



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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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.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

April 1 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. Conference Room 1. 10:00 AM

This meeting will be followed by an MPO meeting.

April 14 (Wednesday)

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Freight Committee. Conference Room 4. 12:30 PM

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

April 15 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. Conference Room 1. 10:00 AM

April 26 (Monday)

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

Calendar continued on p. 2

MPO Releases Report on Bicycle and Pedestrian Study of Six Urban Centers

Six municipalities recently received some state-of-the-practice advice from the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on how to improve bicycle and pedestrian access in their urban centers, with the official release of the report *Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements in Six Urban Centers*.

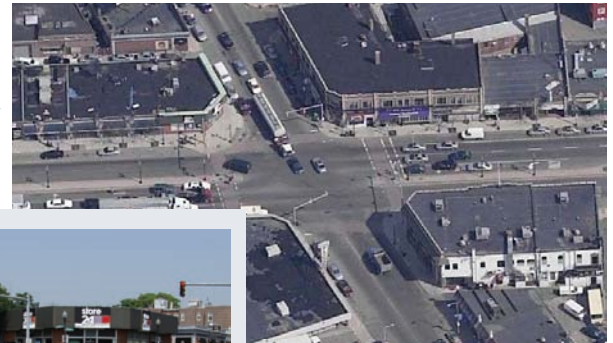
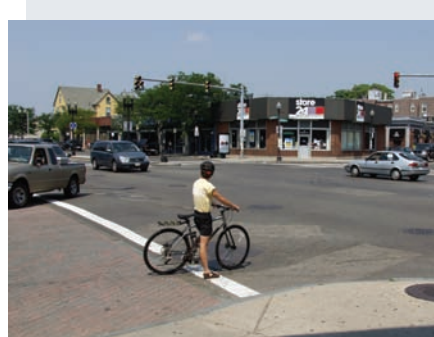
While this study focused on urban centers in Allston, Brookline, Chelsea, Framingham, Franklin, and Weymouth, it was intended to provide ideas and information

that could be applied by local planners around the region to urban and suburban centers in their own communities.

MPO staff worked with municipal officials to

develop recommendations for relatively low-cost, easy-to-

• *Urban Centers cont. on p. 3*



The intersection of Harvard and Brighton avenues in Allston is among the locations in the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements in Six Urban Centers* report. MPO staff made recommendations for improving the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure at this and other locations.

Annual Municipal TIP Input Days in May

Each spring, the Boston Region MPO hosts Municipal Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Input Days, a two-day session during which municipal representatives can address MPO members directly and inform them about proposed transportation projects that need the MPO's support to move forward.

This year's sessions will be held on May 5 and 6 at the State Transportation

Building. (See the calendar for meeting times and locations.) Municipalities within District 4 of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Highway Division will have the floor on the first day, and those within Districts

3 and 5 will present their projects on the second day.

As in past years, the MPO invites project proponents to describe their priority proj-

• *TIP Days cont. on p. 4*

MPO on Twitter

The Boston Region MPO is adding another vehicle to its fleet of ways to communicate – Twitter! You will now be able to keep up to speed on transportation planning and programming activities in the Boston region and be engaged in the MPO's transportation decision-making

• *Twitter cont. on p. 4*

Planning for the new long-range regional transportation plan is beginning. Help the MPO set a vision for 2035. See insert to find out how.

The members of the Boston Region MPO: Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Office of Planning and Programming, cities of Boston, Braintree, Newton, and Somerville, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board, MassDOT Highway Division, Massachusetts Port Authority, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, towns of Bedford, Framingham, and Hopkinton

Bay State Bike Week Begins May 17

Bicyclists, from novices just testing their wheels to avid cyclists, will want to check out the happenings during Bay State Bike Week, May 17 through 21.

This year the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is partnering with the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition (MassBike), a bicycling advocacy group, to publicize Bike Week events across the commonwealth.

MassDOT is taking part in Bike Week as part of the Healthy Transportation Compact, an initiative aimed at providing transportation options that benefit public

health, improve access to the transportation system for bicyclists and pedestrians, help reduce environmental impacts from transportation, and create stronger communities.

Visit the MassBike website, massbike.org/bsbw, or MassDOT's website, www.massdot.state.ma.us, to find out about rides and other event information or, if you are an event organizer, to submit ideas for events.

Also visit MassDOT's website for more information about the Healthy Transportation Compact.



Advisory Council Hosts Bicycle and Pedestrian Forum

On March 10, the Regional Transportation Advisory Council hosted a Bicycle and Pedestrian Forum that brought together several bicycle and pedestrian advocates and planners from the cities of Boston and Cambridge; MassBike; WalkBoston; and staff members of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and the Boston Region MPO.

A point on which all of the panelists agreed is that a greater share of transportation funding should be made available for projects that improve access for bicyclists and pedestrians, and that projects focusing on these two modes of transportation should be given priority on a par with other modes of transportation.

The panelists offered recommendations on how to increase the share of trips made by bicycling and walking in the Boston region. Among their recommendations were the following:

- Municipalities and agencies should consider adopting "complete streets" policies, which would require roadway projects to include accommodations for all users.
- Transportation funding should be more balanced among the modes.
- Allowing bicycles on the Blue Line during peak hours would make it possible to commute by bicycle from several areas north of Boston to downtown Boston.
- Driver training should focus on increasing awareness of vulnerable road users.
- Communities should give priority to removing snow and ice from sidewalks and trails.
- Speed limits should be reduced to 25 miles per hour in areas of heavy pedestrian activity.
- Better data on the use of sidewalks, trails, and streets by nonmotorized users are needed and should be collected by using the latest technology.
- Planners should study how the current bike trails in the region could be connected to form a cohesive network, and how to improve access to transit for bicyclists and pedestrians.

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April 28 (Wednesday)

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

May 5 (Wednesday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee: Municipal Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Input Day. *Conference Room 1. 9:00 AM*

May 6 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee: Municipal Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Input Day. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 9:00 AM*

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

April 7 (Wednesday)

MassDOT Highway Division Public Hearing: Proposed project for Intersection and Signal Improvements on Middle Street at Route 53 and Winter Street in Weymouth. *Weymouth Town Hall, Council Chambers, 75 Middle Street, Weymouth. 7:00 PM*

April 8 (Thursday)

MassDOT Highway Division Public Hearing: Proposed Safe Routes to School project in Arlington. *Dallin School, 185 Florence Avenue, Arlington. 7:00 PM*

MassDOT Public Meeting: Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation on Accelerated Bridge Program Projects. *MassDOT District 4 Office, Conference Room, 519 Appleton Street, Arlington. 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM*

April 13 (Tuesday)

MBTA Senior and Transportation Access Pass CharlieCards. *Quincy Council on Aging, 440 East Squantum Street, Quincy. 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM*

April 27 (Tuesday)

MBTA Senior and Transportation Access Pass CharlieCards. *Wellesley Council on Aging, 219 Washington Street, Wellesley. 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM*

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), (617) 973-7089 (TTY), or e-mail publicinformation@bostonmpo.org.

Planning for 2035 Is Underway

Developing the Vision

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization is beginning the process of developing its next long-range transportation plan for the Boston region. The first step in the planning process is to look ahead and to try to envision how the region and its transportation network should look and function 25 years into the future. The next step is to set out policies that will guide the transportation and community-planning decisions needed to build to that vision.

The MPO has recently begun this visioning. The realities of our economy, environment, and transportation infrastructure present challenges that call for updated approaches for problem solving.

Questions such as . . .

What is sustainable transportation and will it meet our needs?

What are livable communities and can we build them?

What is healthy transportation and how will it help us?

. . . have emerged from the framework of federal, state, and regional guidance and initiatives for transportation planning, as well as from current best practices in urban and land use planning.

On the right side of this page is a summary of the resources that the MPO will be looking to as it develops the new long-range transportation plan. The graphic on the reverse side of this page shows the relationship between the framework, and some of the new ideas and emphasis areas emerging from this framework.

Considering this framework, the new long-range transportation plan will start with a new emphasis on livable communities and move toward a sustainable transportation system for the region.

Your Views Are Needed

Your help is needed to finish the job. Please tell the MPO:

How would you like the region's transportation system to work for you?

Where do you want to go? How should our future system take you there?

What should our communities look like? How should our transportation network relate?

Please submit your ideas to the MPO at its website, www.bostonmpo.org. The MPO will be focusing its initial attention on visioning during the months of April and May; your input within this time frame will be very useful to the MPO in the development of the 2035 plan.

THE FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING

FEDERAL

SAFETEA-LU planning factors, in the current transportation legislation, are topics that MPOs must consider as part of the continuing, cooperative, comprehensive (3C) transportation-planning process.

SAFETEA-LU's focus on multimodal operations calls for the use of objective-driven, performance-based approaches to improving the transportation system.

The Sustainable Communities Partnership promotes policies and programs that address climate change and livability, provide more transit and nonmotorized transportation choices, and target resources to existing communities.

STATE

The Healthy Transportation Compact promotes access to healthy transportation alternatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), increase physical activity, and increase transportation options for persons with disabilities.

The Global Warming Solutions Act seeks to establish statewide GHG emissions limits, implementation plans, and interim targets.

YouMove Massachusetts is a MassDOT program that solicits the public's views on improving the transportation system. It will guide the statewide long-range plan.

Two studies—*Transportation Finance in Massachusetts: An Unsustainable System* and the *MBTA Review* (D'Alessandro report)—spell out the financial needs of the transportation system's most basic maintenance and operations requirements.

The MassDOT Office of Performance Management and Innovation identifies MassDOT's strategic plans for programs and performance measures.

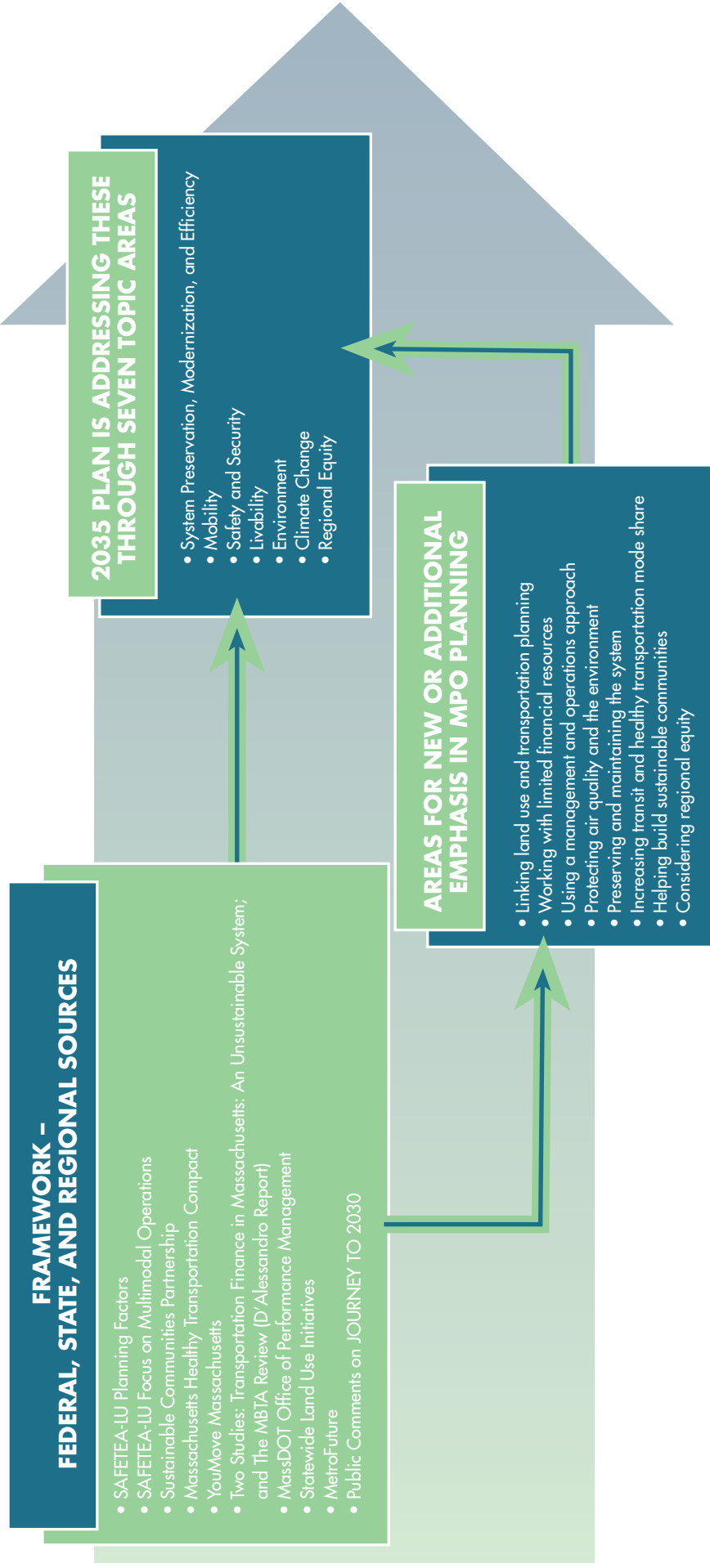
Statewide land use initiatives provide guidance and authority for current planning.

REGIONAL

MetroFuture is a long-range plan for Greater Boston's future, envisioning future qualities of the region and its communities, including healthy communities, a healthy environment, and increased transportation choices, and identifying steps to take to achieve at that vision.

Public comments to the MPO, including those submitted on the current long-range plan, JOURNEY TO 2030, and ongoing MPO activities.

Boston Region MPO's 2035 Transportation Plan PLANNING GUIDANCE AND RESPONSE



MPO Reviews Transit Proposals

Seven transportation providers operating in the Boston Region MPO area have responded to the MPO's solicitation for project proposals for transit services that are eligible to receive funding from the federal Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom programs.

The JARC program provides grants supporting work-related transportation services for welfare recipients who are transitioning to employment. It also supports services for eligible low-income individuals who may need assistance reaching job

locations that are not accessible by existing transit services (or services that do not operate during the times employees must travel to work), and employment support services, such as child care and job training. New Freedom grants are for new transportation services, beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, that assist people with disabilities by reducing the barriers to accessing transportation.

Funding from these two programs, which are sponsored by the Federal Transit

• *Proposals cont. on p. 4*

MPO Recommends Infrastructure Changes for Bicycle and Pedestrian Access

• *Urban Centers cont. from p. 1*
implement changes that could improve the infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians. Proposed solutions include adding or restriping crosswalks, fixing broken pedestrian signals or retiming signals, adding bicycle lanes and racks, building curb extensions or median islands, and other measures to improve safety and connectivity.

The recommendations in the report are both specific to the areas studied and also useful as general concepts. They are consistent with best

practices for measures to address pedestrian and bicycle access problems, including the guidelines in the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division's *Project Development and Design Guide*.

The urban centers study is a companion study to a report the MPO issued in 2007, *Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements in Town Centers*, which focused on six more sparsely populated areas. Both reports can be found on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org, by clicking on MPO/CTPS Reports.

Boston Region MPO Activities

BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee has begun work on the development of the next long-range transportation plan for the MPO region. At a March meeting, Committee members began to discuss their approach to developing a vision for the plan and the guiding policies that the MPO will follow when developing the network of transportation projects that will be in the plan. Also at that meeting, the Committee approved the work program "Low-Cost Improvements to Bottleneck Locations," which will study selected locations where there are traffic chokepoints and identify low-cost solutions for improving traffic flow.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

The Regional Transportation Advisory Council hosted the first of what it hopes will be a series of forums on important transportation issues within the purview of the Boston Region MPO. The first forum brought together a panel of bicycle and pedestrian advocates and planners, including Nicole Freedman of the City of Boston, Cara Seiderman of the City of Cambridge, Shane Jordan of MassBike, Wendy Landman of

WalkBoston, David Loutzenheiser of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, and Cathy Buckley of the Boston Region MPO staff. The panelists each gave a five-minute presentation, followed by a moderated discussion, and ended with questions from the Advisory Council's members and guests. A brief summary of the panelists' ideas and recommendations can be found in the article on page 2.

The next meeting of the Advisory Council and its Freight Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, April 14. (See the calendar for meeting

times and locations.) The Freight Committee will meet at 12:30 PM, 30 minutes earlier than usual.

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

At the February meeting, the MBTA's Department of Systemwide Accessibility (SWA) announced that the Wedgemere commuter rail station in Winchester will be getting ramps and mini-high platforms through a project funded with federal economic stimulus monies. The Department also gave presentations on two MBTA proj-

ects on the Blue Line that involve ADA improvements: the renovation of the Orient Heights Station and the construction of a parking garage at Wonderland Station.

THE RIDE reported a nearly 7 percent spike in ridership for this January compared to January 2009.

As of press time, John Lozada, Director of Civil Rights for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation is scheduled to speak at the March meeting.



Green Tips:

Help make the most of your car's fuel economy by getting regular tune-ups and maintenance, and clearing unnecessary items out of the trunk to reduce weight.

Find MPO Updates on Twitter

- Twitter *cont. from p. 1*

through the MPO's Twitter account at <http://twitter.com/BostonRegionMPO>. It is a convenient way to stay informed of the MPO's work.

You can follow the MPO's work in several other ways, including its website, www.bostonmpo.org; its e-mail listserve, MPO Info; and this newsletter, *TRANSREPORT*. Anyone can sign up to receive updates via MPOinfo or *TRANSREPORT* by contacting the MPO's staff at publicinformation@bostonmpo.org.

Transit Providers Propose New Service Programs

- Proposals *cont. from p. 3*

Administration, are granted following a competitive selection process overseen by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). Solicitations for these programs are facilitated by the five MPOs in the Boston Urbanized Area: the Boston Region MPO, and the Northern Middlesex, Merrimack Valley, Old Colony, and Southeast Regional MPOs.

In this round, there is \$3.2 million in JARC funds and \$2.26 million in New Freedom funds available for

the Boston Urbanized Area. The Boston Region MPO has received a total of \$1.3 million worth of requests for each program.

The Boston Region MPO will identify, at the April 1 meeting of the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee, which projects to recommend to MassDOT. Recommended projects will be forwarded to MassDOT, where they will be evaluated, along with proposals advanced by the other Massachusetts MPOs.

MPO to Meet for Tip Days

- TIP Days *cont. from p. 1*

ects and request the funding that they are seeking through the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which the MPO uses to plan for the allocation of federal funding and some state transportation dollars for the region.

For more information, contact Hayes Morrison, TIP Manager, at hayesm@bostonmpo.org or (617) 973-7129, or visit the TIP homepage on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org/tip.

TRANSREPORT

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