



TRANS REPORT

November/December 2015

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

IN THIS ISSUE

“Capital Conversations”
Page 1

Route 140 Study
Page 2

Boston Region MPO
Activities
Page 3 and 4

Regional Transportation
Advisory Council Update
Page 4, 5, and 6

Access Advisory Committee
to the MBTA Update
Page 6

MEETING CALENDAR

To find up-to-date information about public meetings (and any others that may be scheduled) visit www.bostonmpo.org, or call 857.702.3700 (voice) or 617.570.9193 (TTY).

A photo ID is required to access the State Transportation Building, which is located at 10 Park Plaza Boston, MA.

Schedule of Public Meetings at the State Transportation Building

November 5 (Thursday)

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization:
Conference Rooms 2 and 3,
10:00 AM

Calendar, continued on page 2

“Capital Conversations” Held Across the Commonwealth

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) kicked off its Capital Investment Plan (CIP) development for state fiscal years 2017-21 in October with a series of community meetings across the Commonwealth.

The “Capital Conversations” meetings provided an opportunity for residents to share their thoughts about how the Commonwealth should prioritize transportation network investments over the next five years.

MassDOT will accept ideas and comments from the public through November 5. Post a comment at mass.gov/massdot/capitalconversations or send an email to masscip@state.ma.us.



MassDOT’s first “Capital Conversations” meeting was held at the State Transportation Building in Boston on October 19. Attendees shared their ideas using an online comment form (above) and through discussions with MassDOT staff (below left).

Municipalities Re-Elect Four MPO Members

On October 29, the chief-elected officers of the region’s 101 cities and towns re-elected four municipal members on the Boston Region MPO board whose seats were up for election this year. The towns of Arlington and Norwood, and the cities of Newton and Woburn will continue service on the MPO board for another three-year term.

Seats on the MPO board are held by the municipalities, and the chief-elected municipal officials (or official designees) serve as the representatives on the board. Arlington and Newton fill at-large municipal seats; Norwood and Woburn fill seats from their Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) sub-regions: Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC), and North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC), respectively.



The members of the Boston Region MPO: Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Cities of Beverly, Boston, Everett, Newton, Somerville, and Woburn, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board, Massachusetts Port Authority, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, Towns of Arlington, Bedford, Braintree, Framingham, Lexington, Medway, and Norwood

November 9 (Monday)

MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board: Suite 3830, 1:00 PM

November 18 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA Board of Directors: Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

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

MassDOT Board of Directors: MassDOT Board Room (Suite 3830), 1:00 PM

MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board: Suite 3830, 2:30 PM

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

November 19 (Thursday)

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization: Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10:00 AM

November 23 (Monday)

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

November 30 (Monday)

MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board: Suite 3830, 1:00 PM

December 3 (Thursday)

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization: (Location to be determined), 10:00 AM

Study Could Lead to New Safety Improvements for Franklin's Route 140

"Road Diet" Proposed to Calm Traffic

The Boston Region MPO supported a study, which has led to recommendations for traffic improvement measures on two sections of Route 140 in Franklin. These recommendations will help improve safety, reduce traffic congestion, increase access to roadside businesses, and accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

MPO staff conducted the *Route 140 Arterial Segment Study* as part of an ongoing MPO program, Priority Corridors for Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Needs Assessment. This program prioritizes studies on roadway locations, which were identified in the LRTP as having significant safety and mobility problems.

Working with an Advisory Task Force comprised of representatives of the Town of Franklin and MassDOT Highway District 3, MPO staff studied two sections of Route 140: West Central Street between Franklin Village Shopping Center and Beaver Street; and East Central Street between King and Chestnut Streets, and the entrance to the Municipal Center and the Big Y store. (The section of Route 140 that runs through downtown Franklin was excluded because it is the subject of another study.)

A large number of crashes—some involving pedestrians and a bicyclist—have occurred on these stretches of Route 140 at intersections and entry ways to roadside businesses. One intersection, at West Central Street and



The intersection of West Central Street and Franklin Village Drive in Franklin is among the top crash locations in the Commonwealth with a large number of angle crashes. Lengthening the eastbound left-turn lane or widening it to make a double left-turn lane are options for reducing crashes at this location. (Photo: Google Earth)

Franklin Village Drive, is ranked in the top five percent of the highest crash locations in the state.

The study identified a number of causes for the unsafe conditions. Primary reasons involved congestion caused by left-turning traffic (as there are insufficient left-turn lanes) and uncoordinated traffic signals. High roadway travel speeds and a lack of roadway shoulders have deterred bicyclists from using the roadway.

The task force members and MPO staff developed various options to address the safety and access problems. For the West Central Street section, they offered several options that would change the configuration of the four-lane roadway. Two of

the options would apply a traffic-calming "road diet," changing the configuration to three lanes with left-turn lanes and shoulders to accommodate bicyclists.

For the East Central Street segment, they recommended retiming and coordinating traffic signals to improve traffic flow. Other recommendations addressed pedestrian safety, such as installing accessible pedestrian signals and countdown timers.

The full report is available on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org.

December 9 (Wednesday)

MassDOT Board of Directors:
MassDOT Board Room (Suite
3830), 1:00 PM

MBTA Fiscal and Manage-
ment Control Board: Suite
3830, 2:30 PM

Regional Transportation Ad-
visory Council: Conference
Room 4, 3:00 PM

December 15 (Tuesday)

Public Hearing: Judge
Patrick King's Update on
Compliance with MBTA/
Boston Center for Indepen-
dent Living (BCIL) Accessibil-
ity Settlement: Conference
Rooms 1, 2, and 3; 1:00 PM
to 3:00 PM

December 16 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee
to the MBTA Board of Direc-
tors: Conference Rooms 2
and 3, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

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

December 17 (Thursday)

Boston Region Metropoli-
tan Planning Organization:
Conference Rooms 2 and 3,
10:00 AM

December 21 (Monday)

MBTA Rider Oversight Com-
mittee: Conference Rooms
1, 2, and 3; 5:00 PM to 7:00
PM

Boston Region MPO Activities

Boston Region MPO Approves Amendments to Planning Documents

The Boston Region MPO voted in September to approve three amendments to planning documents.

Amendment Five to the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2015-18 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) included cost updates to several projects and programmed a portion of funds recently made available to the Commonwealth by a federal redistribution.

Of those redistribution funds, \$2.6 million was programmed for intersection and signal improvements at Route 30 (South Avenue) and Wellesley Street in Weston, and \$2.1 million was programmed for the installation of an adaptive traffic control signal system on Cambridge Street, Middlesex Turnpike, and Burlington Mall Road in Burlington.

Amendment Six to the TIP reprogrammed funds for construction in the next fiscal year to accommodate an implementation delay in the Tri-Community Bikeway project in Stoneham, Winchester, and Woburn.

Amendment One to the FFY 2015 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) reprogrammed approximately \$23,000 in planning funds to supplement two studies: one to improve bicycle and pedestrian access to MBTA stations on the Fairmount commuter rail line, and another to identify opportunities and impediments for creating transit-oriented development.

New Projects and Studies Getting Underway

The Boston Region MPO recently gave approval for work to begin on a number of new projects and studies, which will inform the transportation planning process. They are summarized below:

The *MBTA Youth Pass Program and Title VI Equity Analysis* project supports the MBTA as it conducts and evaluates a one-year youth pass pilot program. The MPO staff will analyze the program's impact on fare revenue and MBTA operations. They will conduct a Title VI fare equity analysis to determine if the program would create a disparate impact on minority populations, who are protected under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, or would place a disproportionate burden on low-income populations.

The *MBTA 2016 Title VI Program Monitoring* project will assist the MBTA with reporting requirements under Title VI. As a recipient of federal funds, the MBTA must ensure it provides a comparable level and quality of transportation services to all customers without regard to race, color, or national origin. This work will include an assessment of service indicator data, such as transit vehicle loads, headways, on-time performance, transit amenity distribution, and vehicle assignments.

The *Temporal Changes in Demographics and Title VI Implications* study will review past Title VI and environmental justice equity analyses conducted by the MPO staff. Staff will determine how minority and low-income populations' geographic movement over time affects the analysis of benefits and burdens of transportation projects and/or major transit service changes. They will also evaluate whether developing procedures for projecting demographic changes would improve the accuracy of future equity analyses.

The MPO staff will provide travel modeling services to assist the MBTA in developing its new *Program for Mass Transportation*, a master plan with a 25-year horizon updated every five years.

The *Shared-Use Mobility Services: Study of Their Impacts on the Region's Transportation System* study will research new mobility alternatives including private point-to-point services, such as Uber and Lyft; start-up transit services; and car- and bicycle-sharing

Public Meetings at Other Locations

November 10 (Tuesday)

MassDOT Design Public Hearing: Bridge Rehabilitation along Interstate 90, Newton Weston Public Library, Community Room, 87 School Street Weston, MA; 6:30 PM

November 11 (Wednesday)

MassDOT Design Public Hearing: Carlton Street Footbridge Rehabilitation, Brookline Town Hall, Selectmen's Hearing Room, 6th Floor 333 Washington Street Brookline, MA; 7:00 PM

November 18 (Wednesday)

Massachusetts Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board Mansfield Town Hall 6 Park Row Mansfield, MA; 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

November 19 (Thursday)

MassDOT Public Meeting: Interstate 90 Allston Interchange Improvement Project Task Force Fiorentino Community Center, 123 Antwerp Street Allston, MA; 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM.

Boston Region MPO Activities

Boston Region MPO Activities, continued from page 3

services, such as Zipcar and Hubway, respectively, to understand how they affect traditional transit modes.

The *Prioritization of Dedicated Bus Lanes* study supports MassDOT's effort to identify locations in Greater Boston where there is potential to improve bus operations by installing dedicated bus lanes.

The MPO will continue to support three ongoing programs in FFY 2016.

Through the programs for *Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways* and *Priority Corridors for LRTP Needs Assessment*, staff will identify arterial roadway segments in need of safety, mobility, and access improvements, and will select several locations for study in FFY 2016.

The *Safety and Operations Analyses at Selected Intersections* study will identify regional bottleneck locations and select several for study this year.

The MPO also reserved funding for small staff-generated research projects on metropolitan transportation planning topics that may arise during the coming year.



Bus lane on Essex Street, Boston

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Update

U.S. DOT Staff Discuss Climate Change Resilience

Dr. Bahar Barami, senior economist, and William M. Lyons, principal technical advisor for Transportation Planning, at the U.S. Department of Transportation's Volpe Center discussed climate change resilience at the Advisory Council's meeting in September.

Dr. Barami discussed risk management strategies for climate-related impacts to the transportation system. These strategies involve assessing the threat probability, identifying infrastructure vulnerabilities and exposure levels, and calculating the economic costs of disruption. She explained that climate-related risks have been escalating in recent decades.

Hazard frequency is rising, as measured by the probability of disruptive events caused by higher temperatures, rising sea levels, changing precipitation, and greater storm severity. Asset exposure is increasing because of population growth and coastal development. Asset vulnerability is increasing as a result of aging and inadequately maintained and protected structures, and technological interdependencies.

Advisory Council Update, continued on page 5

Notice of Civil Rights

The MPO complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and other federal and state nondiscrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. The MPO does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, English proficiency, income, religious creed, ancestry, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or military service. Any person who believes herself/himself or any specific class of persons to have been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI, the ADA, or other nondiscrimination statute or regulation may, herself/himself or via a representative, file a written complaint with the MPO. A complaint must be filed no later than 180 calendar days after the date on which the person believes that the discrimination occurred. A complaint form and additional information can be obtained by contacting the MPO (see below) or at www.bostonmpo.org.

Meeting locations are accessible to people with disabilities and are near public transportation. Upon request (preferably two weeks in advance of a meeting), every effort will be made to provide accommodations such as assistive-listening devices, materials in accessible formats and in languages other than English, and interpreters of American Sign Language and other languages. Please contact the MPO staff at 857.702.3700 (voice), 617.570.9193 (TTY), 617.570.9192 (fax), or publicinformation@ctps.org (email).

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Update

Advisory Council Update, continued from page 4

The economic consequences of system disruptions have also increased. Annual losses from natural disasters have risen from \$1 billion in 1960 to \$28 billion today. Dr. Barami explained that while costs are rising, adaptation measures for reducing vulnerabilities are highly cost effective.

Dr. Barami discussed examples of adaptation models employed by New York City and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for reducing flood damages, and the Federal Highway Administration's Vulnerability Assessment Scoring Tool (VAST), which can be used by asset managers to identify assets' exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capability.

Mr. Lyons discussed the MPO's role in resilience planning and the potential for these regional entities to lead the way on climate change adaptation. He discussed how resilience could be built in through the MPOs' transportation planning, project selection, and performance-monitoring processes, and through visioning as part Long-Range Transportation Plan development.

Public-Private Partnerships Offer Alternatives to Drive-Alone Commute

The Advisory Council's October meeting featured a presentation by Julia Prange Wallerce, the executive director of MassCommute. Ms. Prange Wallerce spoke about how transportation management associations (TMAs) in the Commonwealth are working together to provide alternatives to single-occupancy automobile commuting, and leveraging private-sector investments that yield public benefits.

MassCommute is a coalition of 12 TMAs that represent 300 companies, institutions, and organizations in 40 Commonwealth municipalities. Offerings include shuttle and ride-share services, car- and van-pools, and guaranteed ride home programs for employees. Ms. Prange Wallerce reported that by providing transportation demand management (TDM) options, Commonwealth TMAs helped reduce single-occupancy automobile trips by more than 7 million in 2014.

Ms. Prange Wallerce explained that since 2009, a relatively modest investment of public funds—approximately \$550,000 a year for all MassCommute TMAs—has leveraged more than \$75 million in private, corporate, and institutional membership dues into TDM services. These services support state transportation and climate goals for reducing traffic congestion, encouraging mode shift, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

To learn more about TMAs, visit MassCommute's website to read their white paper, "Making the Shift: How TMAs in Massachusetts Leverage Private-Sector Resources to Achieve State Goals and Public Benefits."

To learn more about TDM, visit the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's website to find their white paper "Transportation Demand Management Case Studies and Regulations." This guide is for municipalities interested in advancing TDM measures.



Shuttle serving Boston's Longwood Medical and Academic Area (Photo: MASCO)

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Update

New Officers Elected to Advisory Council

At the Advisory Council's October meeting, members elected Tegin Teich Bennett and Mark Sanborn as the Council's new chair and vice chair, respectively. Ms. Bennett is a transportation planner for the City of Cambridge. Mr. Sanborn serves as the director of Government Relations and Corporate Development for Concord Coach Lines, and as chair of the Massachusetts Bus Association. They will begin their terms in November.

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) Update

New Planning Tool Paving the Way for Sidewalk Access Improvements

John Lozada, Manager of Federal Programs at MassDOT's Office of Diversity and Civil Rights, provided an overview of MassDOT's Curb Ramp Assessment Tool at the October 28 meeting of the AACT Board of Directors. The assessment tool has been used to collect information and images of approximately 2,700 pedestrian curb ramps on roadways over which MassDOT has jurisdiction. The data is helping to prioritize locations where sidewalks must be brought up to ADA standards for access. MassDOT has already repaired or modified some 400 curb ramps and expects to address another 400 in the coming year.

The next step is to make the tool available to cities and towns for inventorying municipally owned curb ramps. MassDOT is providing free workshops for municipal staff to demonstrate the assessment tool and to discuss options available for funding accessibility improvements. The next workshop will be held on November 19 in Woburn.

For more information, contact John Lozada at John.Lozada@state.ma.us.



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