

TRANS REPORT

TRANSPORTATION NEWS FROM THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

TIP and UPWP Development Underway; MPO Open House Scheduled

Development of the fiscal years 2006–2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) began in February with two “Project Information Form How-To” seminars that were held in Weymouth and Woburn. Representatives from 33 communities attended the seminars, in which MPO staff gave a presentation on the MPO, the TIP development process, how the project information forms fit into the process, and changes to the forms from last year. These forms, which were due on March 1, are the MPO’s primary source of information and are used to evaluate projects for funding.

TIP development will continue in March and April with the solicitation of priorities from project proponents at Agency Input Day on March 31 and at Municipal Input Day on April 7. Also in March, MPO staff will attend the meetings of the eight Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) subregional groups, who will establish their project priorities within their subregions.

A major amendment to the current, FYs 2005–2009 TIP, based on the most up-to-date information and priorities, will be developed in April. This amendment, which will also form the basis for the first two years of the 2006–2010 TIP, will be released for public comment in early May and voted on in June. The remaining three years of the draft TIP will also be developed and released for public review in late June. The final FYs 2006–2010 TIP will be endorsed by the MPO in early August.



Development of the FY 2006 Unified Planning Work Program also began in February. The MPO’s UPWP Subcommittee determined funding availability and developed a list of potential studies that is based on unfunded studies from the FY 2005 UPWP development process and on recommendations from the MPO’s recent Congestion Management System report (see related article on page 3).

In addition to establishing TIP priorities in March, the MAPC subregions will also be reviewing this list of proposed UPWP studies, proposing additional projects, if needed, and establishing their UPWP priorities. UPWP development will continue through April and May with the selection of projects and budget finalization. Like the TIP, the draft UPWP will also be distributed for comment in late June and will be adopted by the MPO in August.

An opportunity for input into the development of the TIP and UPWP drafts from the general public will occur on March 15, when the MPO will host an open house. All are welcome to come to share ideas, learn about the planning process, and hear presentations on specific elements of the planning process. The schedule for these open-house presentations is in the box on this page. Details about the MPO Open House and Input Days are listed in the calendar on page 4. For further information on MAPC subregional meetings, contact Mark Racicot at mracicot@mapc.org.

MPO Open House Presentations:

- 12:00 P.M. – Demonstration of Microsimulation: *Braintree Split: Existing Conditions*
- 12:30 P.M. – Trip Generators: *discussion of data collection and GIS products*
- 1:00 P.M. – Bicycle/Pedestrian Issues: *overview of current activities and discussion of the Bruce Freeman Memorial Path Extension Feasibility Study*
- 2:00 P.M. – Suburban Transit Opportunities: *discussion of the Suburban Mobility Program and studies*
- 3:00 P.M. – Break
- 4:00 P.M. – Modeling 101: *introduction to transportation modeling and its role in transportation planning*
- 4:30 P.M. – New Zone System Modeling: *presentation of the new traffic analysis zone system for the CTPS modeling area*
- 5:30 P.M. – Air Quality 101: *introduction to air quality requirements, analysis, and reporting in the Boston area*
- 6:00 P.M. – Congestion Management System (CMS): *discussion of the MPO’s 2004 CMS report*

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TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee of the Boston Region MPO voted on February 27 to distribute an amendment to the fiscal years 2005–2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for a 35-day public comment period. The proposed amendment would revise funding categories and/or amounts for several bridge and transit projects, and would exchange some funding for several transit projects among the FY 2005, 2006, and 2007 programs while maintaining the transit programs' overall totals.

The public comment period will close March 28. See page 4 for details on a meeting of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization to be held on March 31 to take action on this amendment. Comments may be sent to the Boston Region MPO, c/o Central Transportation Planning Staff, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116-3968, or e-mailed to publicinformation@bostonmpo.org, or faxed (to the attention of Sean Daly) to (617) 973-8855. For a copy of the amendment, contact Sean Daly at (617) 973-7100 (voice) or (617) 973-7089 (TDD), or download it from the Boston Region MPO Web site, www.bostonmpo.org.

Also on February 17, the Committee approved the first phase of an update of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's 1997 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which will be undertaken by MAPC on behalf of the MPO. This \$53,300 work effort is expected to be completed in one year.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

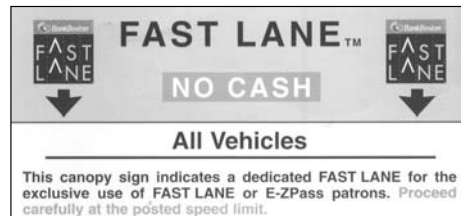
In February Rosemary Scrivens, a transportation planner for the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO), briefed Advisory Council members and guests on the past accomplishments and future goals of the CMMPO. The CMMPO is one of the Boston Region MPO's six neighboring MPOs. It consists of the City of Worcester and the 39 cities and towns that surround it. Their list of current major regional projects includes the Interstate Route 290 Reconstruction Project and the City Square Project; the latter involves transportation improvements around the development of two million square feet of new medical, retail, and residential space in downtown Worcester. Council members and guests also received an update from the Boston Region MPO staff on the development of the draft FY 2006–2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The March Advisory Council meeting will feature a briefing from another one of the Boston Region MPO's neighboring MPOs, the Northern Middlesex MPO, on its past year's activities, news from its area, and plans for the future. See page 4 for details.

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

The nomination period for AACT's annual election of officers has opened. A nominee must be an active member of AACT and either an MBTA user, a human-services advocate, or a senior citizen. Nomination papers and five signatures from active AACT members for each nominee must be received at AACT's office or be postmarked by 5:00 P.M. on May 24. Candidates are also required to submit a 50-word personal profile. For further details on nomination procedures and the duties of officers, contact AACT coordinator Janie Guion at (617) 973-7507 (voice), (617) 973-7089 (TDD), or guion@bostonmpo.org (e-mail). Absentee ballots for the election, which will be held on May 25, will be available from May 2 through May 16.

New Law Allows Mass. Tax Deduction for FAST LANE Users



This year FAST LANE members are eligible to deduct a portion of their 2004 FAST LANE payments from their Massachusetts income tax, thanks to a new law approved last year by the Massachusetts Legislature and signed by the governor.

To make it easier for FAST LANE members to claim this new deduction, the Turnpike Authority has installed a database of FAST LANE payments for 2004 on its Web site, www.masspike.com. With just a few clicks at the site, patrons can quickly get the information they need to claim the deduction.

Taxpayers who are FAST LANE members will need their FAST LANE account number and personal pin number to access the database and to obtain a total of their payments for 2004, which is available online by logging into Your Account.

If FAST LANE members do not know their personal pin number, they should go to the FAST LANE FAQs and click on Question 12 for instructions.

If a patron doesn't know his or her account number, or if additional information on obtaining a pin number is required, they should call FAST LANE at (888) 525-3278 and press "1" to speak to a customer service representative from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. Monday–Friday, and 9 A.M. to 2 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday.

For additional information about the FAST LANE tax deduction, please visit the Massachusetts Department of Revenue Web site or call (800) 392-6089.

Silver Line Expansion Now Eligible for FTA Funding

Secretary of Transportation Daniel A. Gribauskas announced on February 8 that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has recommended the Silver Line Phase III project for eligibility to receive grant monies under FTA's fiscal year 2006 New Starts Program. This very competitive program funds new transit projects or expansions aimed at increasing mobility and easing congestion in urban and suburban areas.

The Silver Line is the MBTA's fifth rapid transit line and the first to use bus rapid transit (BRT) technology. Its first phase, Silver Line Washington Street, which opened in July 2002, runs between Dudley Square in Roxbury and Downtown Crossing. Its ridership doubled in just one year. The second phase of the line, Silver Line Waterfront, opened in December 2004 with a 1.1-mile tunnel from South Station to D Street in South Boston. It currently provides daily service to the U.S. Courthouse, the World Trade Center, and the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center and Sunday service to Logan Airport. Daily service to Logan and Andrew Square Station is scheduled to begin this spring.

Currently in the preliminary engineering phase, Silver Line Phase III will use a 1.3-mile tunnel from the Green Line's Boylston Station to South Station that will connect the Phase I and II routes. In 2003 Silver Line Phase III lost its "recommended" status as a New Starts project when FTA asked for changes to the methods that had been used for estimating ridership and operating costs. The

■ Silver Line Phase III *cont.* on p. 4



New Boston Region MPO Congestion Management System Report Available

The February issue of *TRANSREPORT* included an article reporting on the performance of U.S. urban transportation systems. This month the Boston Region MPO has announced the release of its fourth report documenting transportation system performance specific to the Boston area. The 2004 Congestion Management System (CMS) report, entitled "Mobility in the Boston Region: Existing Conditions and Next Steps," is a critical tool used by Boston Region MPO decision-makers in the planning and programming of transportation projects. It documents the region's mobility concerns and contains the most recent performance information on the regional transportation system, including arterial roadways, limited-access highways, public transit systems, and park-and-ride lots. The report also presents information on roadway crashes, high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lane travel-time savings, activities related to transportation demand management (TDM), bicycle and pedestrian accessibility to transit stations, and an arterial roadway assessment using a bicycle suitability index.

The CMS report documents performance measures such as the following:

ROADWAYS

- Between the periods 1994–1995 and 1999–2000, there was an 8 percent increase in the number of highway miles with average peak-period speeds of less than 50 mph in the morning. However, evening peak-period speeds did not change significantly between the two monitoring periods.
- Monitors driving in the I-93/Southeast Expressway HOV lane saved nearly six minutes on the morning-peak-period,

downtown-bound approach and nearly five minutes on the evening-peak-period, southbound approach, compared to the general-purpose lanes, based on 2003 monitoring results. On the I-93 North HOV lane heading

southbound, the morning-peak-period travel-time savings were approximately six and a half minutes.

TRANSIT

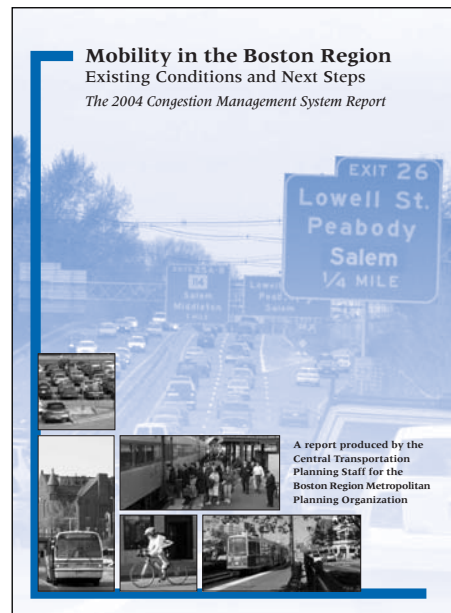
Congestion on roadways affects the mobility of bus transit users. Based on data as recent as 2002, 36 percent of the morning peak-period MBTA buses and 39 percent of the evening peak-period buses

arrive at their destination more than five minutes late.

BICYCLE

Operational and physical conditions of the roadways impact bicycle travel. Due to the high traffic volumes and the limited right-of-way of the region's major arterials, only 14 percent of the arterial roadway miles monitored under the CMS program were deemed suitable for use by bicyclists during peak travel periods.

The Boston Region MPO will use this latest CMS report as a tool in selecting projects for the next Unified Planning Work Program and Transportation Improvement Program. For further information about the CMS program and its report, please contact Lourenço Dantas, CMS Project Manager, by phone (617-973-7125) or email (cms@ctps.org). Visit www.bostonmpo.org to download a copy of the report as a PDF file, or to request the report on CD.



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, March 3 10:00 A.M.
**Boston Region MPO
 Transportation Planning and
 Programming Committee Meeting**

Immediately followed by

**Boston Region MPO
 Transportation Planning and
 Programming Committee Work Session**
 CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

**Boston Region MPO 2:30 P.M.
 Suburban Mobility Program
 Preproposal Meeting**
 CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

Wednesday, March 9 3:00 P.M.
**Regional Transportation
 Advisory Council**
 Conference Room 4

Tuesday, March 15 12:00 P.M.
**Boston Region MPO
 Open House**
 CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

Wednesday, March 23 1:00 P.M.
**Access Advisory Committee
 to the MBTA (AACT)**
 Conference Room 2

Thursday, March 24 10:00 A.M.
**Boston Region MPO
 Transportation Planning and
 Programming Committee Meeting**
 CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

Thursday, March 31 10:00 A.M.
**Boston Region MPO
 Transportation Planning and
 Programming Committee and
 MPO Meetings: Approval of an
 Amendment to the FYs 2005–2009
 Transportation Improvement Program**
 CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

**Boston Region MPO 10:30 A.M.
 Transportation Improvement
 Program Agency Input Day**
 CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

Thursday, April 7 10:00 A.M.
**Boston Region MPO
 Transportation Improvement
 Program Municipal Input Day**
 Conference Room 4

**Boston Region MPO 10:00 A.M.
 Transportation Planning and
 Programming Committee Work Session**
 CTPS 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 LOCATION

Friday, March 11 8:10 A.M.
**MOVE MASSACHUSETTS:
 Urban Ring Update**
 Brown Rudnick Berlack Israels
 One Financial Center, 18th Floor,
 Dewey Square, Boston
 (Contact Dan Wilson at danwilson1@
 verizon.net to be added to the visitor's list.)

Monday, March 21 4:30 P.M.
**MBTA Rider Oversight
 Committee**
 Offices of Conservation Law
 Foundation
 62 Summer Street, Boston
 (Access from Otis Street)

Tuesday, March 22
Big Dig Monthly Construction Update
 Nazzaro Community Center
 30 North Bennet Street, Boston

Thursday, March 31 4:00 P.M.
Walk Boston Annual Meeting
 Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale
 and Door LLP, 26th Floor
 60 State Street, Boston
 (For program details and to RSVP by March 25,
 call (617) 367-9255 or email info@walk
 boston.org.)

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.boston
 mpo.org](http://www.boston

 mpo.org).

Silver Line Expansion

Makes FTA Grade

■ Silver Line Phase III *cont.* from p. 3
 MBTA then developed, using FTA guide-
 lines, entirely new estimation methods.
 Today, FTA gives Silver Line Phase III
 medium-to-high marks for cost-effective-
 ness, environmental benefits, mobility
 improvements, and land use. The MBTA
 plans to finish the project's environmen-
 tal review this summer and then seek
 FTA approval to move into the final
 design phase. For more information on
 the Silver Line, visit [www.allaboutsilver
 line.com](http://www.allaboutsilver

 line.com).

TRANSREPORT

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