

TRANS REPORT

TRANSPORTATION NEWS FROM THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Federal Transportation Bill, SAFETEA-LU, Signed into Law

After Congressional approval in July, the long-awaited new federal transportation bill, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), was enacted with President Bush's signature. The new, 1,700-page federal surface transportation act provides an estimated \$286.4 billion in guaranteed funding for federal fiscal years (FYs) 2004–2009. The total amount of funds available under SAFETEA-LU is more than 30 percent higher than under its predecessor, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

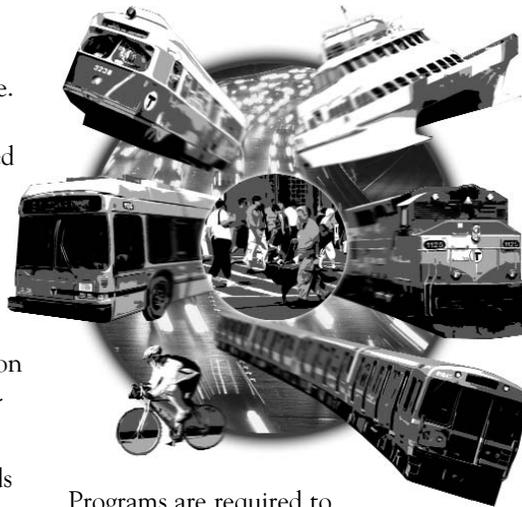
Since 1991, federal transportation funds have been authorized through six-year programs funded by federal gas tax revenue placed in the Highway Trust Fund. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) consolidated federal transportation spending, set planning requirements, and significantly strengthened the role of metropolitan planning organizations in transportation decision-making. Building on its predecessor, TEA-21 was passed in 1998. TEA-21 expired in 2003 and had to be extended 12 times.

It is estimated that Massachusetts will receive an average of \$900 million per year from SAFETEA-LU's highway and transit formula programs.

Metropolitan Planning

SAFETEA-LU increases planning funding to a 1.25 percent share of the authorized funds for the core highway and transit programs. TEA-21 allotted only 1.00 percent of those funds to planning. The act requires long-range metropolitan

transportation plans to be updated every four years. Transportation Improvement



Programs are required to cover a four-year period and to be updated at least every four years, regardless of the air quality designation status.

Core Highway Programs

Formula programming for highway funds is based on population and roadway statistics. Under SAFETEA-LU, each state's minimum rate of return on its Highway Trust Fund contribution will increase from the current 90.5 percent to 92.0 percent by FY 2008. All states are also guaranteed a total six-year average highway funding increase of at least 19.00 percent when compared with a state's six-year average under TEA-21. The Federal Highway Administration estimates that over the life of SAFETEA-LU, Massachusetts will receive a 19.28 percent increase in highway funds over annual TEA-21 funding levels.

A total of \$183.5 billion is estimated for the core highway program for FYs 2005–2009, starting with \$34.6 billion in FY 2005 and increasing to \$38.6 billion in

FY 2009. A total of \$45.3 billion will go to the transit program through FY 2009—\$7.6 billion in FY 2005, increasing to \$10.3 billion in FY 2009.

The Highway Safety Improvement Program, established in the legislation as a new core highway program, is separately funded for the first time. A total of \$5.1 billion is provided for FYs 2006–2009. Of this amount, \$880 million is set aside for a separate distribution for the Railway-Highway Grade Crossing Program, with the remainder to be distributed to states by formula, which states can spend solving their most serious safety problems.

SAFETEA-LU requires states to develop and implement a strategic highway safety plan and to submit annual reports that describe their most hazardous locations, their progress in implementing highway safety improvement projects, and their effectiveness in reducing fatalities and injuries. Other safety programs, such as "Safe Routes to School," will address bicycle and pedestrian needs and improve signage.

■ SAFETEA-LU *cont. on p. 5*

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BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

The Boston Region MPO is ready to begin its new fiscal year following the endorsement of the FYs 2006–2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and FY 2006 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The new TIP, which was adopted on August 11, outlines a \$577.68 million road and bridge program and a \$814.03 million transit program for the MPO region, which includes 101 municipalities. It also allocates \$1.2 billion for the completion of the Central Artery/Tunnel project.

The FY 2006 UPWP sets forth a \$6.3 million program of planning studies and activities. New studies to be undertaken in the new fiscal year are:

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements in Town Centers
- MBTA Transit Signal Prioritization along the Arborway Corridor
- Newton Corner Rotary Study
- Route 2/Alewife Brook Parkway Traffic Study
- Route I-93/Route 24 Interchange Improvement Study

Also on August 11, the MPO adopted an amendment to the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that revises the air quality conformity determination to reflect programming decisions made during the development of the TIP.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

In addition to considering the comments received from the public on the drafts of the TIP, UPWP, and amendment of the RTP, the MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee also approved an adjustment to the FYs 2005–2009 TIP that reflects current information on the readiness of projects for construction.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

In August, Advisory Council members and guests received a briefing on the history and status of the Somerville Community Path and its plans for the future from Stephen Winslow, City of Somerville Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator. Members also discussed the reevaluation of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) transit commitments.

The September Advisory Council meeting will feature a staff briefing on Air Quality Conformity Determination.

MPO to Hold Walkable Community Workshops

The Boston Region MPO will be holding Walkable Community Workshops this fall. September workshops will be held in Maynard (September 14) and Arlington (September 22). The workshops, which last approximately two-and-a-half hours, start with a presentation on techniques to make a community more walkable, as well as pitfalls to avoid. This is followed by a "walking audit," where participants go out and look at a site in the community. The final portion of each workshop is a discussion of what was viewed during the audit and ways to follow up on possible improvements.

The workshops are open to all those with an interest in improving walkability and community livability: elected officials, citizens, and professionals in the fields of planning, engineering, law enforcement, and education.

Last year MPO staff held Walkable Community Workshops in Rockport, Franklin, and Saugus. To register for this year's workshops, or to get more information, please call Cathy Lewis (617-973-7118) or Jonathan Church (617-973-7097) or e-mail walkable@ctps.org.

Savin Hill Station Reopens

Red Line riders who live in the Savin Hill neighborhood of Dorchester now have a new station to meet their needs. A public ceremony to celebrate the re-opening of the newly renovated Savin Hill Station was attended by many local leaders, including Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey and Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino. Originally built in 1927,



Savin Hill Station was in dire need of renovations. Platform upgrades and other minor updates were made in 1982 when the Red Line's tracks were replaced, but the station was never fully reconstructed. The renovated station now boasts a new architectural design and headhouse, extended platforms that accommodate six-car trains, a new escalator, and new elevators.

Savin Hill, which was closed for 21 months during construction, is the first of three Red Line stations in Dorchester to be completed under a \$67 million station rehabilitation contract. The other two stations, Shawmut and Fields Corner, are slated for completion in 2006 and 2007, respectively. The upgrades will bring all of the stations into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will provide state-of-the-art amenities, including LED display signs and updated communications and security systems. The individual designs of all four Dorchester stations are a direct result of years of dialogue between MBTA staff, neighborhood residents, community activists, and elected officials.

Stull and Lee Incorporated, of Boston, designed the new Savin Hill Station, while the new Shawmut, Fields Corner, and Ashmont stations were designed by Cambridge Seven Associates, Inc., of

■ Savin Hill *cont. on p. 4*

MBTA Names Bulfinch Triangle Developers, Debuts Transit-Oriented-Development Web Site

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) has designated Trinity Financial Inc. and Hines Raymond LLP as the developers of two parcels at the Bulfinch Triangle site adjacent to North Station. Purchase of the parcels by these developers will generate nearly \$28 million for the MBTA.

The parcels will be developed in coordination with five parcels being offered by the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (MassPike). Located along Causeway, Canal, and Traverse streets, above the underground Green and Orange lines at North Station, the two parcels total 85,000 square feet.

For one parcel (Parcel 1A), Trinity is proposing a nine-story building with 27,750 square feet of ground-floor retail space, one level of parking, and 200 condominiums on the upper seven floors. For the second parcel (Parcel 2B), Hines Raymond is proposing an eleven-story building with a full-service supermarket, 24,000 square feet of additional retail space, 50 to 75 parking spaces, and seven levels of condominiums.

The planning for the Bulfinch Triangle redevelopment has been a cooperative, multiyear process involving representatives of the Bulfinch Triangle Development Advisory Committee, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), MassPike, and the MBTA. The development proposals will be subject to the BRA's permit review process, which

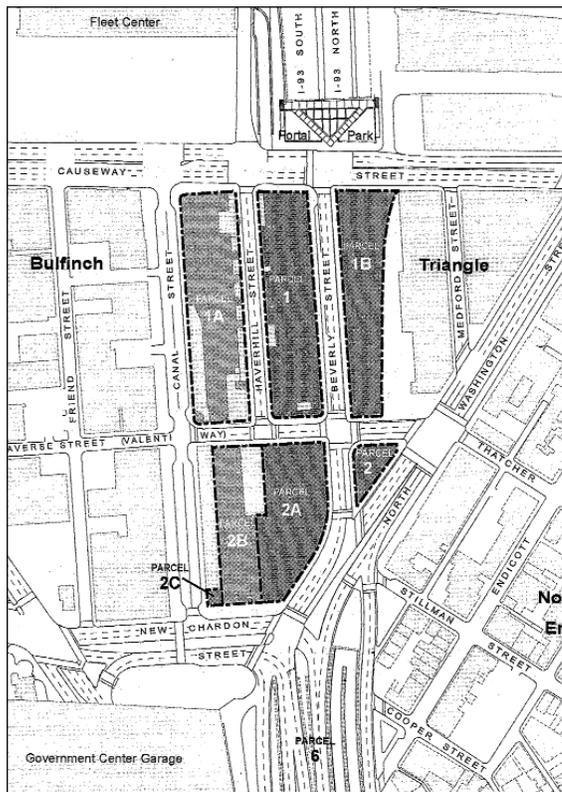
includes public hearings to solicit comments from residents and businesses in the immediate area and in nearby neighborhoods.

Trinity and Hines Raymond submitted the highest responsible bids that accorded with the MBTA's statutory

requirements for the disposition of surplus property. The Bulfinch Triangle development is part of an effort by the MBTA to promote and build transit-oriented development (TOD). TOD is compact, walkable development centered around transit stations. Generally including a mix of uses such as housing, shopping, employment, and recreational

facilities, TOD is designed with transit and pedestrians as high priorities.

In an effort to spread the word about TOD to local communities, the MBTA now has several Web pages devoted to TOD within its general Web site. The pages include local examples of TOD within Massachusetts and other planned and ongoing MBTA TOD projects. There is also a list of resources from the Office of Commonwealth Development to assist local municipalities in implementing TOD in their communities. To find out more, visit the MBTA's TOD Web site at www.mbta.com/projects_underway/tod.asp.



Massport Files ENF for Hanscom Runway Project

In an effort to improve the runway safety areas at Hanscom Field, the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport) filed an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) with the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office for the Runway 5/23 Safety Area Improvement Project. Runway safety areas (RSAs) are designed to reduce the risk of damage to aircraft in the event of either an undershoot, overshoot, or excursion from the runway. An RSA also provides access for firefighting and rescue equipment during such incidents.



This project involves regrading and other improvements to RSAs in order to enhance safety at Hanscom Field and to comply with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) design standards. The improvements will not have any effect on normal runway operations, and there will be no runway expansion, no additional pavement, and no increase in capacity. The Runway 5 safety area is currently 500 feet wide, 520 feet long on the west edge, and 845 feet long on the east edge. The Runway 23 safety area is currently 300 feet wide and 890 feet long. The FAA design standard for runway end safety areas at Hanscom Field is 500 feet wide by 1,000 feet long. The FAA has mandated that the safety areas be improved.

Because of anticipated community interest in the project, Massport has requested an extended public comment period for this ENF. *The deadline for public comments on the ENF is September 27.* In addition, a public consultation session regarding the ENF will be held in the near future, but the details have yet to be determined. For more information, or to view a copy of the ENF, visit www.massport.com.

Handbook Issued on Public Participation in Transportation Planning



Whether you speak English or Spanish, you now have a concise handbook on how to take part in the transportation-planning process of the

Boston Region MPO. The MPO's newly published booklet, "Be Informed, Be Involved," provides an overview of the who, what, where, and when of transportation planning in the region. It outlines how you can keep up-to-date on MPO activities, studies, and publications, and on opportunities for participation.

The handbook is a resource guide for residents and local officials who want to stay informed and have input into transportation decision-making for the region. Its glossary translates the "alphabet soup" of acronyms for transportation terms often found in planning documents.

People can keep informed about transportation planning in the Boston region by visiting www.bostonmpo.org, reading *TRANSREPORT*, and subscribing to MPOInfo, the MPO's one-way e-mail listserve. They can get involved by attending meetings, workshops, and open houses hosted by the MPO or by submitting comments on planning programs and studies.

The English- and Spanish-language booklets will be distributed to municipal planning and administration offices, as well as public libraries, throughout the region. They are also available as PDF files at www.bostonmpo.org. To have a copy mailed to you, please send an e-mail, specifying English or Spanish, to publicinformation@ctps.org or call (617) 973-7100.

Publicación de Guía de Participación Pública en Planeamiento de Transporte

Hable usted tanto Inglés como Español, ahora posee una guía concisa acerca de cómo tomar parte en el proceso de planeamiento de transporte en la Región MPO de Boston. El folleto de publicación reciente de la MPO, "Informese, Involúcrese," provee una visión general acerca del quién, qué, dónde, y cuándo del planeamiento de transporte de la región. Éste resume cómo usted se puede mantener al día con las actividades, estudios, y publicaciones de la MPO, así como con las oportunidades de participación.

¡En Español! Este folleto es una guía de recursos para ciudadanos y autori-

dades locales que desean mantenerse informadas y tener input en la toma de decisiones en transporte de la región. Su glosario traduce la "sopa de alfabeto" de siglas de términos de transporte que se encuentran usualmente en documentos de planeamiento.

Los ciudadanos se pueden mantener informados acerca del planeamiento de transporte en la región de Boston visitando www.bostonmpo.org, leyendo *TRANSREPORT*, y suscribiéndose a la MPOInfo, la lista de servidor unidireccional de e-mail de la MPO. Ellos se pueden involucrar atendiendo a las reuniones, talleres de trabajo, y casas abiertas auspiciadas por la MPO o sometiéndolos comentarios acerca de los estudios y programas de planeamiento.

Los folletos en Inglés y en Español serán distribuidos a las oficinas de planeamiento y administración municipales, así como a las bibliotecas públicas, a través de la región. También están disponibles como archivos PDF files en www.bostonmpo.org. Para tener una copia enviada a usted por correo, por favor envíenos un e-mail, especificando Inglés o Español, a publicinformation@ctps.org o telefoné al (617) 973-7116.

Assabet River Rail Trail to Open in September

The much anticipated Assabet River Rail Trail will open on September 24 with an all-day event that will include something for everyone—activities for children, a ribbon-cutting ceremony with state and local officials, and a community celebration with food and live music.

Bike decorating and a parade for small children will start the festivities at 9:30 A.M. across from the Main Street Cemetery in Hudson. Activities will continue until 3:30 P.M. at various locations in Hudson and Marlborough. The full schedule of events is being finalized, and will be posted on the following Web sites as the event nears: www.arrtinc.org, www.townofhudson.org, and www.marlborough-ma.gov.

The Boston Region MPO conducted a feasibility study of the Assabet River Rail Trail on behalf of MassHighway in 1997 and later programmed acquisition, design, and construction funding in its Transportation Improvement Programs.



■ Savin Hill *cont.* from p. 2

Cambridge. The contract for the reconstruction of the first three stations was awarded to Barletta Construction, which began construction in October 2003. Ashmont Station, further down the line, is scheduled to be rebuilt under a separate contract that is still being negotiated. Construction will begin after the MBTA Board of Directors awards a contract, and is expected to be completed within three years. For construction updates on all of the remaining Ashmont Branch stations, visit www.mbta.com/projects_underway.

■ SAFETEA-LU *cont. from p. 1*

The National Highway System is a 163,000-mile system of significant roads serving major population centers and other important sites. The NHS Program is funded at \$30.5 billion through FY 2009. Massachusetts will receive an estimated \$407 million in NHS Program funds over FYs 2005–2009. The legislation expands the eligibility of NHS funding to include environmental restoration and pollution abatement, control of noxious weeds, and establishment of native species.

The Interstate Maintenance (IM) Program was established under ISTEA to provide for preserving and improving the 46,000-mile Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways. A total of \$25.2 billion in authorized funds will be provided through FY 2009. Massachusetts is estimated to receive \$405 million in IM Program funds over FYs 2005–2009.

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides the most flexible funding that MPOs may use for the reconstruction or rehabilitation of federal-aid roadways (including the NHS), bridges, transit capital projects, and public bus terminals and facilities. A total of \$32.5 billion in STP funds is authorized through FY 2009. Massachusetts is expected to receive an estimated \$526 million in STP funds over FYs 2005–2009. States must designate a portion of their STP funds (10 percent or the amount set aside in FY 2005, whichever is greater) for transportation enhancements.

The \$21.6 billion Bridge Program provides funding for the replacement and/or rehabilitation of any publicly owned bridge. It also includes funding for preventative maintenance. Massachusetts is expected to receive an estimated \$756 million in Bridge Program funds over FYs 2005–2009.

Public Transportation Programs

SAFETEA-LU funds the major public transportation Urbanized Area and Fixed Guideway Modernization formula pro-

grams and the New Starts grant program. In addition, two relatively small formula

expected to receive a total of \$5.2 million of \$339 million authorized nationwide for FYs 2006–2009.

| <i>Fiscal Year</i> | <i>Highway Funds¹</i> | <i>Transit Funds²</i> |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2006 | \$607.8 | \$261.3 |
| 2007 | \$613.0 | \$271.2 |
| 2008 | \$624.4 | \$292.6 |
| 2009 | \$630.6 | \$309.7 |

Sources:
¹Federal Highway Administration, 8/2/2005; ²Federal Transit Administration, 8/12/2005

Earmarked Funding

In addition to funds from formula programs, there is \$332.5 million in funds earmarked by Congress for specific projects located in the commonwealth. Sixty-three projects located in Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization communities will receive an estimated \$173 million in SAFETEA-LU earmarked funds.

Other Provisions

Several provisions are aimed at managing traffic and reducing congestion. States will be encouraged to develop real-time system management information programs to help agencies share information and inform the traveling public.

SAFETEA-LU streamlines the environmental process for transportation projects. A 180-day statute of limitations is added for litigation, linked to publication of environmental actions in the *Federal Register*.

The legislation continues to support public participation and consultation with interested parties in the metropolitan planning process. SAFETEA-LU also provides for increased use of roadway tolling, not only to manage congestion, but also to finance infrastructure improvements.

Next Steps

Now that the bill has passed, implementation will begin. First, Congress will work on a technical corrections bill, likely to be voted on sometime in the fall or winter. For the most part, this technical corrections bill will make changes to the dollar values in SAFETEA-LU and will also make minor changes in the text of the bill. Additionally, both the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration are working on guidance and rulemakings for the new bill. Stay tuned to *TRANSREPORT* and the MPO Web site, www.bostonmpo.org, for updates about the technical corrections bill, rulemakings and other details.

programs were added: Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Formula Grants and the New Freedoms Program.

The Boston Urbanized Area (including parts of Rhode Island and New Hampshire) will receive an estimated \$898.6 million in transit formula funds in FYs 2006–2009.

The Urbanized Area formula grant provides the majority of funding, allocating \$543.2 million to the Boston Urbanized Area of \$16.6 billion nationwide for FYs 2006–2009. The Fixed Guideway Modernization formula provides \$344.2 million for the Boston Urbanized Area and \$6.1 billion nationwide for the same period.

The JARC grants provide formula funding for transportation services to assist low-income and welfare recipients with access to jobs. Funding from the new formula is based on ratios involving the number of eligible recipients in each urbanized area. It is estimated that the Boston Urbanized Area will receive a total of \$6.1 million of the \$603 million authorized nationwide for FYs 2006–2009.

The New Freedom Program provides formula funding for new transportation services and public transportation alternatives to assist persons with disabilities beyond the levels required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The New Freedom Program will allocate funds using a formula based on the disability population in a state. The funds will be made available to transit systems and the states. The Boston Urbanized Area is

MEETING CALENDAR

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

AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON

- Thursday, September 1
Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Work Session 10:00 A.M.
 CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150
- Wednesday, September 14
Regional Transportation Advisory Council Freight Committee 1:00 P.M.
 CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150
- Regional Transportation Advisory Council** 3:00 P.M.
 Conference Room 4
- Thursday, September 15
Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Meeting 10:00 A.M.
 CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150
- Monday, September 19
MBTA Rider Oversight Committee 4:30 P.M.
 Conference Rooms 1, 2, and 3
- Wednesday, September 28
MBTA Bikes and Transit Advisory Committee 6:30 P.M.
 CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150
- Thursday, October 6
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

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

- Tuesday, September 13
Charles River Parks Citizens Advisory Committee 4:00 P.M.
 (For meeting location, contact Charlotte Fleetwood at cxfleetw@bigdig.com.)
- MassHighway Public Hearing: Washington Street (Route 53), Hanover, Transportation Improvements** 7:00 P.M.
 Hanover Town Hall
 Large Hearing Room
 550 Hanover Street, Hanover
- Wednesday, September 21
MassHighway Public Hearing: Proposed Replacement of the Route 109, Route 135, and Great Plain Avenue Bridges in Dedham, Westwood, and Needham 7:00 P.M.
 Newman Elementary School Auditorium
 1155 Central Avenue, Needham
- Thursday, September 22
MassHighway Public Hearing: Proposed Longfellow Bridge Rehabilitation 7:00 P.M.
 Shriners Hospital for Children—Boston
 Hospital Auditorium
 51 Blossom Street, Boston
- Tuesday, September 27
Statewide Transportation Plan: A Framework for Thinking—A Plan for Action* 3:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M.
 Boston Public Library
 Copley Square Branch
 666 Boylston Street, Boston
- Thursday, September 29
Statewide Transportation Plan: A Framework for Thinking—A Plan for Action* 3:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M.
 Burlington Public Library
 22 Sears Street, Burlington

*Document may be viewed at www.mass.gov/eot.

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 TRANSREPORT's August 2005 issue, an incorrect statement was made in the article entitled "Central Artery/Tunnel Project News." It was suggested that during the Leverett Circle reconstruction period, motorists access the McGrath/O'Brien Highway via Charles Circle, taking the Longfellow Bridge to Land Boulevard. Since Land Boulevard is not accessible from the Longfellow Bridge, motorists are instead advised to continue to Broadway in Kendall Square, turning right onto Third Street to get to McGrath/O'Brien Highway.

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 (e-mail).

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