



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) 973-7100. A photo ID is required to access most meeting sites.

AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON

March 9 (Wednesday)

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

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

March 10 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 10:00 AM

Boston Region MPO Clean Air and Mobility Subcommittee. MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 1:00 PM

March 14 (Monday)

MassDOT Accelerated Bridge Program Council. MBTA Board Room. 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

March 23 (Wednesday)

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

March 24 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 10:00 AM

March 28 (Monday)

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

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Study on Route 126 Corridor Released

RECOMMENDATIONS ISSUED FOR IMPROVING TRAFFIC FLOW AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has completed a study on portions of the Route 126 corridor. In response to the traffic safety, congestion, and pedestrian mobility problems that characterize the Route 126 corridor, especially at the town and business centers, major intersections, and resi-

dential areas, the MPO initiated this study to identify the problems and evaluate multi-modal transportation solutions to the problems. The study corridor extends about 24 miles from Bellingham in the south through Medway, Holliston, and Ashland to Framingham in the north.

MPO staff established and worked closely with an advisory task force to guide this study.

The advisory task force was composed of state elected

officials; representatives from the communities of Ashland, Bellingham, Framingham, Holliston, and Medway; the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT); the Metropolitan Area Planning Council; the 495/MetroWest Partnership; the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority; the MetroWest Regional Collaborative; and the SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee.

• *Route 126 cont. on p. 4*

Public Turns Out for MPO Workshops

MPO CONTINUES TO ACCEPT COMMENTS ON TRANSPORTATION PLAN

More than 100 people attended a series of public workshops hosted by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in February to discuss their thoughts and ideas about transportation planning in the region with the staff of the MPO.

They expressed diverse viewpoints on subjects ranging from the MPO's role in supporting economic development to issues having to do with transportation finance, access to transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, and freight distribution.

The MPO hosted these workshops to gain feedback on a draft Needs Assessment prepared as part of the next long-range transportation plan, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*. The Needs Assessment includes an inventory of problems in the region's transportation system, and will serve as a reference tool that the MPO will use when it selects projects that will receive federal funding.

The Needs Assessment is posted on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org/2035input. Voice your ideas and help shape the region's next long-range transportation plan.



Send a comment to the MPO. . .

Online: WWW.BOSTONMPO.ORG

Click on the **PROVIDE FEEDBACK** button when viewing Transportation Plan documents online or use the **COMMENT FORM** on the homepage.

U.S. mail:

Boston Region MPO
Attn: Michael Callahan
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

E-mail:

publicinformation@bostonmpo.org

The members of the Boston Region MPO: Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Office of Planning and Programming, cities of Boston, Braintree, Newton, and Somerville, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board, MassDOT Highway Division, Massachusetts Port Authority, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, towns of Bedford, Framingham, and Hopkinton

Bridge Replacements Scheduled for Interstate 93 This Summer

RAPID CONSTRUCTION TO MINIMIZE TRAVEL IMPACTS

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) will replace 14 deteriorating bridges on Interstate 93 in Medford this summer using new construction techniques that greatly reduce the time needed to rebuild bridges and that minimize disruptions to traffic and surrounding communities.

What is being called the Fast 14 project will use prefabricated bridge deck panels that are built off site, trucked in, and then hoisted into place by cranes. The bridge replacements will be completed in one construction season, about a quarter of the time it would take if conventional building methods were used.

Preliminary work on the project is already underway. This spring repairs to the substructures of the bridges will be occurring. The replacement of the bridge

superstructures will take place on 10 weekends during the months of June, July, and August.

MassDOT anticipates that the construction will not impact rush-hour traffic on weekdays and that disruptions to local roads near the construction area will be minimized. Weekend lane closures on I-93 will begin at 8:00 PM on Friday nights. Jersey barriers will be used to create a crossover to reroute traffic around the worksites, reducing the capacity of I-93 near those locations by 50 percent. Lanes will reopen by 5:00 AM on Monday mornings. There will be no lane reductions on holiday weekends.

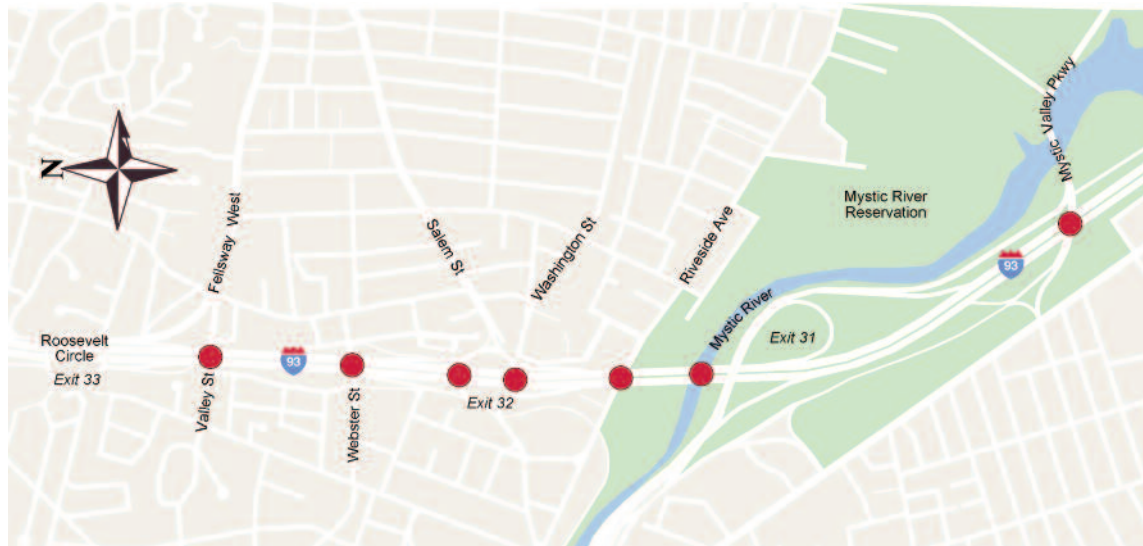
For the latest information on the Fast 14 project, go to www.93Fast14.com.

MassDOT will be implementing a communications plan before and during construction to keep people informed and to help travelers seek alternate routes.

The Fast 14 project is being conducted under MassDOT's Accelerated Bridge Program. The Boston Region MPO approved spending \$70 million in federal funds on this project through the federal fiscal years 2011–14 Transportation Improvement Program.



The Fast 14 project will replace bridge decks on the northbound and southbound sides of Interstate 93 with new modular deck panels, as shown in this MassDOT graphic.



Locations of bridge replacements on Interstate 93

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March 29 (Tuesday)

MassDOT and MBTA: Standing Committee on Finance and Audit. *Offices of the Board, Third Floor.* 11:00 AM

April 6 (Wednesday)

MassDOT and MBTA: Standing Committee on Labor and Compensation. *Conference Room 3910.* 10:45 AM to 12:30 PM

MassDOT and MBTA Board Meeting. *Offices of the Board, Third Floor.* 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

April 7 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3.* 10:00 AM

April 13 (Wednesday)

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

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

April 21 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3.* 10:00 AM

April 25 (Monday)

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

April 26 (Tuesday)

MassDOT and MBTA: Standing Committee on Finance and Audit. *Offices of the Board, Third Floor.* 11:00 AM

April 27 (Wednesday)

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

May 5 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3.* 10:00 AM

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

March 10 (Thursday)

MassRIDES: Safe Routes to School Forum. *Marriott Hotel, Newton.* 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM

March 21 (Monday)

MassDOT Public Information Meeting: Callahan Tunnel Vent Building Facade Overhaul Project. *Nazzaro Community Center, 30 North Bennet Street, Boston.* 6:00 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 publicinformation@bostonmipo.org.

Resources for Elder Transportation Available

Public transportation is a critical need for the region's elder residents, particularly those who no longer drive. Most councils on aging, elder affairs offices, regional transit authorities, and many private nonprofit agencies provide transportation services. To increase public awareness of these services, the MPO has cataloged transportation services available to elders in

each of the MPO region's 101 municipalities. This information is available on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org.

In 62 of the 101 municipalities in the MPO region, the MBTA's THE RIDE program provides door-to-door service to eligible people who cannot use general public transportation all or some of the

● **Elder Services** *cont. on p. 4*

NEW LOCOMOTIVES JOIN THE COMMUTER RAIL FLEET



Two new diesel-electric locomotives have joined the MBTA's commuter rail fleet. These locomotives burn less fuel and are expected to save the MBTA \$78,000 annually per locomotive. Twenty more new locomotives are scheduled to go into service in 2013 to replace the oldest vehicles in the MBTA's fleet.

Boston Region MPO Activities

BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee voted in January and February to move several transportation planning studies forward. The I-495 Corridor/MetroWest Development Compact: Land Use Study will identify priority areas for development and preservation in the Interstate 495 corridor and examine possible smart growth scenarios for that area. The MBTA CharlieCard Trip-Paths Pilot Study will tap into data from the MBTA's Automated Fare Collection system to better understand the travel patterns of transit passengers. The results of the study will be used to calibrate the MPO's regional travel model, which is used for transportation planning in this region.

The Intercity Bus Study will be a comprehensive examination of the intercity, intracity, and commuter bus network in Massachusetts. The information obtained from this study will inform decisions regarding actions that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation could take to retain robust bus routes and to improve mobility and connectivity of the transit system. In order to proceed with the Intercity Bus Study, the MPO must amend two planning documents. The changes are included in Amendment Two of the FFY 2011 element of the FFYs 2011-14 Transportation Improvement Program and the FFY 2011 Unified Planning Work Program. These documents were released for a 30-day public comment period, which ends March 15.

The Committee has also released a completed study, Route 126 Corridor: Transportation Improvement Study: Bellingham to Framingham. (See the article on page one for more information.)

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

The Advisory Council discussed the development of the MPO's next Long-Range Transportation Plan, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*, with MPO project manager Anne McGahan, at their February meeting. The MPO conducted an assessment of the region's transportation needs, which brought together many different data resources to examine the needs of all modes in the region, as well as freight issues and transportation equity concerns.

The Advisory Council also discussed freight needs and issues in the region following a presentation by Walter Bonin, of Marlborough, a Co-Chair of the Freight Committee. A letter written by the Eastern Massachusetts Freight Rail Coalition, and endorsed by the Freight Committee, was submitted to the Advisory Council. The letter identified issues the Freight Committee wants to see addressed in the Long-Range Transportation Plan. Among the issues identified are the relocation of the primary freight rail terminal in the Boston Region, Beacon Park Yards, to Worcester, and

rail car weight restrictions that impede the movement of freight rail in the Boston region.

On the agenda for the March 9 meeting of the Advisory Council is a panel discussion on health and transportation.

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

At the February 23 AACT meeting, Chairman Ben Haynes announced the sudden passing away of the Vice Chairman, John Kane. Mr. Kane was a dedicated member who was actively involved. He will be sorely missed. Board member Philip

Beaulieu has been appointed the new Vice Chairman to complete the term, which expires June 30.

Also at the meeting, nominations opened for the new Executive Board term of 2011-2013, and will continue through April 27. Members in good standing who wish to run for office are invited to request nomination papers by contacting Janie Guion at AACT@ctps.org or by phone at (617) 973-7507.

MPO Recommends Corridor Improvements

• *Route 126 cont. from p. 1*

MPO staff identified several problems in the corridor, which included high-crash locations, congestion, transit delay, lack of sidewalks and amenities for pedestrian circulation, broken and crumbled sidewalks, drainage-related problems, and pavement in poor condition.

MPO staff, in conjunction with the task force, developed several categories of improvements to address the problems identified in the corridor. They included improvements related to sidewalks (continuity and connectivity), pedestrian crossings (enhancements such as signage and lighting), traffic control (including new traffic signals, signal retiming and

coordination, and equipment upgrades), improved signs and pavement markings, pavement rehabilitation, and drainage-related improvements. The recommended improvements, if implemented, would also help on-time performance for bus transit operations in the corridor.

The next step is for the towns to initiate projects through MassDOT for project design development.

The report is available at the MPO website, www.bostonmpo.org. If you have any questions, please contact Seth Asante, Project Manager, at sasante@ctps.org or (617) 973-7098.

Elder Resources

• *Elder Services cont. from p. 3*

time because of a physical, cognitive, or mental disability. Information about THE RIDE and the communities it serves can be found at www.mbta.com/riding_the_t/accessible_services.

In addition, many councils on aging publish transportation information in monthly newsletters. Some newsletters can be found on community websites; most can also be found at www.seniorpublishing.com.

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
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Snow Removal Toolkit Available

During this winter of record snowfalls in New England, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council produced a Snow Removal Policy Toolkit that provides information about local snow removal policies and ordinances, and tools that municipalities can use to increase snow removal compliance and pedestrian safety. Recognizing the important role that commercial, government, and residential property owners have in creating a safe pedestrian network during the winter months, the toolkit offers best practices for maintaining safe walking conditions. Included are tools and recommendations from the Boston Region MPO's Pedestrian Transportation Plan, released in 2010, which identifies actions everyone can take to encourage walking.

The toolkit is available at www.mapc.org/resources/snow-removal-policy.

TRANSREPORT

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