

TRANSREPORT

TRANSPORTATION NEWS FROM THE BOSTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Major Big Dig Milestone Reached: Route I-93 Northbound Opens

A low-key ribbon-cutting ceremony for the phased opening of the new Route I-93 northbound tunnel system, which Governor Romney and state lawmakers are proposing to name the Liberty Tunnel, was held on March 27. It was attended by federal, state, and local dignitaries as well as project construction workers. It included a tribute to the four workers who were killed in the course of the 12-year construction period and homages to American troops involved in the war in Iraq. "America is built by great American men and women; America is defended by great American men and women," said Matthew Amorello, chairman of the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority.

The process of moving northbound traffic from the old elevated Central Artery to the new I-93 northbound tunnel system began with reducing the Sumner Tunnel to one lane between March 22 and March 30 so that construction crews

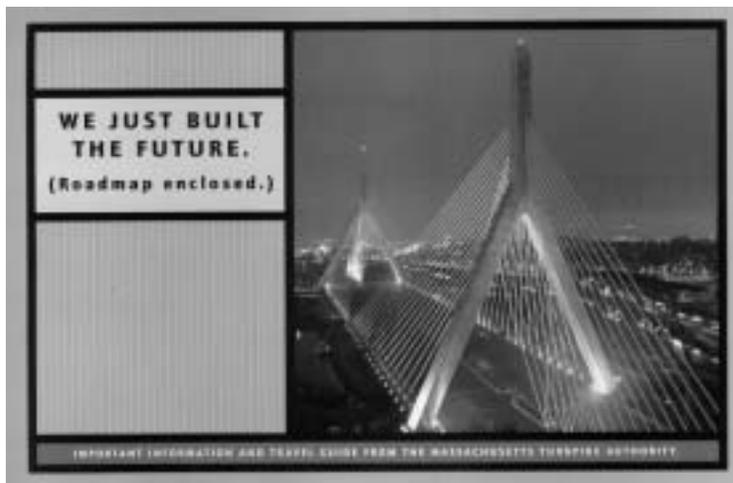
could rebuild and lower the right-hand lane to connect it to the new tunnel in the North End. Next, Exit 26 from I-93

way. Motorists were urged to stay away from the Central Artery during the transitional weekend and advised to either

seek alternate routes or use the MBTA, which ran additional service throughout the weekend. Maps and descriptions of detours and of new exits and on-ramps were included in newspapers and posted on media Web sites along with links to the Big Dig Web site's Motorist Advantage Program and the site's virtual driving tour of the new highway.

To assist motorists in familiarizing themselves with the new locations of on-ramps

and exits, the Turnpike Authority has produced the Motorist Advantage Program brochure, which is designed to fit in a glove compartment. The brochure is available at turnpike exits, chambers of commerce, town halls, and numerous other locations. A complete list of these locations, along with additional maps and other information about using the new highway system, may be downloaded from www.bigdig.com.



Cover of Turnpike Authority guide to using new I-93 northbound

northbound to Storrow Drive, Leverett Circle, and the North Station area was closed on March 26 at 11:00 P.M. to allow construction crews to complete an underground Exit 26 to those destinations.

On Friday, March 28, at 7:00 P.M., traffic on I-93 northbound was reduced to one lane from the Massachusetts Avenue entrance ramp through the Tobin Bridge exit in Charlestown, also to allow for completion of connections to the new highway.

The new Route I-93 northbound tunnel system and the Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge opened on Saturday, March 29, in the evening. The new highway system currently carries five lanes of traffic at its widest point. When completed at the end of 2004, the bridge will carry six lanes of northbound traffic.

Extensive media coverage greatly assisted the management of traffic over the course of the transition to the new high-

MPO ELECTION REMINDERS

Nomination papers for the 2003 MPO election, to be held on May 28, are due at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council on **April 21**. For further information call MAPC at (617) 451-2770 or visit its Web site at www.mapc.org.

The deadline for submitting candidates' statements for publication in the May issue of TRANSREPORT is **April 16**. Statements may be sent to CTPS, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116 or to publicinformation@ctps.org.

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BOSTON MPO ACTION ITEMS

On March 6, following a 30-day public review and a recommendation from the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee, the Boston MPO approved an amendment to its 2003–08 Transportation Improvement Program. The amendment:

- Authorizes the use of Grant Anticipation Notes (GANS) to purchase new emission-control buses and to accelerate the reconstruction of Maverick Station on the Blue Line.
- Reallocates MBTA funds from grade crossing improvements to the provision of accessibility at Charles/MGH Station on the Red Line.
- Makes funding changes within the Section 5303 and Section 5307 Infrastructure Programs to achieve consistency with the current project schedules and the MBTA Capital Investment Plan.
- Reduces short-term funding for an automated fare collection system for the MBTA.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

On March 6, in addition to recommending MPO endorsement of the TIP amendment outlined above, the Boston MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee approved a work program for the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) to conduct a reconnaissance study of Route 133 in Essex. This work is part of the first of eight Executive Order 418 grant proposals that have a transportation component. Executive Order 418 is a state-funded initiative intended to help cities and towns expand their housing opportunities, while balancing economic development, transportation infrastructure, and open-space preservation.

On March 20 the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee approved a work program for CTPS to provide assistance to MassHighway in processing the Registry of Motor Vehicles accident file and in producing lists of the top 1,000 crash intersections for 1998–2000 and 1999–2001. MassHighway will use these lists for safety analyses. Also on that day, the committee approved two technical reports. The first report, prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, presents socio-economic forecasts that will be used in the development of the Boston MPO's 2003 Regional Transportation Plan. The second report presents the results of a study of the Route 109 corridor (see related article on page 3).

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA UPDATE

At the March AACT meeting, members reviewed the 60% design plans for Fields Corner Station on the MBTA's Red Line. Also, Chairman Jim Oliver reminded members of the change in meeting time for April. See the calendar on page 4 for details. The evening meeting time is being tested to see if it allows more people to attend. In April a subcommittee will be reviewing the MBTA's response to comments made at the AACT focus group meetings that were held last fall.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

At the March meeting, four Metropolitan Area Planning Council subregional groups—the Inner Core Committee, North Shore Task Force, North Suburban Planning Council, and Three Rivers Interlocal Council—were officially accepted as new Council members. There are now 52 members, including municipalities, citizen organizations, and non-MPO agencies, and 16 ex-officio members, including MPO members.

Hadley Clark, data coordinator for the Boston Indicators Project, gave an overview of the project and discussed some of the transportation findings. (See related article to the right.)

MBTA Advisory Board Set to Review 2004 Budget

On April 11 the MBTA Advisory Board will hear a presentation from MBTA chief financial officer Jonathan Davis on the Authority's fiscal year 2004 budget, which begins on July 1. See the calendar on page 4 for details.

Oversight of the MBTA's operating budget is the primary responsibility of the Advisory Board, which is composed of the chief elected officials (or their designees) of the MBTA district's 175 cities and towns. The MBTA submits its budget annually to the Advisory Board for review and approval. It also submits any subsequent requests for line-item transfers or supplementary budgets.

In addition to approving the budget, the Board is responsible for approving the Program for Mass Transportation, the long-range plan for capital development, and for reviewing the five-year Capital Investment Plan. A staff of four keeps abreast of MBTA capital project planning and operations in terms of cost, operating effectiveness, marketability, and revenue, as well as ensuring that the budget meets legal requirements.

The Advisory Board is also a member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Boston Foundation Releases *Boston Indicators Report*

On February 28, at a Boston College Citizens Seminar attended by hundreds of civic leaders, the Boston Foundation announced the release of *The Boston Indicators Report 2002*. Speakers at the event included state and city officials, as well as business, education, and church leaders.

The Boston Indicators Project is a civic initiative coordinated by the Boston Foundation in partnership with the City of Boston/Boston Redevelopment Authority and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. Its goal is to engage the general public, as well as civic and community-based institutions, the media, business, academia, and government officials, in better understanding Boston's

■ Boston Indicators Report *cont.* on p. 4

HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT BOSTON MPO STUDIES

NORTH SUBURBAN TRANSIT OPPORTUNITIES STUDY

This recently completed study, which was conducted by the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), examines the potential for implementing new transit services and modifying existing ones in selected municipalities of the North Suburban subarea. The subarea includes, but is not limited to, Burlington, Woburn, Wilmington, Reading, Stoneham, and Wakefield.

The report first identifies major employment concentrations in the study area and assesses their accessibility to existing transit services. It then reviews existing travel patterns to determine the origins of commuters traveling to these employment locations, along with the



relative volumes of all commuting trips made in the study area. Finally, specific improvements to transit service are proposed as strategies for improving mobility. Examples of such strategies are:

- The institution of an Anderson Regional Transportation Center feeder service oriented to area employees.
- The extension of certain bus routes to provide better "crosstown" suburban-suburban connections.
- The expansion of service hours for specific bus routes to provide local residents with improved access to nearby jobs with early report times.

To request a copy of the study, contact Clinton Bench of CTPS at (617) 973-7100 or cbench@ctps.org.

ROUTE 109 CORRIDOR PLANNING STUDY

This study, which was also conducted by CTPS, provides a detailed examination of congestion issues along Route 109, a two-lane arterial roadway that passes through eight communities from Dedham to Milford. The study is an outgrowth of the Boston MPO's 2000 Congestion Management System Plan, which identified significant congestion along this cor-

ridor. It responds to requests from corridor residents for multimodal solutions that would promote safety and efficiency of regional and local traffic while maintaining the character of the roadway.



The study identifies changes in traffic volumes, includes an origin-and-destination analysis of traffic traveling in the corridor, suggests intersection improvements, and explores alternative transportation options, including the use of park-and-ride lots, shuttle bus opportunities, and improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians.

To request a copy of the report on this study, contact Alicia Wilson at (617) 973-7100 or awilson@ctps.org.

MBTA Short Notes



• On February 25 the Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad Company (MBCR) signed a \$1 billion, five-year contract with the MBTA to provide commuter rail services. The award came after a highly competitive bid process that began last spring. MBCR is comprised of three parent companies: Connex, Bombardier, and Boston's Alternative Concepts, Inc. (ACI). The companies have extensive experience in operating and maintaining passenger rail systems, both in North America and abroad, and they understand the MBTA's rich history and operations. MBCR will begin providing services on July 1.

• In March the MBTA reintroduced its AnsaldoBreda (Type Eight) cars into Green Line service. The MBTA suspended the use of these accessible low-floor vehicles in August 2001 due to problems that had developed shortly after the cars began operation. The reintroduction follows a 15-month study of the vehicles' design, the upgrading of track, and 5,000 miles of incident-free vehicle testing.

To ensure a smooth introduction, the MBTA has put eight Breda cars on the B branch of the Green Line and will phase the cars into service on the C, D, and E branches. The MBTA expects to put all 100 Breda low-floor cars into service by the end of 2004.

• Also in March, MBTA construction crews began raising platform D at Park Street Station to make it accessible for all customers. Commuters who normally board at the west-end platform must now board at the east-end platform, at the Cleveland Circle berth on Track 1. MBTA officials will be available to answer any questions about the new boarding configuration.



MEETING CALENDAR

The public is welcome to attend the following transportation-related meetings. A photo ID is usually required for access to these meeting sites.

AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON

Thursday, April 3
Boston MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Work Session 10:00 A.M.
 MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150

Wednesday, April 9
Regional Transportation Advisory Council 3:00 P.M.
 Conference Room 1

Friday, April 11
MBTA Advisory Board: MBTA Fiscal Year 2004 Budget 9:30 A.M.
 Conference Room I

Thursday, April 17
Boston MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee 10:00 A.M.
 MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150

Wednesday, April 23
Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) 6:00 P.M.
 Conference Room 2

Wednesday, April 30
Boston MPO Environmental Justice Committee 2:00 P.M.
 MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150

Call (617) 222-5179 for date, time, and room
MBTA Board of Directors

AT OTHER BOSTON-AREA LOCATIONS

Tuesday April 1
New Charles River Basin Citizen Advisory Committee 4:00 P.M.
 EF Center
 One Education Street, Cambridge
 29F site visit: wear long pants and sturdy boots; hard hats and vests to be provided.

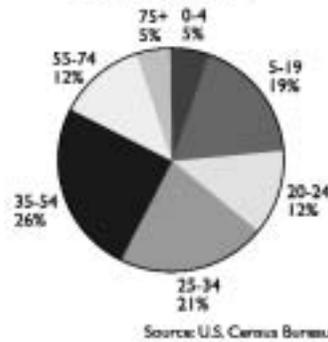
Monday, April 14
MBTA Public Meeting: Fitchburg Commuter Rail Service 6:00 P.M.
 Concord Town House, Second Floor
 22 Monument Square, Concord

Meeting dates and times are subject to change: call (617) 973-7119 for confirmation. Additional transportation meetings open to the public are listed on the Boston MPO Web site, at www.bostonmpo.org.

■ Boston Indicators Report cont. from p. 2

key challenges and opportunities through shared access to high-quality, objective data. In addition to produc-

**Population by Age Group
 Boston, 2000**



An example of data available in the Indicators Report

ing the indicators report, the project fosters dialogue about how to identify and respond to the city's and region's unique challenges and opportunities.

"The Boston Indicators Project is a major accomplishment that has become the envy of other cities," said Mayor Thomas Menino. "It examines our current situation from a historical perspective and provides us with a road map to the possibilities of the future."

The complete indicators report is available online at a new interactive Web site, www.bostonindicators.org, providing the latest data, charts, and analysis tracking Greater Boston's progress across 10 categories: civic health, cul-

tural life and the arts, economy, education, environment, housing, public health, public safety, technology, and transportation. The full online report enables visitors to the site to explore, research, understand, and explain many stories about Boston and the region, how issues connect to each other across sectors, and how change occurs. It also presents partial lists of challenges, innovative local solutions, and competition in each sector. A print version of the full report will be available later this spring. In addition, the Boston Foundation will release biennial reports with constant online updates and outreach through 2030, Boston's 400th anniversary.

TRANSREPORT

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TRANSREPORT is available in accessible formats to people with disabilities. Contact the Central Transportation Planning Staff at (617) 973-7119 (voice), (617) 973-7089 (TTY), (617) 973-8855 (fax), or publicinformation@ctps.org (e-mail).

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