

TRANS REPORT

TRANSPORTATION NEWS FROM THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Draft Transportation Spending Programs Released for Review; Public Workshops Scheduled

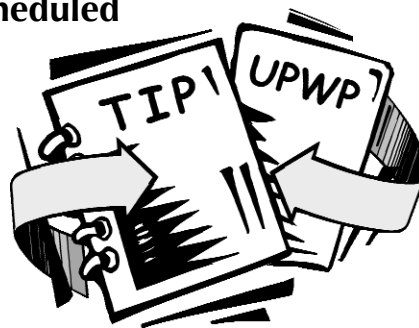
On June 23 the Boston Region MPO approved the distribution of the draft fiscal year 2006 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the draft fiscal years 2006–2010 Transportation Improvement Program and Air Quality Conformity Determination (TIP) for a 30-day public comment period. In addition, the MPO is considering an amendment to the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan, its long-range planning document, that would revise construction time frames for several projects and show updated air quality conformity.

The UPWP programs funds for surface-transportation planning studies and other transportation-related activities to be conducted by the Boston Region MPO staff in a given federal fiscal year. It also provides information on studies to be conducted by other transportation agencies and academic institutions in that year. The TIP is a federally mandated, financially constrained five-year program of improvements for the metropolitan area's transportation system.

The Regional Transportation Plan, TIP, and UPWP form the basis of federally funded transportation planning and construction for the region's 101 cities and towns.

Eight workshops have been organized to hear residents' and local officials' views on these spending programs. (See calendar on page 4 for details.)

"While one of our major investment priorities is system preservation and maintenance in order to secure the quality and safety of our existing transportation system, we know you have additional trans-



portation needs and we want to hear about them," said Transportation Secretary John Cogliano, speaking as MPO Chairman. "We are particularly interested in hearing your ideas on where transit and development can support each other and where we should be working on relieving highway bottlenecks. We hope you'll come talk to us."

Compact disks (CDs) containing the documents and the Plan amendment will be sent to municipal offices and public libraries in each Boston Region MPO community. All materials were made available Wednesday, June 29, as Adobe PDF files, at www.bostonmpo.org. Copies are also available free of charge, upon request, in CD, print, or accessible formats. For a copy, contact the Central Transportation Planning Staff by mail at 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116-3968, by voice at (617) 973-7100, by TTY at (617) 973-7089, by fax at (617) 973-8855, or by e-mail at publicinformation@ctps.org.

The public comment period will close at 5:00 P.M. on Tuesday, July 26, for the TIP and UPWP, and at 5:00 P.M. on Monday, August 1, for the Plan amendment. Comments must be received by the MPO at the above addresses or phone numbers on or before these dates.

Debut of New Shuttle Service

A new transportation service, the MetroNorth Shuttle, is up and running in the region. The service, operated by the 128 Business Council and M&L Transit Systems, began on June 13. It connects the Anderson Regional Transportation Center (RTC) on the Lowell commuter rail line to commercial and residential destinations in Woburn, Burlington, and Lexington and is expected to help companies in the area retain and attract employees who want or need public transportation as part of their commute.

This is the second project implemented with funding from the Boston Region MPO's Suburban Mobility program, the MPO's commitment to reducing single-occupancy-vehicle travel in suburban areas that are currently underserved by transit, and improving mobility within the region. The MetroNorth Shuttle further expands the intermodal connections available at the Anderson RTC, which is a hub for the Lowell commuter rail line, Amtrak Downeaster service to New Hampshire and Maine, and Logan Express bus service.

■ New Shuttle Service *cont. on p. 2*

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BOSTON REGION MPO ACTIVITIES



BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

At its meeting on June 16, the Boston Region MPO approved an amendment to the fiscal year 2005 element of the fiscal years 2005–2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that revises funding categories and/or amounts for several bridge, roadway, and transit projects.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

On June 23 the MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee voted to release the draft fiscal years 2006–2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the draft fiscal year 2006 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and a draft amendment to the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan for a 30-day public comment period.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

In June the Advisory Council received a briefing from Dennis DiZoglio of the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) on the reevaluation of State Implementation Plan transit commitments and EOT's recommendation on the commitments.

On June 14 the Boston Transportation Department hosted a tour of its Traffic Management Center (TMC) for the Advisory Council. The TMC, located on the seventh floor of City Hall, was one of the first such facilities in the country. Originally established in the 1980s, it has evolved in response to the Central Artery/Tunnel Project.

The TMC operations center consists of eight computer monitors, two television screens, and an eight-split movie-type screen capable of being subdivided further into 32 separate images. The screens project images gathered from dozens of individual closed-circuit television cameras set up at various locations in Boston.

The TMC monitors 400 of the 798 signalized intersections in the city of Boston. Plans are currently underway to expand the fiber-optic network required to increase the number of monitored intersections. The TMC coordinates and is electronically connected with intersections under different jurisdictions. TMC operators can communicate directly with the various police agencies that have jurisdiction in the city of Boston, in order to respond to emergencies or resolve traffic issues.

Though the TMC can hold up to 10 staff members in an emergency, it is normally managed by one operator from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M., Monday through Friday.

Most of the equipment for the TMC was funded by the Boston Region MPO with recent TIP funds. In its draft fiscal years 2006–2010 TIP, the MPO programmed additional funding to hire more full-time operators and to expand the TMC hours of operation.

The July 13 Advisory Council meeting will feature the draft fiscal years 2006–2010 TIP, draft fiscal year 2006 UPWP, and draft amendment to the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan. (See calendar on page 4 for details.)

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

At the June 22 meeting of AACT, Andrew Brennan, Director of Environmental Affairs for the MBTA, gave an overview of the Silver Line Phase III and answered questions from AACT members. The next AACT meeting will take place on July 27. (See calendar on page 4 for details.)

■ New Shuttle Service *cont. from p. 1*

The shuttle operates Monday through Friday during peak commuting hours. Fares range from \$1.00 to \$1.75, with reduced fares for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and multiride tickets. Schedule information may be obtained on the 128 Business Council's Web site, www.128bc.org.

The MetroNorth Shuttle is funded by both the MPO and private businesses. For more information on the Suburban Mobility Program, contact Barbara Lucas at blucas@mapc.org.

Want to Host a Walkable Community Workshop?

If you are interested in promoting walking and pedestrian safety where you live, consider taking up the Boston Region MPO's offer to conduct a Walkable Community Workshop for your community.

Based on a national series awarded to the MPO in 2003 by the National Center for Bicycling and Walking, the MPO Walkable Community Workshops lead participants in exploring common difficulties that pedestrians encounter and in identifying an array of possible solutions specific to the host community. While the sessions are designed to generate more interest in walking, they have an additional outcome—improving community livability.

The workshops, which last approximately two hours, consist of a presentation, a community "walking audit," and a follow-up session for brainstorming possible options for improvements. They are open to everyone, including elected officials and citizens, but are geared to professionals in the fields of planning, engineering, law enforcement, and education.

Last year MPO staff held Walkable Community Workshops in Rockport, Franklin, and Saugus. If your community is interested in hosting a workshop, please call (617) 973-7118 or e-mail walkable@ctps.org by Wednesday, July 27.

Smart Growth Update

MBTA Awards Contract to Rebuild Ashmont Station

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority has awarded a \$35.2 million contract for the complete reconstruction of the Red Line's Ashmont Station in Dorchester to Barletta Heavy Division, Inc.

A multimodal transit hub that is more than 75 years old, Ashmont Station is in need of a complete overhaul. Input and recommendations for the new design from many area residents and officials make the reconstruction of Ashmont Station a neighborhood project. Highlights of the project include: new platforms, a viaduct for the trolley service to Mattapan, two new lobbies with street access at both ends of the station, an elevated busway that is level with the new lobbies, public access over the subway tunnel to Peabody Square, three new elevators, two new escalators, security cameras, significantly enhanced lighting, automated fare-vending machines, and new fare gates.

As part of Governor Mitt Romney's transit-oriented-development initiative, the Ashmont Station project is an exemplar of the smart growth principle of revitalizing urban centers by improving transit hubs. In the next few years, the area around the station will be transformed by the construction of more than 100 residential units and nearly 30,000 square feet of retail space.

Community Access TV Buys Land from MBTA

The MBTA has approved the sale of a former power substation and nearly 12,000 square feet of land in the Egleston Square section of Roxbury. The Urban Edge Housing Corporation and the Boston Community Access and Programming Foundation are purchasing the property for \$560,000. Once used for providing power to trolleys on the elevated Orange Line, the substation has been vacant and unused since the 1970s. Because the structure is on the Massachusetts Register of Historic Places, the new owners have agreed to preserve

Silver Line Introduces Logan Airport Service

The MBTA, along with the Massachusetts Port Authority and the Executive Office of Transportation, introduced Silver Line service to Logan Airport on June 1. The service is an extension of the Silver Line Waterfront service that opened in December 2004.

Air travelers can now get to the airport from downtown Boston in about



Silver Line vehicle

20 minutes. Passengers can board at South Station or at stations on the South Boston waterfront before heading to the airport, where stops are made at all five of Logan's terminals. New 60-foot-long Silver Line vehicles are specially designed for air travelers, with low floors and space for luggage.

The Silver Line is expected to become the preferred alternative for many people who are traveling to and from Logan Airport. From South Station, airport-bound Silver Line vehicles depart every 10 minutes between 7:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M. on weekdays. After 8:00 P.M. and on weekends, service is available every 15 minutes. Daily ridership has grown to 7,000 passengers in the six months since Silver Line Waterfront service began.

The Silver Line also provides easy connections at South Station to the MBTA's commuter rail, the Red Line, and MBTA buses, as well as Amtrak and private bus service. For more information or to obtain schedules and updates, visit www.allaboutsilverline.com.

the building's exterior and renovate only the interior space. Once the construction work is completed, Boston's community-access cable television station will move its operations into the building. The remaining space will be used for offices or housing.

Transit Support for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities

MBTA Replacing Senior Photo ID Passes and TAPs

With the implementation of new fare-collection equipment on the Blue Line, the MBTA began replacing all existing MBTA senior citizen photo ID passes, as well as Transportation Access Passes (TAPs) for persons with disabilities. MBTA staff will visit various towns throughout the summer to take photos and to replace current senior passes and TAPs at no charge. Persons 65 or older who are signing up for the first time may obtain a senior pass for a 50-cent fee.

Applications for new TAPs will be available as well. First-time TAP applicants who are eligible for the program will receive an approval notice in the mail with instructions on how to obtain the new ID at the MBTA's Office for Transportation Access located at Back Bay Station. Temporary permits will be issued at each sign-up site to customers with a current senior pass or TAP and to first-time senior customers. The permanent photo IDs will arrive by mail.

For more information, please call the MBTA's Office for Transportation Access at (617) 222-5976.

State Provides Transit Funding for Elderly and Persons with Disabilities

The Commonwealth released \$4.1 million to regional and local agencies to help support transit programs for the elderly through the Mobility Assistance Program (MAP). MAP provides capital assistance to public agencies and private nonprofit organizations for the purchase of vehicles and related equipment to provide continued transit service to seniors and persons with disabilities. These state grants cover up to 80 percent of the cost of the equipment; the remaining 20 percent must be matched by the recipient organization. To date, the Commonwealth has assisted 25 public agencies and 12 nonprofit organizations, with approximately 500 vehicles currently funded through this program.

MEETING CALENDAR

BOSTON REGION MPO PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

The Boston Region MPO will hold eight workshops at which the public can ask questions and express views about the documents under review and other transportation issues. The documents are: the fiscal years 2006–2010 Transportation Improvement Program, the fiscal year 2006 Unified Planning Work Program, and an amendment to the Regional Transportation Plan (see related article on page 1).

On each date there will be two workshops, one 4:00–5:30 P.M. and one 6:00–7:30 P.M. A photo ID is usually required for access to meeting sites.

Thursday, July 14

Cosponsored by the City of Boston, the Executive Office of Transportation, the MBTA, and MassHighway

State Transportation Building
Conference Room 4, Second Floor
10 Park Plaza, Boston

(Reached by the Silver Line—New England Medical Center (NEMC) Station; Orange Line—NEMC or Chinatown Station; Green Line—Boylston or Arlington Station; and MBTA bus routes #43 and #55.)

Tuesday, July 19

Cosponsored by the 128 Business Council

Cummings Park Conference Center
400 Cummings Park
Washington Street, Woburn

(Reached by MetroNorth shuttles at 3:30, 5:40, and 6:25 P.M. from the Anderson Regional Transportation Center on the Lowell commuter rail line, and by MBTA bus routes #354 and #355. Please see the 128 Business Council Web site, www.128bc.org, for complete shuttle schedules.)

Wednesday, July 20

Cosponsored by the City of Lynn

Lynn City Hall, Room 302
3 City Hall Square, Lynn

(Reached by the Newburyport/Rockport commuter rail line—Lynn Station; and by MBTA bus routes #426, #429, #435, and #455.)

Monday, July 25

Cosponsored by the South Coastal Work Force Investment Board, Quincy Mayor William J. Phelan, and the South Shore Chamber of Commerce

Quincy City Hall
Second Floor Conference Room
1305 Hancock Street, Quincy

(Reached by the Red Line—Quincy Center Station; Kingston/Plymouth and Middleborough/Lakeville commuter rail lines—Quincy Center Station; and many MBTA buses.)

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON

The public is welcome to attend the following transportation-related meetings. A photo ID is required for access to the State Transportation Building.

Wednesday, July 13

Regional Transportation Advisory Council 3:00 P.M.
Conference Room 4

Monday, July 18

MBTA Rider Oversight Committee 4:30 P.M.
Conference Rooms 1, 2, and 3

Thursday, July 21

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee 10:00 A.M.
CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

Wednesday, July 27

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) 1:00 P.M.
Conference Room 2

Thursday, August 4

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Work Session 10:00 A.M.
CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

Call (617) 222-5179 for date

MBTA Board of Directors 1:00 P.M.
Conference Rooms 2 and 3

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.

FOR THE RECORD

A TRANSREPORT Correction

In its June 2005 issue, TRANSREPORT made two incorrect statements in its article entitled “State Proposes Changes to SIP Transit Mitigation Plans.” The following statements are correct:

- The doubling of commuter rail service on the Worcester/Framingham Line is an investment consistent with the Statewide Transportation Plan that will be undertaken separately from the SIP transit commitments.
- For the Fairmount Line project, the MBTA is currently spending \$35 million for state-of-good-repair elements, including rehabilitation of existing stations, track and signal work, and some bridge repair. The SIP commitment would pay for the four additional stations and major-bridge replacement.

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.

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