



TRANSREPORT

NOVEMBER 2009

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) 973-7119. A photo ID is required to access most meeting sites.

AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON

November 5 (Thursday)

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

November 18 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA. Conference Room 4. 1:00 PM to 2:45 PM

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Freight Committee. MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 1:00 PM

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

Calendar continued on p. 2

'Direct Connect' Silver Line Service Begins

In October, service began on a new Silver Line



route that operates between Dudley Station and South Boston. The new route, SL 4, provides a direct connection, for the first time, between Boston's Roxbury, South End, and Bay Village neighborhoods and South Station. It also improves connections to the financial district, the South Boston waterfront, and Logan Airport.

With the new service, dubbed Direct Connect, transit customers in the Washington Street corridor now have two options for getting downtown: the recently renamed route SL 5,

which operates between Dudley Station and

Downtown Crossing, and SL 4, which operates every 10 minutes during the weekday morning and evening rush hours. Midday and weekend service operates every 15 minutes. Late-evening trips run every 20 minutes.

The graphic on page 4 shows the routes for SL 4 and SL 5. It should be noted that while route SL 5 stops at Temple Place and Tremont Street, route SL 4 does not. Schedules for all Silver Line routes are available at www.mtba.com.

• Direct Connect *cont. on p. 4*

AMENDMENTS TO MPO'S TIP AND LONG-RANGE PLAN EXPECTED

The MPO has begun discussion of a process for amending the federal fiscal years 2010-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and JOURNEY to 2030, the MPO's 25-year transportation plan. Amendments to these documents are necessary in order to program the second round of funding available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Look for further announcements from MPOinfo (the MPO's list-serve) and check in at www.bostonmpo.org, where the proposed amendments will be posted when available.

MPO Kicks Off Community Technical Assistance Program

Staff from the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) kicked off a new MPO program in October that is designed to provide municipal officials with technical advice on local transportation concerns and with quick-response recommendations.

A team of transportation engineers and planners from the MPO and MAPC met with Wrentham town officials to conduct an assessment under this Community Transportation Technical Assistance Program. The pro-

• MPO Program *cont. on p. 4*



Traffic at corner of Route 1A and Common Street in downtown Wrentham

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

Rail Purchase by State to Benefit Regional Economy and Commuters

Massachusetts officials reached an important agreement in September with the freight railroad company CSX Transportation Inc. that paves the way for improved commuter rail service between Boston and Worcester and facilitates plans to expand service to New Bedford and Fall River.

The agreement, which redefines the Massachusetts passenger and freight rail system, calls for the state to purchase rail-line rights from Boston to Worcester and from Taunton to New Bedford and Fall River for \$100 million.

Resolution of liability issues, which were a stumbling block during negotiations between the state and CSX,

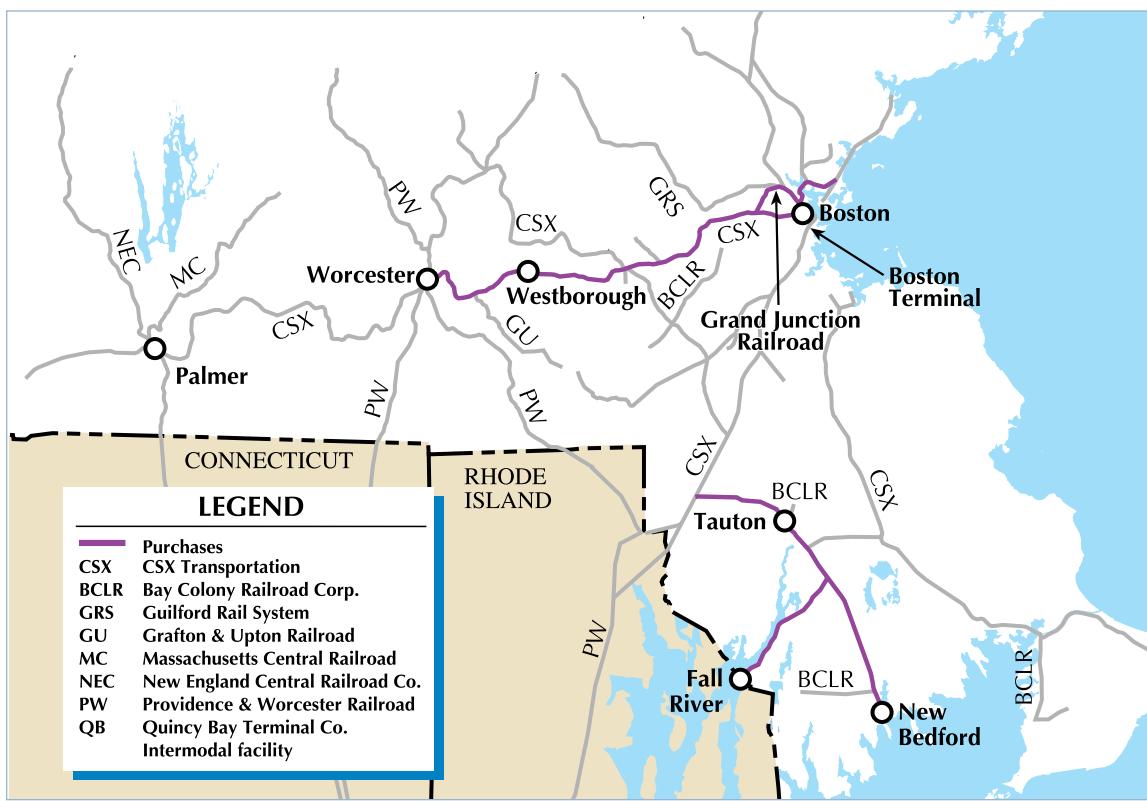
allowed the deal to be finalized. CSX will make an annual risk payment to the state of \$500,000 to continue operating on the lines. The risk payments will help offset the state's liability insurance costs for the entire commuter rail system. In addition, CSX will be responsible for a payment of up to \$7.5 million per accident if the company is at fault.

The agreement also gives the state ownership of the line from Southampton Yard to Massport terminals in South Boston and of the Grand Junction rail line that crosses the Charles River near Boston University.

Under the agreement, CSX will move the operations currently at Boston's Beacon Park Yard in Allston to central Massachusetts, which will allow the planned redevelopment of Beacon Park Yard.

Double-stack freight train capability between I-495 and the New York State line is another feature of the agreement, with the Commonwealth assuming responsibility for raising the highway bridges and CSX being responsible for lowering the tracks at underpasses.

It is expected that improved rail-freight operations and commuter rail service will lead to less congestion on area roadways.



Massachusetts freight railroad network and components of purchase from CSX Transportation Inc.

Calendar cont. from p. 1

November 19 (Thursday)

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

November 30 (Monday)

MBTA Rider Oversight Committee. Conference Rooms 1, 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 9 (Wednesday)

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Freight Committee. MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 1:00 PM

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

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

November 5 (Thursday)

MassDOT Highway Division Design Hearing: Proposed replacement of the Fountain Street Bridge over MBTA/CSX Railroad in Framingham. Framingham Town Hall, Albondi Room, 150 Concord Street, Framingham. 7:00 PM

November 17 (Tuesday)

MassDOT Highway Division Design Hearing: Reconstruction of a portion of Lynnfield Street (Route 129) in Lynn. Lynn City Hall, City Council Chambers, 4th Floor, 3 City Hall Square, Lynn. 7:00 PM

November 18 (Wednesday)

Green Line Extension Public Hearing. Somerville High School, 81 Highland Avenue, Somerville. 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 us at publicinformation@bostonmpo.org.

Massachusetts Household Travel Survey Set to Begin

The Commonwealth is gearing up to survey the travel behavior of Massachusetts's residents. The last time such a survey was done in this state was 1991, when the Boston Region MPO surveyed 4,000 households in its region. In recent years, recognizing that data from the earlier effort were becoming dated, the MPO began setting aside funding for a new survey in its region. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) then decided to expand the scope of the survey and offered to fund the major share of a statewide effort. A firm that specializes in conducting these surveys was hired.

SURVEY A VALUABLE TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE PLANNING

Why would the Commonwealth or this MPO want to survey residents' travel behavior? Because the survey data enhance the ability of both organizations to conduct sound, cost-effective transportation planning. How many trips of various kinds people make, what their destinations are, what modes they use, and what routes they take — all of this information is essential to properly targeting taxpayer dollars to appropriate transportation investments.

The survey data will first be used to rebuild the Commonwealth's and the Boston Region MPO's travel-demand-forecasting models. Other interested MPOs in the state will be able to

rebuild their models as well. These models are essential tools in the transportation planning process. The survey data will then also be available to inform the transportation planning process in a variety of other ways.

The project got underway this past spring. In the first phase, preparations for surveying were undertaken. A sampling plan was crafted to ensure statistically valid results from all parts of the state and from different socio-demographic groups. Particular attention was also paid to ensuring that the sample would include households whose members use the less common modes: transit, walking, and bicycling. The survey questionnaire, which is in the form of a travel diary, was created. Public outreach plans were established, and various logistical issues were worked out.

PILOT SURVEY NOW UNDERWAY

The second phase of the project, the pilot survey, is currently underway and will continue through December. This dry run is being done to test all aspects of the surveying approach and questionnaire so that any necessary corrections can be identified and made prior to commencement of the main survey. Up to 600 households will be sampled in this

pilot survey, and the resulting data will eventually be combined with those of the main survey.

MAIN SURVEY TO BEGIN IN 2010

The third phase of the project, the main survey itself, will commence early next

year and will continue for 12 months. The goal is to survey 15,000 households across the state, or

roughly one-half of one percent of the state's households.



The survey process will begin with randomly selecting households from address lists covering the entire state. The selected households will be mailed a packet of materials including a brochure explaining what the survey is all about and a letter from MassDOT encouraging the household to participate. A couple of days after receiving the packet, households that have landline telephones will be called and asked if they will participate. Other procedures will be in place to communicate with households that have only cell phones or no phones whatsoever.

SURVEY TO INCLUDE USE OF TRAVEL DIARIES AND GPS TECHNOLOGY

Households that agree to participate will be asked several questions about the characteristics of their

household and its general travel behavior. Then these households will be mailed travel diaries, and on an agreed-upon travel day, each member of the household will record all the places they went, the times they traveled, the modes used, prices paid, etc. The following day, the household will be called, and their diary information will be retrieved over the phone. The physical diaries can also be mailed back.

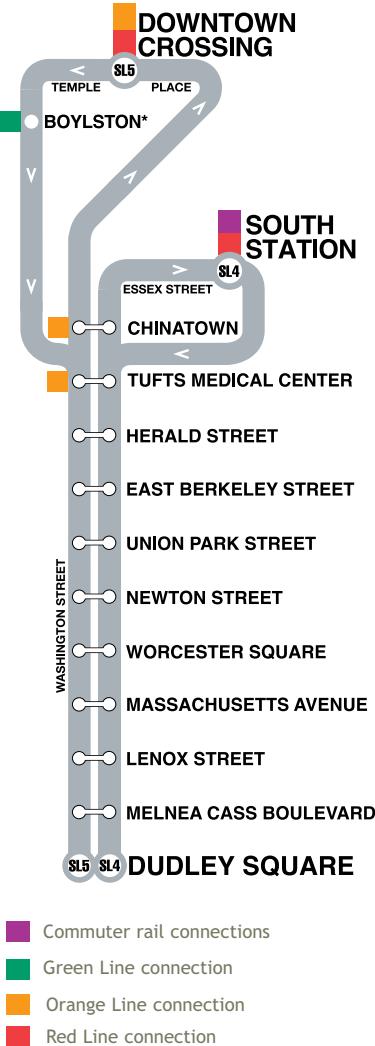
A subset of recruited households will also be sent Global Positioning System (GPS) units that all household members over the age of 16 will wear on their travel day and the following day. The units will track all of their movements outside their homes. Survey respondents often forget to record short trips in their travel diaries, such as those made by walking and those involving stopping off at, say, a coffee shop on the way to work. The GPS data will be used to correct for this and other errors in the travel diary sample.

More information about this survey can be found at www.mass.gov/eot/travelsurvey.

Dudley to South Station Now a One-seat Ride

• Direct Connect *cont. from p. 1*

Additional Direct Connect amenities include: new stone curbing and sidewalks with access ramps, and a state-of-



the-art, heated mini-station at South Station with CharlieCard access and trip countdown information to improve customers' waiting experience.

The \$1.7 million project was funded with money provided by the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and programmed by the Boston Region MPO.

New Yawkey Station in Plans for Development over Turnpike

State transportation officials and a joint-venture development firm have reached an agreement regarding the financing and development of Parcel 7 in Boston, a plot of land between Beacon Street and Brookline Avenue near Kenmore Square with air rights over Interstate 90. The agreement brings plans for a multimodal transportation center with a full-service commuter rail station in the Fenway neighborhood closer to reality.

A refurbished Yawkey commuter rail station on the Framingham/Worcester Line would be a part of the Fenway Center development, a smart-growth project that includes plans for building a deck over I-90, new residential, retail, and commercial buildings, parking garages, and green space. The new development would be next door to Fenway Park and near educational and cultural institutions in the Fenway area. The full-service Yawkey Station would be a critical

transit link for the more than 100,000 employees, students, patients, and visitors coming to the Longwood Medical Area on a daily basis.

Additional transportation improvements associated with the project include new roadways in the area of Yawkey Station, reconstructions of Brookline Avenue, Van Ness Street, and Boylston Street, and reconfiguration of traffic flows at the Sears Rotary.

The developer is MK Parcel 7 Development LLC. It has agreed to pay fair market value for the state-owned land at Parcel 7 and to provide the Massachusetts Department of Transportation a share of the operating income from the air rights parcels during the development process.



Rendering of proposed development over the Massachusetts Turnpike near Kenmore Square

Staff Offers Technical Support

• MPO Program *cont. from p. 1* gram, which is open to all of the MPO's 101 municipalities, was recently approved as a Unified Planning Work Program pilot project.

During the Wrentham site visit, participants identified traffic and safety issues at intersections in the downtown and around the Wrentham Common. Town officials expressed concerns about the high speed of motorists, unsafe turning movements, and limited pedestrian access. A walk through the focus areas allowed participants to discuss potential alternatives for addressing these issues.

Based on the site visit, MPO staff prepared short- and long-term recommendations for the Town of Wrentham's consideration. Short-term recommendations focused on improvement of pedestrian travel by increasing the number of crossings, reducing their length, and narrowing business driveways.

Long-term recommendations consisted of calming traffic speeds by reconfiguring problem intersections to better channel traffic.

Municipalities interested in having a similar assessment conducted for their community are invited to contact the MPO staff's deputy technical director at (617) 973-7100 or publicinformation@bostonmpo.org.

North Shore Commuter Rail Parking Expansion Projects Advancing

The Commonwealth is moving ahead with plans to construct over 1,000 new commuter parking spaces on the MBTA's Newburyport/Rockport commuter rail line by December 2011. Two new parking garages planned for Salem and Beverly are expected to meet the demand for parking by commuter rail customers on that line.

At Salem Station, one of the most heavily used stations on the line, a 750-space garage will be constructed, with the majority of spaces available for use by commuter rail riders. One hundred and fifty spaces will be reserved for the new Essex County Court-

house complex. A 500-space garage will be built near Beverly Depot, where the new Beverly Intermodal Center will be located.

The two projects will fulfill the Commonwealth's commitment to build 1,000 new parking spaces at transit stations within the Boston Region MPO area as mitigation for the air quality impacts associated with the Central Artery/Tunnel project.

The \$45 million Salem garage project will be largely paid for with Commonwealth funds, including \$3 million from the Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Man-

agement.

The Beverly parking garage project is expected to cost approximately \$20 million and will be funded primarily by the Commonwealth, with

additional funding from the MBTA and the City of Beverly.



Salem commuter rail station

Boston Region MPO Activities

BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

The MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee began discussion of a process for amending its federal fiscal years 2010–2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and JOURNEY TO 2030 and expects to announce proposed amendments in November. They will include Boston Region MPO projects to be programmed under the final round of funding available through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. In addition, in September the Committee approved the report *Route 60 Mobility Study: Malden and Medford*. An in-depth discussion of this study and its recommendations will be featured in the December issue of TRANSREPORT.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

Jonathan Lenicheck, District Director for Congressman Michael Capuano, spoke to the Advisory Council in October. The primary topic was the status of the next federal surface transportation bill. The Advisory Council learned that the federal transportation program is funded through the end of October by a 30-day continuing resolution to extend SAFETEA-LU, the federal transportation bill that expired on September

30, 2009. Lenicheck said that President Obama and Senate leadership prefer an 18-month extension of SAFETEA-LU, and he predicted that a new surface transportation bill would not be approved before 2011. The biggest obstacle for the new bill is finding a funding source.

Lenicheck also discussed the Freight Rail Capacity Expansion Act of 2009. This bill would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide incentives for investments in freight rail infra-

structure. The bill is stalled in Congress, but Congressman Capuano supports the bill and is a cosponsor.

The next meetings of the Advisory Council and the Council's Freight Committee will be held on November 18. Please see the meeting calendar for details.

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

AACT members heard two presentations in October. The first was from Carla Howze, Director of the MBTA Customer Service Center, who

talked about the role of customer service representatives. The second presentation was from Michael Festa, MBTA Senior Accessibility Specialist and Project Manager, who reviewed plans for the upcoming reconstruction of Science Park Station.

The November meeting will be held one week earlier than the usual fourth Wednesday of the month, due to the Thanksgiving holiday. It will also end 15 minutes earlier than usual. Please see the meeting calendar for details.

MassDOT and MBTA Investing in Bicycle Parking Facilities and Programs

BICYCLE FACILITY OPENS AT FOREST HILLS STATION

The MBTA opened a new bicycle facility this fall at Forest Hills Station on the Orange Line, providing shelter and security for as many as 100 bicycles. This is the second such facility to open in the MBTA system and a forerunner of more to come, as the T plans to use federal economic stimulus funding to expand services for bicycle commuters at its stations.

The new facility complements the City of Boston's recent designation of bicycle lanes on roadways in Jamaica



Officials celebrate unveiling of MBTA bicycle cage at Forest Hills Station

Plain and Roslindale. Commuters may access the new cage at Forest Hills Station by swiping a Bike Charlie-Card and store their bicycles in the canopied enclosure, which has security features that include lighting, cameras, and an emergency call box. A similar facility at Alewife Station on the Red Line, which opened in the summer of 2008 and accommodates approximately 300 bicycles, has been heavily used in the past year.

Moving forward, the MBTA plans to invest \$4.8 million of funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to improve the ability of the system's infrastructure to accommodate bicycles. As many as 10 more cages and 50 covered bicycle racks could be provided at transit stations throughout the system.

BICYCLE THEFT AWARENESS CAMPAIGN BEGUN

As the MBTA moves forward with plans to provide more secure areas at transit stations where customers can lock their bicycles, the Authority is also taking steps to educate bicycle commuters about what they can do to protect their property at transit stations.

In October the MBTA launched the second annual Transit Police Bicycle Theft Awareness Campaign, during which transit police officers provided tips on theft prevention. Officers distributed wallet cards to bicycle owners on which they can record the serial number, make, and model of their bicycles. This information enables police to notify owners if a stolen bicycle is recovered. Bicycle owners are advised to lock their bicycles even when they leave them in the secure cages at Forest Hills and Alewife Stations.

TRANSREPORT

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