



# TRANSREPORT

JUNE/JULY 2009

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**MPO RELEASES ALEWIFE STUDY**  
Page 2

**WALKABLE COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS**  
Page 2

**UPWP NEWS**  
Page 2

**ECONOMIC STIMULUS BOOSTS CONSTRUCTION**  
Page 3

**MPO ACTIVITIES**  
Page 3

**BAY STATE BIKE WEEK**  
Page 4

## 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](http://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**

**July 2 (Thursday)**

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

**July 8 (Wednesday)**

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

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

**July 9 (Thursday) Tentative**

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

**July 16 (Thursday)**

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

*Calendar continued on p. 2*

## Arlington Street MBTA Station Is Now Accessible to All

### BOSTON REGION MPO HELPS SUPPORT RENOVATIONS FOR ADA COMPLIANCE

The Arlington Street entrance to the Green Line subway reopened this June after a two-and-a-half-year closure, during which the 88-year-old station was brought up to modern standards of accessibility. Arlington Station, previously inaccessible to people who could not manage stairs, now complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Passengers can now access the underground station via elevators and can board trolleys more easily.

The Boston Region MPO helped fund the station renovations by programming federal dollars for the MBTA Accessibility Program in the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program.

The station renovations included the installation of three elevators, ADA-compliant warning edges on platforms that assist the visually impaired in detecting where the track lies, elevated platforms that accommodate low-floor Green Line cars, new stairways, new head

houses, a revamped mezzanine, and lighting improvements.

The \$22.7-million station upgrade is scheduled for completion this fall after the reconstruction of the platform near the Berkeley Street entrance and the installation of two escalators.

The Arlington Station project is among a number of projects that the MBTA has undertaken to improve access to the Green Line—Boston's oldest trolley line—as well as other stations in the MBTA transit system. Through its Key Station Plan, the MBTA is bringing 80 transit stations into ADA compliance. Seventy-seven of the stations are now in compliance.



*A ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 1 marked the reopening of the main entrance of Arlington Station.*

The members of the Boston Region MPO: Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works, cities of Boston, Braintree, Newton, 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



In June the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is responsible for programming federal funds for transportation projects and studies in the MPO region, welcomed a new member.

The Town of Braintree assumes the seat on the MPO vacated by the City of Salem, which chose not to run for reelection.

Another seat was also up for election this year and the incumbent, the Town of Bedford, was reelected for another term.

# MPO Releases Alewife Study

The Boston Region MPO recently completed the Alewife Traffic Operations and Access Study, Phase II, which made recommendations for improving traffic operations at the Route 2 and Route 16 intersection in Cambridge; access and egress for MBTA buses serving the Alewife MBTA station; and bus routes serving Alewife Station and the Arlington and Lexington areas. A companion study, conducted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), recommended improvements for bicycle and pedestrian access to Alewife Station.

The study of the Route 16/Route 2 intersection yielded the following low-cost recommendations for improving traffic operations and bus access in the area:

- Adding a short westbound lane between the Alewife Station Access Road

approach (jug handle) and the Minuteman Bikeway overpass

- Adding a left-turn lane from Route 2 eastbound to Route 16 northbound
- Adding a lane to the Alewife Station Access Road and upgrading traffic signals to allow for demand-responsive operation and bus priority

Recommendations from the bus service portion of the study include exploring whether modifying the spacing of bus stops in the study area could reduce delays and whether the MBTA and LEXPRESS, a bus service in Lexington, could improve coordination of services to reduce transfer time.

The bicycle and pedestrian portion of the study recommended curb-cut repairs, safety-related traffic operations improvements, maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian

facilities, and the redesign of access points near the station. Longer-term recommendations for shared-use paths include:

- Extending the Watertown Branch Trail to Alewife Station, including the construction of a pedestrian bridge over the rail tracks to Russell Field
- Redesigning Cambridgepark Drive and Cambridgepark West to improve safety and operations for cyclists and pedestrians
- Extending the Minuteman Bikeway to Porter Square
- Creating a radial shared-use path from Fresh Pond to Spy Pond, including a new bridge over the tracks west of Alewife Station, that would connect new developments and would

- Alewife *cont.* on p. 4

## Schedule a Walkable Community Workshop

The Boston Region MPO is continuing its Walkable Community Workshop program and is currently scheduling workshops for this summer and the rest of this year. If there are areas in your municipality where you wish to encourage more walking, the MPO can help. MPO staff will work with you to evaluate potential walking sites that might be difficult spots for pedestrians, places that are relatively attractive for walking but could use some improvement, or areas

slated for new development.

The workshops last approximately two and a half hours, starting with a presentation on elements that make a community more pedestrian-friendly. Participants then go for a short walk and return to discuss ways to engender improvements.

A good walking environment is an important aspect of community livability, which in turn is related to the community's economic viability

- Workshops *cont.* on p. 4

## UPWP News

The Boston Region MPO expects to release the draft Federal Fiscal Year 2010 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for public review early this summer. The UPWP describes the transportation planning studies that the MPO plans to undertake in the upcoming fiscal year.

The draft document will be available on the MPO's website, [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org), and members of the public will have 30 days to provide comments to the MPO. Check the website for a notice of the start of the public-review period.

*Calendar cont. from p. 1*

**July 22 (Wednesday)**

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

**July 23 (Thursday) Tentative**

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

**July 27 (Monday)**

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Freight Committee. *MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 1:00 PM*

**July 30 (Thursday) Tentative**

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

### AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

**July 10 (Friday)**

MBTA Senior and Transportation Access Pass Registration. *Weymouth Elder Services, 182 Green Street, Weymouth. 12:00 noon to 4:00 PM*

**July 14 (Tuesday)**

MassHighway Public Hearing: Route 99 Reconstruction and Signal Improvements in Everett. *City Hall, Keverian Room, 3rd Floor, 484 Broadway, Everett. 7:00 PM*

**July 15 (Wednesday)**

MassHighway Public Hearing: Willow Street Bridge Replacement Project. *Great Hall, Dover Town Hall, 5 Springdale Avenue, Dover. 7:00 PM*

**July 16 (Thursday)**

MassHighway Public Hearing: Route 1 over Neponset River Bridge Replacement Project. *Norwood Public Safety Building, Community Room, 137 Nahatan Street, Norwood. 7:00 PM*

**July 28 (Tuesday)**

MBTA Senior and Transportation Access Pass Registration. *Dedham Council on Aging, 735 Washington Street, Dedham. 12:00 noon to 3:00 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), or (617) 973-7089 (TTY), or e-mail us at [publicinformation@bostonmpo.org](mailto:publicinformation@bostonmpo.org).*

# Construction Gets a Boost from Economic Stimulus

## MPO-PROGRAMMED PROJECTS ARE GETTING UNDERWAY

Federal economic stimulus dollars from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 are being awarded to contractors to begin transportation projects in Massachusetts. These dollars, provided under Title 23 of federal law, are programmed through the public planning processes of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs.) As a whole, the Commonwealth has the authority to spend nearly \$438 million on highway

projects and \$319 million on transit projects.

For the greater Boston area, the Boston Region MPO programmed nearly \$130 million of stimulus funds for 23 roadway projects in this region, including resurfacing projects, a bicycle path connector, sidewalk and pedestrian improvements in parkways and near elementary schools, an intelligent-transportation-systems (ITS) program, and traffic sign repairs on major highways. It also directed nearly \$178 million to transit projects for the MBTA, MetroWest Regional

Transit Authority, and the Cape Ann Transportation Authority.

As of press time, contracts for stimulus-funded roadway projects had been awarded for resurfacing projects on Route 2 in Harvard, Littleton, and Lincoln, and for repairs to highway signs on Interstate 95.

Transit projects underway include the design and siting for construction of bicycle parking features at 50 stations in the MBTA system (including bike cages with lighting and security cameras), and preparations for

bus station and shelter improvements. A project for bus lane enhancements for the Silver Line service from Dudley Station to South Station has been advertised for bids. Also, this summer the MBTA plans to begin the procurement of 108 vans for THE RIDE service.

The Commonwealth is continuing to plan for stimulus funding as federal fiscal year (FFY) 2010 approaches. The Boston Region MPO expects to program another set of stimulus-funded transportation projects during the

● Stimulus *cont. on p. 4*

## Boston Region MPO Activities

### BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

In May the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee approved Amendment Three to the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009 Element of the FFYs 2007–2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and released two MPO studies, the “Regionwide Suburban Transit Opportunities Study, Phase III,” and the “Alewife Traffic Operations and Access Study, Phase II.” The Committee also approved the work program for Arterial Traffic Signal Improvements and Coordination, which will develop plans for coordinating traffic signals in selected corridors that have multiple intersections. On May 21 and 28, the MPO held its annual Municipal TIP Input Days meetings, where representatives of 43 communities in the region made presentations on their high-priority transportation projects.

### REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

The Advisory Council received an update at its May meeting from Jack Murray and Jonathan Geller, of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), on the Parkway and Bridge Program. DCR plans to achieve its goal to spend \$150 million for bridge repair in FFY 2009. Bridges currently set for construction in the Boston region are the Mystic Valley Parkway Bridge in Arlington, the Boston University, Lech Walesa, and Neponset River Bridges in Boston, the Magazine Beach Pedestrian Bridge in Cambridge, and the Cheney Bridge in Dover.

At the June meeting, the Advisory Council hosted Joe Cosgrove, of the MBTA, who provided an update on the MBTA's Program for Mass Transportation (PMT). The PMT is a 25-year vision for mass transit in the authority's service area. A draft of the PMT may be viewed on the MPO's website, [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org).

The Advisory Council also received updates on the development of the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) from Steve Olanoff, of the Advisory Council, and Hayes Morrison, the MPO's TIP Project Manager, respectively.

The Advisory Council will continue its review and com-

ment on the MPO's certification documents at its July meeting.

### ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

New contracts spanning state fiscal years 2010–2014 for the MBTA's paratransit service THE RIDE will go into effect on July 1. The three contractors—Greater Lynn Senior Services, Veterans Transportation Services, and The Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN—will cover the North, NorthWest, and South service areas respectively. Starting on June 17, THE RIDE will be taking reservations from customers wishing to travel on or after July 1. An informational mailing is being sent to

all active RIDE customers. Copies of the new THE RIDE Guide may be obtained by contacting the MBTA at (800) 533-6282 (phone), (617) 222-5415 (TTY), or [THERIDE@MBTA.com](mailto:THERIDE@MBTA.com) (e-mail).

Please note that THE RIDE will no longer serve Framingham and Natick; the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) will be providing paratransit service within those towns starting July 1. For more information on the MWRTA's services, call (508) 935-2222 or visit the MWRTA's website, [www.mwrta.com](http://www.mwrta.com). A transfer will be required between MWRTA and MBTA vehicles for customers traveling between the two authorities' areas.

# Bike Week Participation Grows

The second annual Bay State Bike Week raised the bar set in 2008 as more than 3,000 cyclists pledged more than 125,000 miles of cycling for the week. Free events were held across the state, including Mayor Menino's Bike Festival at City Hall. Nearly 1,000 riders made their way to City Hall on May 15, many of them escorted by police convoys.

More than 450 businesses competed in the Mass-Commuter Challenge, a friendly competition among companies based on the number of miles bicycled by employees.

The number of miles pledged during this year's Bay State Bike Week translates into a savings of 5,621 gallons of gas and \$12,872 in gas costs, and a reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by more than 49 metric tons.

See the Bay State Bike Week website at [www.baystatebikeweek.org](http://www.baystatebikeweek.org). For more information on Boston Bikes events this summer, visit [www.bikefridays.org](http://www.bikefridays.org).

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization  
State Transportation Building  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150  
Boston, MA 02116

# More Stimulus Funds to Come

- Stimulus *cont. from p. 3*

development of the FFYs 2010–2013 Transportation Improvement Program.

Municipalities have proposed approximately 4,000 projects, which have been assessed by the Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works and MassHighway to determine if they are eligible to receive federal funding under Title 23.

# Alewife Study Online

- Alewife *cont. from p. 2*

feed into the Mass Central Rail Trail

The study is available on the MPO's website, [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org). Click on the "MPO/CTPS Reports" tab on the left side of the homepage. For more information

# MPO Offers Pedestrian Planning Assistance

- Workshops *cont. from p. 2*

and residents' physical health. People walk more when the environment is safe and pleasant.

MassHighway, with assistance from the Commonwealth's 13 regional planning agencies, is now reviewing eligible projects to determine whether they could be ready for construction within the time frame during which the stimulus funds must be awarded. The Office of the Lieutenant Governor will be coordinating with municipalities regarding their requests for stimulus funding.

about the study, contact Efi Pagitsas, of the Boston Region MPO staff, at (617) 973-7106 or [efip@ctps.org](mailto:efip@ctps.org). For information on the bicycle and pedestrian access study, contact David Loutzenheiser, of MAPC, at (617) 451-2770 or [dloutzenheiser@mapc.org](mailto:dloutzenheiser@mapc.org).

If you think your community or neighborhood would benefit by hosting a workshop, please contact the MPO at (617) 973-7100 or e-mail [walkable@ctps.org](mailto:walkable@ctps.org).

## TRANSREPORT

PUBLISHED BY THE BOSTON  
REGION METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING ORGANIZATION

James A. Aloisi Jr.,  
MPO Chairman

David J. Mohler, Chair  
Eric Bourassa, Vice Chair  
Transportation Planning and  
Programming Committee

## EDITORS

Maureen Kelly  
Mary Ellen Sullivan

## CONTRIBUTORS

Cathy Buckley  
Michael Callahan  
Janie Guion  
David Loutzenheiser, MAPC  
Efi Pagitsas  
Sean Pflazer

## GRAPHICS and PHOTOS

MBTA  
Kim Noonan

*The MPO does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, English proficiency, income, religious creed, ancestry, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, or military service. Any person who believes herself/himself or any specific class of persons to have been subjected to discrimination may file a written complaint with the MPO. A complaint must be filed no later than 30 calendar days after the date on which the person believes the discrimination occurred.*

First Class Mail  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Boston, MA  
Permit No. 52233