



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

May 1 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. Transportation Improvement Program Municipal Input Day. *Conference Room 4. 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM*

May 8 (Thursday)

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

Boston Region MPO Suburban Mobility/Transportation Demand Management Subcommittee. *MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 1:30 PM*

May 14 (Wednesday)

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

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

Calendar continued on p. 2

MPO to Fund Start-up Transportation-Demand-Management Projects

FIRST ROUND OF GRANTS AWARDED TO BOSTON, CAMBRIDGE, ARLINGTON, AND WALKBOSTON

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) awarded \$142,000 in April to support four transportation-demand-management (TDM) projects that will help improve air quality in the region by reducing transportation-related emissions.

The largest award, \$67,000, went to the City of Cambridge for the launch of a pilot social-marketing campaign aimed at encouraging Cambridge residents to switch from driving to using other transportation modes. The City of Boston received \$40,000 to start a bicycle pool that city employees can use to reduce driving trips within the city.

WalkBoston will use its

- TDM Awards *cont. on p. 4*

State Transportation Bond Bill Passes

BOND BILL PROVIDES \$3.5 BILLION FOR INFRASTRUCTURE; NEW STIMULUS PLAN WOULD FUND BRIDGE REPAIR

On April 17, Governor Deval Patrick signed a multibillion transportation bond bill that will begin to address the commonwealth's transportation infrastructure needs by enabling the state to leverage federal funding for an investment of approximately \$3.5 billion in the state's transportation system over the next three years. Built

into the bill are measures for streamlining the Massachusetts Highway Department's project delivery process and increasing transparency in the agency.

Taking effect immediately is the provision of federal matching funds for municipalities' Chapter 90 monies for local roadway projects. Chapter 90 grants will be funded at \$150 million per year. The bill also includes \$700 million to fund transit projects that the state is committed to building as mitiga-

- Bond Bill *cont. on p. 2*



The MPO will hold its annual election on Wednesday, May 28, following the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's MetroFuture Strategy Event. (See calendar on page 2 for meeting time and location.)

For more information, contact Barbara Lucas at (617) 451-2770 or blucas@mapc.org.

CELEBRATE NATIONAL BIKE MONTH!

Take part in bicycling events occurring throughout the commonwealth.

See page 4 for details.



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

MASSHIGHWAY SAFETY TOOLBOX

HELP IS ONLINE FOR MUNICIPALITIES NEEDING TRAFFIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

As part of a statewide effort to improve safety on the commonwealth's roads, the Massachusetts Highway Department has developed an online resource to help municipalities develop and implement roadway safety improvements. The Massachusetts Traffic Safety Toolbox offers a series of fact sheets on traffic safety and engineering topics that municipal governments can reference when considering safety initiatives.



This resource provides information ranging from general traffic safety to more specific topics such as guidelines for designing crosswalks, installing warning signs, implementing low-cost intersection improvements, conducting road safety audits, and ensuring work-zone safety. The fact sheet also includes links to other resources on design standards, design manuals, and safety-related laws.

The Toolbox may be found at www.mhd.state.ma.us/safetytoolbox.

Bond to Fund Road and Transit Projects

● **Bond Bill** *cont. from p. 1*
tion for the Central Artery/Tunnel project: improvements to the Fairmount commuter rail lines, the Green Line Extension to Medford and Somerville, the design for the Red Line–Blue Line Connector, and the addition of 1,000 new parking spaces at commuter rail stations. It provides \$10 million for mass transit planning projects, including the South Coast Rail extension to Fall River and New Bedford, the Urban Ring, and the Blue Line extension to Lynn, as well as \$16 million for improvements to the Fitchburg commuter rail line.

Other reforms include the establishment of a deferred maintenance trust fund, adjustments to health insurance benefits for retirees of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, and a requirement that regulations be established to determine when civilian flagmen could be used at construction sites instead of police details to reduce costs.

The state expects to save millions of dollars by instituting streamlining measures at the Massachusetts Highway Department that could reduce project delivery time by as much as 40 percent

● **Bond Bill** *cont. on p. 4*

Gas Prices Drive More Commuters to Transit

RIDERSHIP INCREASING ON THE MBTA

As gas prices crept up over the past year, the MBTA reported an increase in transit ridership, indicating that more commuters may be choosing to leave their cars in the garage and take the bus, subway, or train to work.

According to MBTA ridership statistics, MBTA transit services attracted nearly 3 million more riders in February 2008 than at the same time last year—an increase from approximately 27 million riders in February 2007 to 30 million in February 2008.



MBTA General Manager Daniel Grabauskas told the *Boston Globe* that the price of gas is a major factor in the ridership increase.

The trend toward increased transit ridership is nationwide, according to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), which reported that in 2007, U.S. cities had the highest level of transit ridership in 50 years.

Calendar cont. from p. 1

May 15 (Thursday)

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

May 19 (Monday)

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

May 22 (Thursday) (Tentatively scheduled)

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

May 28 (Wednesday)

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

May 29 (Thursday) (Tentatively scheduled)

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

June 5 (Thursday)

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

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

May 5 (Monday)

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

Week of May 12 (Day to be determined)

MPO Candidates Night. *Location to be determined. 7:30 PM (For the latest information, call (617) 973-7144 or e-mail jhersey@bostonmpo.org.)*

May 14 (Wednesday)

MPO Walkable Community Workshop. *Banquet Hall, 35 Central Street, Stoneham. 8:30 AM*

May 28 (Wednesday)

MetoFuture Strategy Session and Boston Region MPO Elections. *Omni Parker House Hotel, 60 School Street, Boston. 8:00 AM (Continental breakfast and registration at 7:30 AM.)*

June 2 (Monday)

EOTPW and MBTA. Green Line Extension Project Advisory Group. *Shiloh Baptist Church (corner of Bower and Holton streets), Medford. 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM*

Bicycle Parking at MBTA Stations Increased

MPO INVENTORY SHOWS 79 PERCENT INCREASE OVER FOUR YEARS

The Boston Region MPO has posted online the results of its most recent inventory of bicycle parking spaces at MBTA facilities, which was conducted in 2005 and 2006. The previous inventory was done in 1999, 2000, and 2002.

The MPO staff collected data on the number of MBTA-owned and municipally

owned bicycle racks and the number of bicycle parking spaces being used at 123 rapid transit stations, 124 commuter rail stations, 4 commuter boat terminals, and 3 major bus stops in the region.

Since the previous inventory had been done, the number of bicycle parking spaces at MBTA facilities increased by 79 percent and 25 more stations had bicycle racks.

The inventory also identified locations of underutilized

racks. MPO staff made recommendations for improving bicycle parking at those stations.

Both the recommendations and the inventory results can be found at www.bostonmpo.org/bostonmpo/resources/CMS/cmsbpark.htm.

This work was conducted as part of the MPO's Mobility Management System, a program for collecting data for use in analyzing the performance of the region's transportation system.



Bicycle rack at a Silver Line station

Boston Region MPO Activities

The MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee approved a data set of demographic and employment projections for use in the development of the MPO's long-range regional transportation plan. The projections incorporate data developed through the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's MetroFuture process for the 101 municipalities in the MPO region and projections developed by neighboring regional planning agencies for their respective 63 municipalities surrounding the MPO. The Committee also deliberated on whether to include illustrative projects, which would be over and above the expansion projects currently included in the regional transportation plan. Following the discussion, the Committee voted not to include those additional projects at this time due to the financial crisis facing the state's transportation sector and the need to keep the region's infrastructure in a state of good repair. The Committee also voted to approve federal fiscal year 2008 funding for four transportation-demand-management projects in the region (see article on page one).

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

At the Advisory Council's March meeting, Charlie O'Brien, Pam Prentiss, and Linda Walsh, of Mass Highway's Right-of-Way Bureau, detailed the right-of-way (ROW) process for local-roadway and state-highway construction and design projects. The presentation provided an overview of ROW certification and the distinctions between 25 percent, 75 percent, and 100 percent designs. Projects receiving federal or state funding through the MPO or projects whose construc-

tion is administered by MassHighway cannot be advertised for construction bids until the ROW Bureau issues a ROW certificate. This certificate ensures that municipalities follow all federal and state regulations in the ROW process.

The April meeting featured a discussion with Paul Regan, executive director of the MBTA Advisory Board and member of the Transportation Finance Commission, and Marc Draisen, executive director of MAPC and member of the Transportation Investment Coalition, who presented work they perform that addresses the transportation finance issues

facing the state. The Commission recently released two reports, *Transportation Finance in Massachusetts: An Unsustainable System*, which detailed a \$15–19 billion shortfall in transportation maintenance over the next 20 years, and *Transportation Finance in Massachusetts: Building a Sustainable System*, which offered 28 cost-effective solutions. The Coalition, composed of more than 20 organizations, is now promoting those recommendations to the State Legislature, in local and regional media, and at community meetings.

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

Robert Rizzo, Manager of Paratransit Contract Operations for the Office for Transportation Access, announced that THE RIDE, the MBTA's paratransit service, provided 6,017 trips on March 13, a record for a single day. Ridership also showed a marked increase in February, up by nearly 18 percent compared to February 2007. For the year to date, as of February, ridership was up 10 percent.

BAY STATE BIKE WEEK May 12-18

Celebrate National Bike Month this May by participating in one of the many activities taking place during Massachusetts' own Bay State Bike Week.

Take the 50,000-Mile Commuter Challenge and get your corporate team to compete with like-sized organizations in a contest to determine which organization has the highest percentage of employees commuting by bicycle. Join a Safe-Rider Convoy in Boston, Cambridge, or Arlington and bicycle to work with fellow riders. Or be a Bike Buddy by encouraging a friend to ride.



For more information and event listings, visit www.baystatebikeweek.org, or contact MassCommute at (617) 918-4456 or ride@BayStateBikeWeek.org.

TDM Projects Aim to Improve Air Quality

• TDM Awards *cont. from p. 1*
\$29,000 award to work with several communities to develop walking maps and to identify low-cost improvements that will make local walking routes safer. The MPO also awarded \$6,000 to the Town of Arlington for a covered bicycle rack for the Parmenter School as part of a program aimed at reducing automobile travel.

These awards represent the first round of TDM funding for federal fiscal year 2008. The MPO intends to provide \$250,000 in funding for

FFY 2008 projects. The MPO's TDM program is financed with federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds and matching state/local funding.

For more information on the TDM program, please visit www.bostonmpo.org/bostonmpo/resources/TDM/index.html or contact either Barbara Lucas (blucas@mapc.org, [617] 451-2770) or Jonathan Belcher (jbelcher@bostonmpo.org, [617] 973-7253).

Bond Bill Passes

• Bond Bill *cont. from p. 2*
and cut down on cost increases that are due to inflation. A Web-based "Scorecard" will enable the public to view information on project delivery, bridge and pavement conditions, and performance related to safety and mobility goals. The Scorecard can be found at www.mass.gov/eot/scorecard.

The previous week, the governor announced an economic stimulus plan that includes an additional \$3.8 billion bond proposal that would provide funding to accelerate repairs on over four hundred structurally deficient bridges throughout the commonwealth over the next eight years.

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