



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**BEYOND SAFETEA-LU:
MPOs LOOK TO THE
FUTURE OF TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING**

Page 2

**STRATEGIES FOR
BEING GREEN**

Page 3

**MASSDOT ISSUES STATUS
REPORTS ON BIG DIG
MITIGATION PROJECTS**

Page 4

**COMMENT PERIOD
EXTENDED FOR GREEN
LINE ENVIRONMENTAL
REPORT**

Page 4

MPO ACTIVITIES

Page 5

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**

December 1 (Tuesday)

Urban Ring Citizens Advisory Committee. Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

December 3 (Thursday)

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

December 16 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA. CANCELLED

Calendar continued on p. 2

MPO Examines Mobility and Safety Issues in the Route 60 Corridor

A new study by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which focused on ways to improve mobility and safety along the Route 60 corridor in Malden and Medford, is now available. The study identifies safety issues for pedestrians and

bicyclists, traffic safety and operations problems, and associated bus service issues along the corridor, which extends from the I-93/Route 60 rotary interchange in Medford to Centre Street and Ferry Street in Malden.

The MPO staff analyzed nine intersections on Route 60,

three others on Main Street and Florence Street, and the bus service in those areas, to define the problems that were impairing mobility and safety.

City officials from Malden and Medford also provided

• *Route 60 cont. on p. 5*



The Malden Center MBTA station is a key transit hub within the Route 60 study area providing connections to commuter rail, subway, and bus service. The MPO studied ways to improve bus service reliability along this corridor.

Transition to MassDOT Underway

Formal implementation of the sweeping transportation reform bill signed by the governor in June began last month with the official launching of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) website on November 1 and the first meeting of the newly appointed, five-member board on November 2.

The transition to MassDOT involves the consolidation of the state's transportation functions into four divisions.

Its structure is presented in a graphic on page 4.

The steps for accomplishing the massive undertaking are outlined in the *90-Day Integration Report* that was prepared by the Office of Transition Management and submitted to the governor in September. The report articulates the vision for the new organization and its goals. It also presents milestones and achievements attained thus far. The report is obtainable

• *MassDOT cont. on p. 4*

MPO Approves More ARRA Projects

The MPO has programmed approximately \$100 million for new transportation projects in the Boston region with the second round of federal economic stimulus funding that was provided to the state this year under the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The new projects are expected to create

• *Stimulus cont. on p. 6*

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

Beyond SAFETEA-LU: MPOs Look to the Future of Transportation Planning

LIVABILITY, ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS, AND CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE MPO AGENDA

While metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) await new federal transportation legislation to replace the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) – the legislation that has governed MPO activities for the past four years – emerging issues that will have a role in the new authorization were key topics at the annual conference of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO), held in Savannah, Georgia, during the last week of October.

Keynote speaker Polly Trottenberg, Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), spoke about important aspects of the authorization that the federal agency will likely focus on, including a Livability Initiative.

This initiative will be aimed at improving quality of life and reducing household expenditures for transportation by investing in projects, such as transit-oriented development projects, that enable people to reduce their reliance on the automobile.

The emphasis will be on breaking down the barriers that often exist across planning areas and investing in transportation projects that are coordinated with, for example, housing and envi-

ronmental initiatives.

Conference sessions addressed other topics that will likely be factors in the development of the new transportation bill, such as federal investment in high-speed rail to connect “megaregions” and to spur economic productivity necessary for the United States to compete effectively in the global marketplace.

Transportation projects and studies implemented at the “megaregion” scale would require MPOs to coordinate more with neighboring MPOs.

The federal climate-change bills being developed by the House and Senate were also subjects of interest at the conference, given that MPOs will have a role in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the transportation sector and adapting to climate-change impacts. Expectations are that MPOs will likely need to develop emission-reduction targets several years after the final rulemaking.

Presenters offered various strategies for reducing GHG emissions from the transportation sector that focus on reducing vehicle-miles traveled, developing land in ways that reduce the reliance on the automobile, and managing the transportation system to reduce fuel consumption. (For more on this subject, see the insert on page 3.)

Speakers suggested that in addition to achieving GHG emission reductions, an MPO’s role in addressing climate change impacts may also incorporate adaptation measures, including planning for the protection of transportation infrastructure from the effects of rising sea levels, more intense storms and flooding, and temperature changes that climate scientists are predicting.

The Federal Highway Administration is recommending that MPOs begin



Investment in high-speed rail service to provide more connectivity between megaregions, reduce traffic congestion, and spur economic activity was one of the topics discussed at this year's AMPO conference.

inventorying infrastructure that could be subject to climate-change impacts in their future regional transportation plans.

Calendar cont. from p. 1

December 16 (Wednesday)

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Freight Committee. CANCELLED

Regional Transportation Advisory Council. CANCELLED

December 17 (Thursday)

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

December 21 (Monday)

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

January 7 (Thursday)

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

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

December 10 (Thursday)

MBTA Senior and Transportation Access Pass CharlieCards: *Arlington Senior Center, 27 Maple Street, Arlington.* 12:00 noon to 4:00 PM

December 15 (Tuesday)

MBTA Senior and Transportation Access Pass CharlieCards: *Lynn Senior Center, 8 Silsbee Street, Lynn.* 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

December 16 (Wednesday)

MassDOT Highway Division Design Hearing: Proposed Replacement of the Cedar Street bridge over Route 9 in Wellesley. *Wellesley Town Hall, Great Hall, 525 Washington Street, Wellesley.* 7:00 PM

December 23 (Wednesday)

MassDOT Highway Division Design Hearing: Route 9 Resurfacing in Framingham and Natick. *Framingham Town Hall, Memorial Building, Ablondi Room, 150 Concord Street, Framingham.* 7:00 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), (617) 973-7089 (TTY), or e-mail publicinformation@bostonmpo.org.

For 2010, I resolve to . . .

2010 is just around the corner, so it is not too soon to think about New Year's resolutions. These days just about everyone recognizes that each of us needs to play a role in mitigating the potentially staggering impacts of climate change. Individual actions make a difference! Kudos to you if you are already doing things like remembering to bring a reusable bag for grocery shopping or using an eco-friendly dry cleaner. But if you want to ramp up your commitment, consider incorporating some of the transportation-related strategies listed below into your lifestyle—both at home and at work.

Personal Strategies for Being Green

- Switch to e-mail subscriptions. *(For TRANSREPORT, drop an e-mail to publicinformation@bostonmpo.org with "e-subscription" in the subject line.)*
- Consider selling your car and joining a carsharing service such as Zipcar.
- Attend a public meeting or hearing related to a transportation initiative you support.
- Drive the speed limit.
- Patronize car washes that recycle water.
- Make one meal per week without using any processed food.
- Learn about issues related to the environmental impacts of transportation
- If purchasing a new car, purchase one with high fuel economy. *(Check www.fuel-economy.gov/FEG/bestworst.shtml.)*
- Invest in companies that research and develop alternative fuels.
- Keep your tires properly inflated.
- Do not idle your vehicle. *(Idling for 10 seconds uses more fuel than turning the engine off and restarting it. The modern automobile engine does not need to idle when first started in cold weather. The best way to warm the engine is to drive it.)*
- Remove excess weight from your vehicle.
- Use overdrive gears.
- Keep your vehicle's air filter clean.
- Purchase carbon offsets when you fly.
- Don't drive if you don't have to. *(For example, walk or bike to the supermarket and, if driving, combine trips such as shopping and picking up your dry cleaning when feasible.)*
- Take transit whenever possible.

- Live near transit.
- Shop locally.
- Carpool/vanpool for both commuting and non-work trips, for example, when meeting friends for dinner, or shopping.
- Use a transponder to reduce idling at toll plazas and to reduce your travel time.

Business Strategies for Being Green

- Promote telecommuting where feasible.
- Institute carpool/vanpool ridematching programs. *(For information, contact MassRIDES at www.commute.com or 888-4COMMUTE.)*
- Offer a guaranteed-ride-home program.
- Offer flexible work schedules in conjunction with implementing congestion pricing.
- Form an employee group to identify ways for your company to be more green.
- Allow a four-day work week.
- Subsidize transit passes.
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Promote eco-driving (for example, driving the speed limit and keeping tires properly inflated).
- Promote compact land use concepts such as smart growth and transit-oriented development.
- Enforce anti-idling regulations.
- Retrofit vehicle fleets with clean-fuel technologies.
- Educate employees about their carbon footprint.
- Locate your business near transit and limit the parking capacity.

Status Report on Big Dig Mitigation Projects Issued by MassDOT

MassDOT officials announced in November that they will begin providing monthly updates on the progress of a set of projects that the Commonwealth is legally required to construct or design as mitigation for the air quality impacts related to the Central Artery/Tunnel project.

The set of projects, defined in the Commonwealth's State

Implementation Plan (SIP), consists of the extension of the Green Line to College Avenue in Medford, with a spur to Union Square in Somerville; improvements to the Fairmount commuter rail line; the addition of a total of 1,000 new parking spaces at the Beverly and Salem commuter rail stations; and the design of a connector

• SIP *cont. on p. 5*

• MassDOT *cont. from p. 1* at the MassDOT website, www.massdot.state.ma.us; click on the "Accountability and Transparency: Facts and Figures" link. Similar quarterly reports will be presented as the transition proceeds.

Day-to-day progress may be followed through a variety of

MassDOT social media, such as "The Road to Reform," a weekly e-newsletter; a blog page; Twitter; YouTube; and Flickr. These also may be found at the MassDOT website; click on the "MassDOT Social Media" link at the bottom of the webpage.

Comment Period Extended for Green Line Environmental Report

MassDOT has extended the public comment period for the Green Line extension project's draft environmental impact report/environmental assessment (DEIR/EA), a detailed environmental analysis of the alternatives for extending the MBTA's Green Line service to Somerville and Medford.

The proposed service consists of two distinct branches: a "mainline" branch, which will operate within the existing MBTA Lowell Line commuter rail right-of-way, beginning at a relocated Lechmere Station in Cambridge and traveling north to Medford; and a branch line operating within the existing MBTA Fitchburg Line commuter rail right-of-

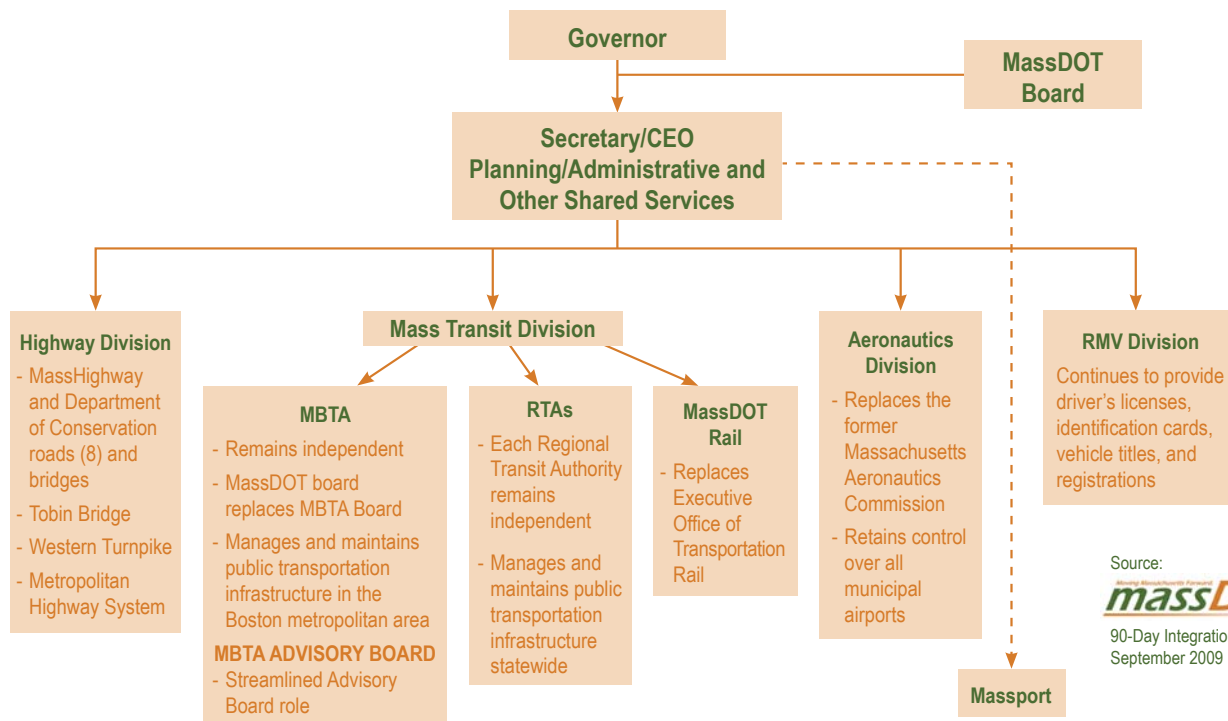
way, to Union Square in Somerville. For both lines, the existing commuter rail tracks will be moved and the new Green Line tracks will be located within the existing rights-of-way.

The DEIR/EA, a combined state and federal planning document, contains technical information on potential benefits and environmental impacts to the municipalities through which the extension will run. The document is now available for public review at www.mass.gov/greenlineextension.

Public comments on the DEIR/EA may be sent to the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Ian

• Green Line *cont. on p. 6*

Massachusetts Department of Transportation Organizational Structure



Source:

 90-Day Integration Report,
 September 2009

• SIP *cont. from p. 4*

between the Red Line and the Blue Line in downtown Boston. The status updates on these projects will occur during one of the meetings of the MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee, which are open to the public. (See Meeting Calendar for notices of upcoming MPO meetings.)

An additional public meeting about the Green Line extension is scheduled this month to discuss alternatives for the location of the maintenance facility associated with the project. The meeting will be announced in the calendar on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org, and on MassDOT's website, www.massdot.state.ma.us.

MPO Recommends Improvements to Route 60 Intersections

• Route 60 *cont. from p. 1*
input during this process.

Problems that were identified include the following:

- A general lack of pedestrian and bicycle signage and pavement markings along the corridor to alert motorists to share the road with pedestrians and bicyclists
- Traffic signals that have poorly timed pedestrian phases or lack push buttons to activate the pedestrian crossing signal
- Traffic operations that do not satisfactorily move the heavy volumes of traffic

that occur during peak hours

- Higher-than-average crash rates
- Traffic signal delays that affect the travel time of buses during peak hours

MPO staff developed alternatives for addressing the safety and mobility problems in the corridor based on their analysis and from input by city officials and state transportation agencies. The study recommendations focused on traffic safety and operations improvements, visibility and structural improvements to enhance the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists, and traf-

fic signal improvements to benefit the movement of buses.

Some of the recommendations involved adding left-turn bays at intersections, retiming and coordinating traffic signals, implementing transit signal priority at busway exits, adding signage and pavement markings for pedestrians and bicyclists, repairing sidewalks, installing flashing beacons at crosswalks, and posting pedestrian guide maps.

To read the full report, visit the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org, and click on "MPO/CTPS Reports."

Boston Region MPO Activities

BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee adopted an amendment to the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2010 element of the FFYs 2010–2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to incorporate projects that will receive economic stimulus funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). (See the article on page 1.) The Committee also approved the work program for Safety and Operations Analyses at Selected Intersections, the third in a series of studies that the MPO staff has conducted to identify improvements that address safety and operational problems at selected intersections in the Boston region.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

The relation of climate change to transportation was the theme of the Advisory Council's November 18 meeting. Chris Porter, of Cambridge Systematics, who represents MassBike on the Council, presented the findings of a national study, "Moving Cooler: An Analysis of Transportation Strategies for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions." The study considered the benefits, costs, and equity effects of

several individual strategies and bundles of strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. More information on the report and its findings can be found at www.movingcooler.info.

Anne McGahan, of the Boston Region MPO staff, then updated members on the current MPO programs that address climate change and discussed future directions the MPO could take in this area. Presently, the MPO addresses climate change by funding projects that enhance biking, walking, and transit use; through intersec-

tion improvements that reduce congestion; and by supporting the use of alternative fuels.

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

At their November meeting, AACT members discussed designated parking for THE RIDE at key stations and safety issues concerning the MBTA's fixed-route and paratransit services.

At the October meeting, members heard from the Manager of Systemwide Accessibility and the Deputy Director for Paratransit

Operations—THE RIDE, who reported on monthly activities and statistics and announced the MBTA's plan to replace 18,000 bus stop signs. The new signs will include notice of a \$100 fine for parking in a bus stop.

Also at that meeting, members reviewed the MBTA's updated wall map, which features rapid transit stations, key bus routes, and commuter rail connections. The MBTA is updating maps throughout the system with input from AACT and other organizations.

MPO Programs Economic Stimulus Projects in TIP and JOURNEY TO 2030

• Stimulus *cont. from p. 1*

jobs and provide infrastructure that will help spur economic development in the region.

The projects selected in this second round include reconstruction, safety, and roadway resurfacing projects in Bellingham, Braintree, Boston, Framingham, Medford, Newton, Norwood, Quincy, Somerville, and Watertown, as well as a bicycle path connector to the Alewife MBTA station, bus transit improvements, a pedestrian bridge over Route 1 in Foxborough, a ferry terminal in Lynn, roadway access improvements to the Assembly Square redevelopment site in Somerville, the

construction of a parking garage at the MBTA's Wonderland Station in Revere, and upgrades to the fiber-optic network that transportation agencies use for emergency management.

The complete list of ARRA-funded projects and funding amounts can be found on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org.

ARRA funds are provided under Title 23 of federal law, and therefore must be programmed by metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in their Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs).

At its meeting on November 19, following a 14-day public

comment period, the Boston Region MPO amended the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2010 element of the FFYs 2010–2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – the plan for implementing projects over the next several years – to add the ARRA-funded projects.

This action necessitated a revision of the MPO's long-range transportation plan, JOURNEY TO 2030, since every project that is estimated to cost more than \$10 million must be referenced in the long-range plan.

• Green Line *cont. from p. 4*

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Comments may be copied to Katherine Fichter, MassDOT,

Office of Transportation Planning, 10 Park Plaza, Room 4150, Boston, MA 02116.

Comments must be received no later than January 8, 2010.

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