



# TRANSREPORT

December 2016/January 2017

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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## TRANSREPORT Is Now a Blog!

### TRANSITIONING FROM A NEWSLETTER FORMAT TO AN ONLINE BLOG!

The *TRANSREPORT* blog, which can be accessed at <http://ctps.org/transreport>, offers the same information as the newsletter, allowing readers the opportunity to discover the major activities that underpin the work of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). *TRANSREPORT* will continue to present information on a variety of MPO activities. Posts will cover

- major certification activities, such as the Transportation Improvement Program, Unified Planning Work Program, and Long-Range Transportation Plan;
- planning studies and newly released reports;
- recent actions taken by the MPO;
- topics discussed at meetings of the Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA and the Regional Transportation Advisory Council;
- news about transportation planning in the region; and
- opportunities to get involved in MPO planning and programming decision-making.

*Blog, continued on page 2*



*Access MPO news on your mobile device, tablet, or computer.*

## Study Investigates Enhancing Rest Locations for Long-Distance Truck Drivers

Trucks are the most important means of bringing goods into New England, but for long-distance truckers traveling into or through the Boston region, it can be a difficult search to find a good place to park their rigs for the ten-hour rest period that federal safety regulations require them to take after 11 hours of driving. Rest locations—an important subsystem of the freight transportation system that provide services and amenities, such as meals, fuel, and electric hook-ups—are lacking in the region, according to staff of the Boston Region MPO's Freight Planning Program.

In a recent study, the MPO staff analyzed and mapped the publicly and privately owned rest locations in Massachusetts and made recommendations for addressing gaps in service in the Boston region. The study focused on the corridor between Connecticut and Maine formed by Interstates 84, 90, 290, 495, and 95. This corridor connects the Middle Atlantic States with northern New England and the Maritime Provinces of Canada. After a truck stop near I-84 in Sturbridge, the next truck stop with amenities and ample parking is in Kittery, Maine, more than 100 miles away.

*Rest stops, continued on page 2*

The members of the Boston Region MPO: Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Cities of Beverly, Boston, Everett, Newton, Somerville, and Woburn, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board, Massachusetts Port Authority, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, Towns of Arlington, Bedford, Braintree, Framingham, Lexington, Medway, and Norwood

The following public meetings were scheduled at the time *TRANSREPORT* was released. For up-to-date information about meetings scheduled since that date, call 857.702.3700 (voice) or 617.570.9193 (TTY).

Readers of the online issue may click on the following hyperlinks for direct links to online meeting calendars:

*Boston Region MPO*

*MassDOT*

*MBTA*

## Schedule of Public Meetings at the State Transportation Building

A photo ID is required to access the State Transportation Building, located at 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA.

### January 5 (Thursday)

MPO Office Hours  
Suite 2150  
MPO Conference Room  
1:30 PM

### January 11 (Wednesday)

Regional Transportation  
Advisory Council  
Conference Room 4  
3:00 PM

### January 17 (Tuesday)

MassDOT Capital Programs  
Committee Meeting  
Transportation Board Room  
10:30 AM

*Calendar, continued on page 3*

# Rest Locations Explored for Long-Distance Truck Drivers in the Boston Region

*Rest stops, continued from page 1*

Semi-trailers used for long-distance routes are often pulled by a tractor with an integrated sleeping compartment. These “sleeper” units provide the driver a convenient and comfortable place to rest. The challenge for a driver, however, is to find a rest location when nearing the end of the allowed driving period that is safe, legal, and conveniently located for the next day’s



*Sleeper cab interior*

journey. Approaching the final destination, customer delivery time windows must also be considered as drivers and motor carrier dispatchers work to keep trips efficient. If a good rest location is not readily accessible, a driver may simply park at the side of a road, a practice referred to as informal parking.

A preferable rest location is a large commercial truck stop, where diesel fuel, maintenance services, food, and other amenities are available. Some are equipped with truck stop electrification (TSE) technology that provides electric current to power refrigeration units, heating, and air conditioning while the tractors’ diesel engines are turned off. Public rest areas on interstates can



*A large truck stop in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, next to I-84*

supplement, but not substitute for large commercial truck stops.

Foremost of the recommendations from the study was a suggestion to add a new private truck stop near the northwest arc of I-495. However, truck stops are usually located where land is inexpensive, and the acquisition of sufficient land for a large truck stop in or near the Boston region may be more expensive than a truck stop operator’s business model allows. Federal funds may be used to improve the rest location system, however, and the study recommended exploring this possibility. Other recommendations offered ideas for improving the usefulness of publicly owned rest areas on the interstate highway system and revitalizing public rest areas through a new type of public-private partnership.

The adequacy of the rest location system is a nationwide problem, and the MPO staff evaluated the entire system in Massachusetts in recognition of the importance of truck transportation to

the Boston region itself. State, neighboring MPOs, and industry stakeholders will be involved in any follow-on work that the MPO does on this topic.

## Update to *TRANSREPORT* Format!

*Blog, continued from page 1*

Tags allow readers to filter posts and find the content most meaningful to them. A glossary helps readers decipher the acronyms and planning terms that can make navigating the regional transportation planning processes confusing.

This format shift is part of the MPO’s ongoing efforts to bring the planning process to the public in the clearest and most convenient way possible.

If you would like to obtain print or accessible print format versions of *TRANSREPORT* blog posts or related materials, contact Róisín Foley at 857-702-3704 or rfoley@ctps.org.

January 18 (Wednesday)

Massachusetts Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board Transportation Board Room 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

January 19 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Unified Planning Work Program Committee Suite 2150 MPO Conference Room 9:00 AM

Boston Region MPO Conference Rooms 2 and 3 10:00 AM

January 23 (Monday)

MassDOT Finance and Audit Committee Meeting Transportation Board Room 10:00 AM

Joint Meeting of the Fiscal and Management Control Board and MassDOT Board of Directors Transportation Board Room 12:00 PM

January 25 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA Board of Directors Conference Rooms 2 and 3 10:00 AM

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

# MPO Initiates Study to Research Wait Time Reduction for MBTA Bus Passengers

At the October 6 meeting of the Boston Region MPO, board members voted to initiate a study to research ways to reduce wait times for bus passengers on corridors in which multiple bus routes operate, so-called “trunk sections” of the MBTA bus network.

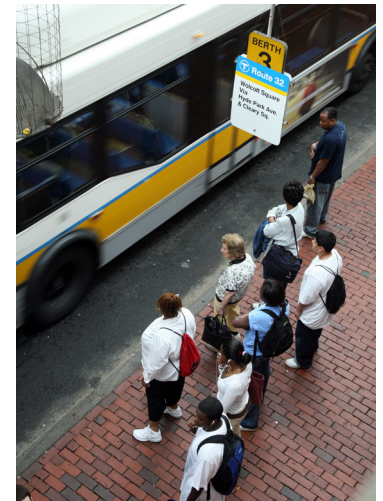
If one views a bus network as a tree, the section where multiple buses run (usually closer to the central area of a community) is the trunk. Different bus routes traverse the same trunk and then branch off onto their individual routes. Headways for individual bus routes operating on a trunk section may be determined independently of one another. This can cause irregular wait times between buses that serve the same corridor. By studying these wait times and adjusting the headways on multiple routes, it may be possible to reduce passenger

wait times on trunk sections as a whole.

The study concept was presented to the MPO by Elizabeth Moore, Director of Policy and Planning, and Steven Andrews, both of the MPO staff, and described in a work program titled, “Using General Transit Feed Specification Data to Find Shared Segments with Excessively Irregular Headways.” In this study, MPO staff will identify locations where multiple bus routes are operating on a trunk section and choose specific bus stops for study. They will then determine if passengers could realistically take different bus routes to reach their destinations along this section. They will finally evaluate the benefit of smoothing out bus arrivals. Sections eligible for the study would be those where buses arrive often enough that passengers will show up at

a stop without consulting a schedule.

Once staff have identified potential changes to bus schedules that might save time for passengers, they will present their findings to the MPO. The MBTA will decide whether to spend resources on implementing proposed changes; the MBTA makes minor schedule changes on a quarterly basis.



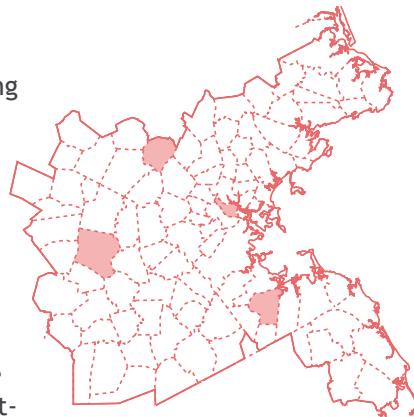
# Municipalities Reelect Four MPO Members and Vice Chair

On October 26, the chief-elected officers of the 101 cities and towns in the Boston region reelected four municipal members to the Boston Region MPO board. Continuing service for another three-year term are the Town of Bedford, representing the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination subregion; the Town of Framingham, representing the MetroWest Regional Collaborative subregion; the City of Somerville, representing the Inner Core Committee subregion; and the Town of Braintree, representing the

South Shore Coalition subregion.

On November 3, the board reelected the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) as vice chair of the Boston Region MPO. The chair of the MPO is the secretary of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (or the secretary’s designee).

Elected seats on the MPO board are held by the municipalities, and the chief-elected municipal officials (or their official designees) serve as the representatives on the board. Elections occur annually at MAPC’s Fall Council meeting.



MPO planning area, highlighting four reelected municipal members

## Public Meetings at Other Locations

### January 5 (Thursday)

MAPC: Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Collaboration (MAGIC)  
141 Keyes Road  
Concord  
2:30 PM - 4:30 PM

### January 11 (Wednesday)

MassDOT Design Public Hearing: Cochituate Rail Trail Project in the Towns of Framingham and Natick  
Wilson Middle School  
Joseph Keefe Auditorium  
22 Rutledge Road  
Natick  
6:30 PM

### January 17 (Tuesday)

MAPC: Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC) Regional Economic Development  
Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce  
520 Providence Highway  
Suite 4, Norwood  
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

### January 19 (Thursday)

MassDOT Design Public Hearing: Roadway Improvements along Route 203 from West Selden Street to Gallivan Boulevard  
Mildred Avenue Middle School Auditorium  
5 Mildred Avenue  
Mattapan  
6:00 PM

# MPO Amended its Long-Range Transportation Plan in August

On August 18, 2016, the MPO amended its **Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)**, Charting Progress to 2040, to make the document consistent with the MPO's recently adopted Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)—a rolling five-year plan that finances construction of highway, transit, and multimodal projects and programs—and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Capital Investment Plan (CIP)—which documents projects that are prioritized and funded by the state.

The LRTP documents regionally significant projects and investment programs planned out over a 25-year timeline. For planning purposes, regionally significant projects are considered to be those that either will add capacity to the transportation system or that cost more than \$20

million. Projects programmed in the LRTP are ultimately programmed through the TIP when they are within five years of implementation. Amendment One accomplishes the following:

- transfers funds to Phase One of the Green Line Extension project (extending the line from Lechmere Station in Cambridge to Union Square in Somerville, and College Avenue in Medford) from Phase Two (the extension from College Avenue to Route 16 in Medford), in keeping with Amendment Four of the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2016-20 TIP and the FFYs 2017-21 TIP
- updates the cost for the ramp construction on Interstate 95 northbound and improvements to Canton Street and Dedham Street in Canton, Norwood, and Westwood

- programs funds for the reconstruction of Melnea Cass Boulevard in Boston, to align with the FFYs 2017-21 TIP, and
- documents funding for two regionally significant projects in the CIP:
  - reconstruction of the Interstate 90 and Interstate 495 interchange in Hopkinton and Westborough
  - construction of a new bridge connection from Burgin Parkway over the MBTA railroad in Quincy

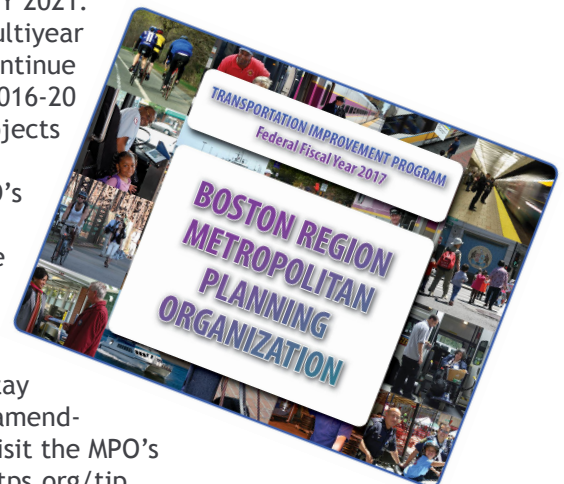
The MPO is expected to update the LRTP in 2019, incorporating elements from MassDOT's Focus40 plan for the MBTA system, the City of Boston's GoBoston 2030 planning effort, and additional scenario planning.

# Federal Agencies Approve the MPO's FFYs 2017-21 Transportation Improvement Program

On October 20, 2016, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) completed their review of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2017-21. The federal regulatory agencies approved both documents and found them to be in conformity with the Clean Air Act requirements. The current TIP documents the funding allocation for projects to be implemented

in the Boston region in FFY 2017 through FFY 2021. They include multiyear projects that continue from the FFYs 2016-20 TIP and new projects selected to receive the MPO's discretionary funding over the next five years.

To view the latest TIP and stay current on any amendments, please visit the MPO's **TIP webpage**, [ctps.org/tip](http://ctps.org/tip).



## Notice of Civil Rights

The MPO complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and other federal and state nondiscrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. The MPO does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, English proficiency, income, religious creed, ancestry, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or military service. Any person who believes herself/himself or any specific class of persons to have been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI, the ADA, or other nondiscrimination statute or regulation may, herself/himself or via a representative, file a written complaint with the MPO. A complaint must be filed no later than 180 calendar days after the date on which the person believes that the discrimination occurred. A complaint form and additional information can be obtained by contacting the MPO (see below) or at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org).

Meeting locations are accessible to people with disabilities and are near public transportation. Upon request (preferably two weeks in advance of a meeting), every effort will be made to provide accommodations such as assistive-listening devices, materials in accessible formats and in languages other than English, and interpreters of American Sign Language and other languages. Please contact the MPO staff at 857.702.3700 (voice), 617.570.9193 (TTY), 617.570.9192 (fax), or [publicinformation@ctps.org](mailto:publicinformation@ctps.org) (email).

## MPO Votes on Draft TIP Amendment One

At the December 15 meeting of the Boston Region MPO, board members voted to approve an amendment to the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2017-21 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Amendment One was endorsed to better align the TIP with the Capital Investment Plan of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), as well as to provide some project-level detail for the MBTA's investment programs in FFY 2017. Other changes that were incorporated in Amendment One include the repurposing of earmark funds for highway projects.



Documents discussed in this issue are available on the MPO's website at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org). Online readers may use the direct links below:

[TIP Amendment One](#)  
[FFYs 2017-21 TIP](#)  
[L RTP Amendment One](#)  
[FFY 2017 UPWP](#)

## Federal Agencies Approve FFY 2017 Unified Planning Work Program



In September, the MPO received federal approval of its federal fiscal year (FFY) 2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which it had endorsed in July. The MPO produces a UPWP each year in order to document the transportation-planning studies, programs, and administrative activities that the MPO staff conduct. The document also contains the costs and funding sources for each of the outlined efforts. The MPO granted approval to initiate the following new studies and technical analyses for FFY 2017, which began on October 1:

- Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways
- Low-Cost Improvements to Express-Highway Bottleneck Locations

- Addressing Priority Corridors from the Long-Range Transportation Plan Needs Assessment
- Using General Transit Feed Specification to Find Shared Segments with Excessively Irregular Headways
- Safety Effectiveness of Safe Routes to Schools Programs

The MPO is expected to approve two additional work programs at their upcoming meeting in January 2017:

- Planning for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles
- Study of Promising Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategies.

## Boston Region MPO Activities

This fall, at the start of the new federal fiscal year (FFY), the Boston Region MPO board approved its staff, the Central Transportation Planning Staff, to begin work on several new studies as part of their FFY 2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). (See article on page five.) Additional studies are expected to kick-off in early winter 2017.

In December, the MPO voted to approve Amendment One to the FFYs 2017-21 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). (See the article on page five.)

In early winter 2017, the MPO plans to discuss how to formalize the representation of regional transit authorities in its planning and programming decision-making process. The MPO will also begin development of its next UPWP and TIP.

## Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) Update

This past April, the settlement agreement between the MBTA and the Boston Center for Independent Living expired. Judge Patrick King, the independent monitor who oversaw the settlement, has since issued a set of recommendations for a model advisory group that would allow for continued public input on accessibility improvements on the MBTA system, and make it easier for more MBTA customers to get involved, share feedback, and learn about new projects.

Beginning in January, an ad hoc committee will be tasked with developing the structure of this new group. Once the new group is established, the MBTA will withdraw from the current Memorandum of Understanding with AACT and enter into a formal partnership with this enhanced committee.

This is an opportunity to build on the significant progress and trust established between AACT and the MBTA over the years. AACT members and MBTA customers who would like to help shape the committee should contact Jessica Podesva, Legal Fellow, at 617-603-1664 or [jpodesva@gbls.org](mailto:jpodesva@gbls.org), for information on how to be involved.

The next AACT meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 25, 2017, at 1:00 PM.

## Regional Transportation Advisory Council Update

In December, staff of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) updated the Advisory Council on the continued progress of the Green Line Extension project and gave a briefing on the results of a MassDOT-sponsored study conducted by the MBTA and CTPS to prioritize roadway segments for implementing dedicated bus lanes.

At the next Advisory Council meeting, which will take place on January 11, 2017, at 3:00 PM, the discussion will focus on planning for electric vehicles. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

For more information, please contact David Fargen at 857-702-3654 or [dfargen@ctps.org](mailto:dfargen@ctps.org).

## TRANSREPORT

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