: Arborway Corridor
MPO Mobility Management System
MBTA Program for Mass Transportation
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): "How-To"
MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Database

*Attendees must present a photo ID to enter the State Transportation Building after 5:00 PM.

The members of the Boston Region MPO: Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works, 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

Massachusetts Plans for Economic Stimulus

MPOS GEAR UP TO AWARD FUNDING TO SHOVEL-READY PROJECTS

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is preparing for an expected infusion of hundreds of millions of federal dollars directed toward the construction of transportation projects in the state when an anticipated federal economic stimulus package is approved by Congress and President Obama.

The Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works reached out to other agencies that are part of the state's Mobility Compact to develop a preliminary list of transportation projects that are likely to be eligible for stimulus funding. Lieutenant Governor Tim Murray also invited municipalities to submit lists of priority projects for consideration.

State planners are now evaluating whether the projects proposed in response to the

solicitations are eligible for federal aid and whether they are ready for construction. MPOs have been notified that the state and its federal partners are proceeding under the assumption that stimulus funds for transportation projects (provided under federal Title 23) would be programmed through the MPO programming procedures and that the funds would come with the stipulation that contracts be awarded within an expedited time frame. Funds set aside for projects that fail to meet the deadline would likely be redirected to other states.

To prepare for programming stimulus projects in Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs), MPOs have been advised that they should amend their TIPs by March. The Boston Region MPO will address the TIP amendment during the meetings of February 5 and 26 (see meeting calendar for details).

Stiff Fine for Parking in a Bus Stop

Those who park a motor vehicle in a designated bus stop are now subject to a \$100 fine following the passage of a state bill in January that aims to discourage drivers from impeding curb access by buses, an issue of particular concern to bus passengers with disabilities.

The bill increases the penalty for the violation to a uniform rate across

municipalities. Previously, fines varied from municipality to municipality.



Illegal parking in a bus stop now incurs a \$100 fine

Towns Deliver Transit Ideas

• Proposals cont. from p. 1

January to review the letters and decide which projects comply with program guidelines. Proponents of complying projects will be invited to submit full proposals, which are due in April.

In past years, the MPO has provided funds through its Suburban Mobility program for several successful services, including a demand-responsive service in Marlborough and Southborough, and several shuttle services between transit stations, employment areas, and other destinations in nearby municipalities.

Examples of these shuttle services are the one operated by the Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce connecting the Quincy Adams and Ashmont Red Line stations and employment destinations in Canton, and services operated by the Greater Attleboro-Taunton Regional Transit Authority in Franklin and in the Marshfield/Duxbury area.

This month the MPO issued a call for letters of interest proposing projects that could be funded through its Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program, another MPO program that addresses mobility needs in the region. TDM projects contribute to air quality improvements.

Both the Suburban Mobility and TDM programs are paid for by the MPO using funds designated for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality activities.

Calendar cont. from p. 1

MBTA. Conference Room 4. 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM

February 26 (Thursday)

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

March 5 (Thursday)

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

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

February 3 (Tuesday)

Green Line Extension Project Citizens Advisory Committee. *St. Clement's High School, New Parish Hall, 579 Boston Avenue, Medford. 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM*

February 11 (Wednesday)

MBTA Senior and Transportation Access Pass Registration. *Quincy City Hall, 1305 Hancock Street, Second Floor, Quincy. 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM*

February 19 (Thursday)

MBTA Meeting: Fairmount Corridor Improvement Projects. *Blue Hill Avenue Commuter Rail Station, Mildred Avenue Community Center, 5 Mildred Avenue, Mattapan. 6:30 PM*

February 24 (Tuesday)

Boston Region MPO TIP "How-To" Seminar. *Natick Town Hall, Selectmen's Room, 13 East Central Street, Natick. 9:00 AM*

February 25 (Wednesday)

Boston Region MPO TIP "How-To" Seminar. *Salem City Hall Annex, 4th Floor Conference Room, 120 Washington Street, Salem. 9:00 AM*

MBTA Senior and Transportation Access Pass Registration. *Watertown Council on Aging, 31 Marshall Street, Watertown. 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM*

March 3 (Tuesday)

Boston Region MPO TIP "How-To" Seminar. *Canton Town Hall, Selectmen's Room, 801 Washington Street, Canton. 9:00 AM*

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 us at publicinformation@bostonmpo.org.

MPO Evaluates Alternatives for Congestion Relief at Newton Corner Rotary

● Rotary *cont. from p. 1*

lane-changing maneuvers within short distances around the interchange.

Building on data and findings from the first phase of the study, which was completed in 2006, MPO staff applied the MPO's regional transportation model to test five alternative plans for improving traffic conditions at Newton Corner. Staff worked with a study advisory committee to develop the improvement concepts.

The selected alternatives were all tested for traffic conditions projected for the year 2030. Analysis showed

that two of the five alternatives appear to be the most effective in relieving congestion. Further study is required to clarify operational, right-of-way, and environmental issues.

The study report may be found on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org (click on the Completed Studies tab on the home page). For more information about the study, please contact Chen-

Yuan Wang at cYW@ctps.org or (617) 973-8009.



TRANSTRIVIA

Test your trivia knowledge against the MPO's Mobility Management System! The MPO uses the MMS to monitor the performance and utilization of transportation facilities in the region.

1. Which rapid transit lines in the Boston region have the most bicycle parking spaces?
2. Which rapid transit lines have the highest rates of bicycle parking utilization?
3. Which five rapid transit stations have the highest rates of bicycle parking utilization?
4. Which five commuter rail lines have the most bicycle parking spaces?
5. Which five commuter rail lines have the highest rates of bicycle parking utilization?
6. Which six commuter rail stations have the highest rates of bicycle parking utilization?

See answers below.

Municipalities Invited to TIP Seminars

• TIP *cont. from p. 1*

transportation projects, and the MPO's goal of making the project evaluation process more data-oriented and municipalities' role in it easier to perform.

These criteria updates will be used in the development of the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2010–2013 TIP. Over the next two months, municipalities will be asked to submit the projects for which they intend to seek state or federal funding. Each municipality's chief elected official and TIP Contact will receive a list of the active projects in their municipality as a reference.

Municipalities are also asked to RSVP regarding the MPO's Municipal TIP Input Days, currently scheduled for May 20 and 21. This event is an opportunity for municipalities to talk directly with

the MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee about priority projects and to provide additional information for the Committee as it develops the draft FFYs 2010–2013 TIP.

The MPO will be conducting its TIP "How-To" Seminars on February 24, 25, and March 5 to provide an opportunity for TIP Contacts, municipal officials, elected officials, and members of the public to hear about the MPO's TIP process, ask questions, and receive technical assistance from MPO staff. (See calendar on page 2 for meeting times and locations.)

If you have any questions about TIP development, please contact Hayes Morrison, TIP Manager, at (617) 973-7129 or hayesm@bostonmpo.org.

TRANSREPORT

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Trivia Answers: 1) Red (1,037), Orange (315), Green (310), Blue (132); 2) Red (45%), Green and Blue (25%), Orange (24%); 3) Wollaston (100%), Harvard (85%), Davis (73%), Kendall/MIT (64%), North Station (61%); 4) Providence/Stoughton (222), Newburyport/Rockport (212), Worcester (189), Fitchburg (180), Lowell (124); 5) Haverhill (24%), Lowell and Fitchburg (22%), Framingham/Worcester (19%), Providence/Stoughton (16%); 6) Lowell (54%), Framingham and West Natick (50%), South Acton (41%), Sharon and Salem (40%).

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