

TRANSREPORT

TRANSPORTATION NEWS FROM THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Bedford and Salem Reelected to the MPO

Municipal officials from the cities and towns in the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area reelected the City of Salem and the Town of Bedford to the MPO on May 24. While the Town of Bedford ran unopposed for the town seat up for election this year, both the City of Salem and the City of Woburn ran for the city seat that was up for election.

The MPO election, administered by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the MBTA Advisory Board, was held in conjunction with MAPC's annual meeting, at which MAPC also held its own elections. Gordon Feltman, the MPO representative from Bedford, was reelected as MAPC vice chairman, and two other MPO members, Ginger Esty of Framingham and Mary Pratt of Hopkinton, were elected to the MAPC Executive Committee.

Environmental Justice Forum Concludes First Phase of JOURNEY TO 2030 Outreach



The MPO wrapped up its spring outreach for JOURNEY TO 2030 by hosting an Environmental Justice Forum on April 27 at Boston City Hall. The purpose of the event was to provide information about the MPO's Regional Equity Program and gather input for the environmental justice analysis that will be conducted for JOURNEY TO 2030. This analysis will provide information on whether the recommended changes in the transportation system are equitable for all populations in the MPO region.

The primary aim of the MPO's environmental justice work is the equitable distribution of the benefits and burdens of transportation services and projects in the MPO region. This work relies on the

participation of minority and low-income communities in the MPO's processes.

Members of the public participated in the forum, offering their ideas and suggestions, and representatives from MPO member entities were on hand to answer questions and provide additional information. More coverage of the forum, including a summary of comments received and copies of the presentations that were given, is available on the MPO's Web site, www.bostonmpo.org.

The MPO will hold another Environmental Justice Forum in the fall, where MPO staff will present the results of the JOURNEY TO 2030 environmental justice analysis and hear additional comments from the public. Stay tuned to TRANSREPORT for additional information on JOURNEY TO 2030 outreach events this fall.

Outreach Underway on the MBTA's Proposed Fare Increase and Restructuring

DRAFT IMPACT ANALYSIS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

In May the MBTA hosted 11 public workshops throughout eastern Massachusetts on its proposed fare increase and restructuring, to hear customers' concerns and to foster discussion. The outreach program will continue in June with six public hearings (see the calendar on page 4 for details).

While the MBTA developed the proposed fare increase, the proposed fare restructuring is the product of a two-year evaluation by the MBTA and the Rider Oversight Committee (ROC), a 24-member group composed of customers,

transportation advocacy organizations, and MBTA staff.

In addition to working with the ROC on the restructuring, the MBTA commissioned the Central Transportation Planning Staff of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization to analyze the proposal's expected impacts on revenue, ridership, and air quality. The draft technical report *Impact Analysis of a Potential Fare Increase and Restructuring in 2007*, which will be finalized after hearing public comments, may be downloaded from the MBTA Web site, www.mbta.com.

Extensive information about the proposal, including a booklet that describes the new fare policy, the reasons for it, and details of the proposed fare structure, is also available at www.mbta.com.

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TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

In addition to hosting the Environmental Justice Forum (see related article on page 1), the Boston Region MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee held an Agency Input Day where the MBTA and MassHighway proposed projects for funding in the fiscal years (FYs) 2007–2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Committee continues to develop that document, as well as the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and JOURNEY TO 2030, the long-range transportation plan for the Boston region. The Committee expects to release draft versions of the TIP and UPWP for public comment in late June.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

The Advisory Council received briefings in May from Boston Region MPO staff on peak spreading on express highways in the Boston metropolitan area and from a representative of Urban Transit Enterprises on a proposal to the MBTA for a program called Communities Opportunities Growth Nurturing Enterprises in Transit (COGNET), which is designed to foster economic growth and shared revenues through expanded opportunities for retail locations at MBTA stations.

In June Boston Region MPO staff will discuss the status of the draft FYs 2007–2010 TIP and the draft FY 2007 UPWP and listen to comments and suggestions for their development. See the calendar on page 4 for details.

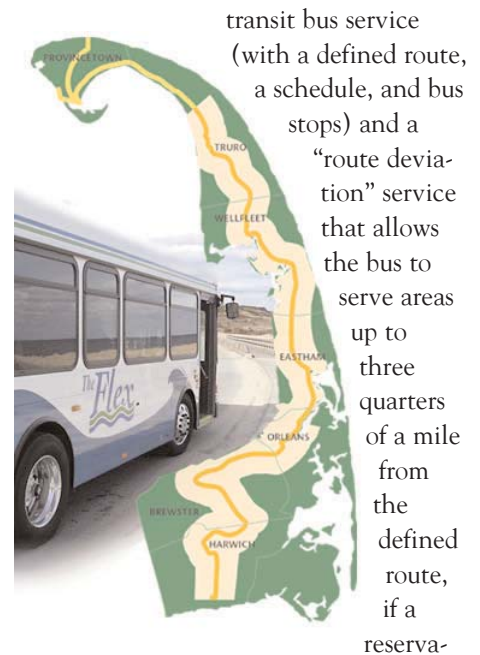
ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

In April the AACT executive board appointed a new member: Ben Haynes will fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Michael Sears, who moved out of the area. The new executive board is in the process of defining its agenda for the coming year.

Included in a report from the Office for Transportation Access was information on the delivery schedule for 94 new Blue Line cars: the first cars are expected in September, with all cars anticipated to be in service in the second quarter of 2007. The arrival of the pilot bus for the purchase of 155 emissions-controlled diesel buses is tentatively scheduled for the end of July, with delivery to begin in October.

Go Car-Free on Cape Cod

With the current cost of gas and congestion levels, it comes as a welcome relief that residents and visitors in lower and outer Cape Cod communities have an additional option for getting about car-free this summer. The Flex bus began operating on June 1 in the towns of Harwich, Brewster, Orleans, Eastham, Wellfleet, and Truro. This hybrid-style service, which runs every half hour, seven days per week, incorporates a traditional



transit bus service (with a defined route, a schedule, and bus stops) and a “route deviation” service that allows the bus to serve areas up to three quarters of a mile from the defined route, if a reservation is made in advance. It connects with the Provincetown–North Truro Shuttle, which provides service to MacMillan Wharf in Provincetown, Provincetown Airport, and Cape Cod National Seashore beaches.

Fares are \$1.00 or less. All buses are accessible to people with disabilities and are equipped with a bicycle rack. For more information on reservations, etc., go to www.theflex.org/.

FlexRoute service is the Cape Cod Regional Transit Administration's latest innovation for getting around car-free in their service area, which extends from Barnstable to Provincetown. For more information about the Breeze, a service that operates buses on six other Cape Cod routes, call the Breeze Info Line, (800) 352-7155, or visit www.thebreeze.info. This Web site also has a link to the 2006–2007 Smart Guide for going car-

■ The Breeze cont. on p. 4

U.S. DOT Unveils Plan to Reduce Congestion



“Congestion is not a fact of life. It is not a scientific mystery, nor is it an uncontrollable force,” says Norman Y.

Mineta, U.S. Transportation Secretary, in an introduction to the recently published *National Strategy to Reduce Congestion on America's Transportation Network*. The U.S. Department of Transportation report, which examines the causes of congestion and its toll on the economy and on people, sets forth a six-point plan for reducing congestion in the short term and for building a foundation for successful longer-term strategies.

The plan calls for the implementation of congestion pricing strategies, expansion of express bus services, more use of telecommuting and flextime, and involvement of the private sector in transportation investments. The report, which may be downloaded from <http://isddc.dot.gov/OLPFiles/OST/012988.pdf>, also includes tactics for promoting operational and technological improvements, targeting freight bottlenecks, and accelerating major aviation-capacity projects.

Alternatives Being Developed for Reconstruction of the Longfellow Bridge

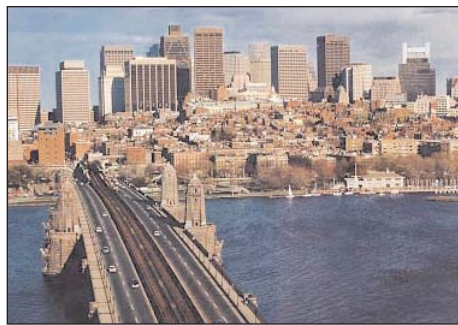
MassHighway and its consultants are currently considering a variety of interesting options for the reconstruction of the Longfellow Bridge. This historic landmark, known locally as the “Salt and Pepper Bridge,” joins Cambridge Street in Boston with Main Street in Cambridge. It carries 90,000 MBTA Red Line passengers, 28,000 vehicles, and a significant number of pedestrians and bicyclists across the Charles River each day.

Completed in 1907 and last rehabilitated in 1959, the bridge is in need of a complete overhaul. A major challenge of the project is to develop a design that will meet the needs of today’s users while preserving the bridge’s architectural and historic elements.

The project team presented options at a public hearing on May 24 and explained that the design of the approach to Boston on the bridge’s south side is a particular challenge because this portion of the bridge is a “pinch point” that narrows as it nears Charles Circle. In order to accommodate the MBTA tracks, current vehicular traffic, and bicycle/pedestrian and accessibility standards, this section of the bridge ideally should be widened. Widening, however, is the option that

would have the most impact from an architectural and historic perspective.

Other options for the Boston approach include reducing the width of the roadway lanes, sidewalk, and bicycle lane, merging the bicycle lane with a traffic lane at the bridge’s exit, and eliminating one of the three vehicular lanes at the Charles Circle traffic light.



Longfellow Bridge

Officials are also considering two construction-staging options for replacing the MBTA’s Red Line track bed and tracks along the center of the bridge. One option is to build temporary tracks on a portion of the roadway and shift the trains over while one track is being worked on, repeating the process again for the other set of tracks. This option would close one roadway lane in each

direction but would result in fewer MBTA shutdowns. Another option is to work on one short section of track at a time. This option would result in replacing the train service with bus service almost every weekend for over two years.

The project will also include restoring some of the bridge’s historic elements that were removed when it was rehabilitated in 1959. Additionally, the bridge will be upgraded to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and include infrastructure for bicyclists. Safety railings separating pedestrians from vehicular traffic will be installed, and connections between the bridge and city streets will be improved.

The preliminary design for the bridge reconstruction is expected to be presented at a public hearing in December 2006, with final design work extending through 2008. Construction could begin as early as 2009 and last for approximately four years. The schedule, however, could change, depending on that of the Storrow Drive Tunnel reconstruction project, which is also currently under design.

To receive mailings about the project, contact Kate Barrett of Regina Villa Associates at (617) 357-5772, ext. 12, or kbarrett@reginavilla.com.

Mattapan Line Station Renovations to Begin; Buses to Replace Trolleys for a Year

On June 24 the MBTA will suspend service on the Mattapan High Speed Line for a year and begin operating an interim bus service along the route. The purpose is to allow the stations and platforms along the line to be renovated. Improvements will include new canopies, signage, lighting, and accommodations that will improve access for people with disabilities.

The highlight of the rehabilitation program will be the \$6.2 million reconstruction of Mattapan Station. In addition to an updated station, the facility will include a new two-story building that will house an MBTA Police substation and offices for bus operations personnel. New platforms, benches, lighting, and signage will be provided, along with a

new communications system and improved accessibility.

The work at Mattapan Station will take approximately 15 months. Earlier this year, a reconstruction project began at Ashmont Station. Implementing the High Speed Line program simultaneously with that project will expedite the work and minimize service disruption.



Rendering of reconstructed Mattapan Station

Win Free Tickets!

MassRIDES In a new initiative from MassRIDES, the Executive Office of Transportation’s ridesharing program, you can win tickets to destinations like the New England Aquarium, Old Sturbridge Village, Brockton Rox Baseball, Seekonk NASCAR Speedway, Wachusett Mountain, and other popular attractions throughout Massachusetts.

To be eligible, have a friend enroll in the program by filling out the ridematching registration form at www.commute.com, making sure they put your name in the space for “Referral.”

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, June 1
**Boston Region MPO
 Transportation Planning and
 Programming Committee** 10:00 A.M.
 Conference Room 4

Wednesday, June 14
**Regional Transportation
 Advisory Council** 3:00 P.M.
 Conference Room 4

Thursday, June 15
**Boston Region MPO
 Transportation Planning and
 Programming Committee** 10:00 A.M.
 Conference Rooms 2 and 3

Monday, June 19
**MBTA Rider Oversight
 Committee** 4:30 P.M.
 Conference Rooms 2 and 3

Wednesday, June 28
**Access Advisory Committee
 to the MBTA** 5:30 P.M.
 Conference Rooms 2 and 3

Thursday, June 29
**Boston Region MPO
 Transportation Planning and
 Programming Committee** 10:00 A.M.
 Conference Rooms 2 and 3

Thursday, July 6
**Boston Region MPO
 Transportation Planning and
 Programming Committee** 10:00 A.M.
 Conference Rooms 2 and 3

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

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

Thursday, June 8
**MBTA Urban Ring
 Citizens Advisory Committee** 4:00 P.M.
 Boston City Hall, Room 801
 One City Hall Plaza, Boston

Tuesday, June 13
**MassHighway Public Hearing:
 Intersection Improvements at
 Marrett Road (Route 2A) and
 Waltham Street in Lexington** 7:00 P.M.
 Jonas Clarke Middle School
 Auditorium
 17 Stedman Road, Lexington
 (Access from Brookside Drive)

Tuesday, June 13
**Boston Region MPO Walkable
 Communities Workshop** 3:00 P.M.
 Bellingham Town Hall
 4 Mechanic Street, Bellingham
 To RSVP, contact Cathy Lewis at (617) 973-
 7118 or e-mail cbucklewis@bostonmpo.org.

MBTA PUBLIC HEARINGS

The MBTA will hold a series of public hearings in June to gather comments on the proposed MBTA fare increase and on the draft technical report Impact Analysis of a Potential Fare Increase and Restructuring in 2007. The locations and dates are as follows:

Tuesday, June 6
 Boston Public Library 4:30–6:30 P.M.
 Copley Square Branch
 700 Boylston Street, Boston
 Framingham Town Hall 6:30–8:30 P.M.
 Memorial Building
 150 Concord Street, Framingham

Wednesday, June 7
 North Shore 6:30–8:30 P.M.
 Community College
 300 Broad Street, Lynn
 (Spanish interpreter available)

Monday, June 12
 Attleboro City Hall 6:30–8:30 P.M.
 Council Chambers
 77 Park Street, Attleboro

Tuesday, June 13
 Arlington Town Hall 6:30–8:30 P.M.
 Town Hall Auditorium
 730 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington

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.

■ The Breeze cont. from p. 2



free on Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and Cape Cod, with a trip planner, links to relevant Web sites by mode, and information about the best times to travel to avoid congestion, if public transportation is not a viable option. Another feature of the Breeze's Web site is a button that allows users to track the real-time locations of its buses.

TRANSREPORT

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TRANSREPORT is available in accessible formats to people with disabilities. Contact the Central 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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