



TRANS REPORT

April/May 2016

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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MPO Study Leads to Corridor Redesign Plan in Hingham and Hull

The Town of Hingham is taking steps to advance a project to redesign Summer Street in the Hingham Harbor area to improve roadway safety and access for pedestrians and bicyclists on this seaside corridor that consists of Summer Street, Rockland Street, and George Washington Boulevard, leading to Nantasket Beach in Hull.

The inception of the project was a study supported by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and conducted by the MPO's Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS).

CTPS brought together stakeholders from the Towns of Hingham and Hull, MassDOT Highway District 5, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and others to identify safety and mobility problems in the corridor and identify solutions.

Of paramount concern are the large numbers of crashes that occur on the Hingham Harbor section of the corridor. There were more than 200 crashes in the study area during a five-year period (2008-12), half of which were on the section of Summer Street between North Street and the Route 3A rotary.

Among the crashes that occurred in the study area in the five-year period, four involved pedestrians and five involved bicyclists. The safety and access issues for users of the corridor are associated with fast travel speeds of vehicles, insufficient sidewalks, and lack of bicycle lanes.

Also of concern is congestion along the corridor that increases in the summer, when there is more traffic going to and from Nantasket Beach. During July, traffic volumes may increase by 30% to 50% on weekend days.

Corridor Redesign, continued on page 2

MEETING CALENDAR

The following public meetings were scheduled at the time *TRANSREPORT* was released. For up-to-date information about others scheduled subsequently, 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

Calendar, continued on page 2



An MPO study has proposed two alternatives for replacing the Route 3A rotary in Hingham. The overlays above show the layout of a proposed signalized intersection (left) and a modern roundabout (right) over the existing rotary. [Photo: GoogleEarth]

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

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.

April 4 (Monday)

MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board: Suite 3830, 12:00 PM

April 7 (Thursday)

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization: Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10:00 AM

April 11 (Monday)

MassDOT Board of Directors: Suite 3830, 1:00 PM

MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board: Suite 3830, 3:00 PM

April 13 (Wednesday)

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

April 21 (Thursday)

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Unified Planning Work Program Committee: Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 9:00 AM

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization: Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10:00 AM

April 25 (Monday)

MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board: Suite 3830, 12:00 PM

Rotary Redesign and Road Diet Proposed

Corridor Redesign, continued from page 1

Significant pedestrian crossings occur at the intersections near Nantasket Beach and Hingham Harbor waterfront on summer weekends. Route 3A, in particular, presents a barrier to safe pedestrian access to the waterfront.

The CTPS study resulted in short- and long-term recommendations to improve safety and mobility in the corridor. Short-term solutions include retrofitting the Route 3A rotary to define travel lanes and installing advanced warning signs on the approaches to the rotary.

Long-term solutions include converting the rotary to a signalized intersection or to a modern roundabout. Redesigning the rotary into

an intersection would provide crosswalks with exclusive signal phases for pedestrian crossings and a direct connection to the Hingham Lincoln Maritime Center. The intersection option also would allow signal coordination to improve traffic flow at peak travel times. Another recommendation calls for reconstructing the intersection of North Street and Route 3A.

Further, a traffic-calming "road diet" is proposed for a portion of the corridor east of the existing Route 3A rotary. This would convert the four-lane roadway to two travel lanes, with a center median or left-turn lane, and a sidewalk and dedicated bike lane on each side of the roadway. An upgrade to an existing sidewalk could make

it a multi-use trail, possibly extending from Hingham Harbor waterfront to Nantasket Beach. Other recommendations address summertime traffic congestion; one includes providing parking at Nantasket Junction Station for people who could bicycle to the beach.

This study was undertaken through the MPO's Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Roadways Program, which is implemented through the Unified Planning Work Program.

The *Summer Street/George Washington Boulevard Subregional Priority Roadway Study* is available on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org.

MPO Releases a Report about Strategies for Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions

Since the Global Warming Solutions Act went into effect in Massachusetts in 2008, the Commonwealth has been establishing regulations aimed at significantly reducing the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that drive climate change. The overarching goal is to reduce emissions by 25% less than statewide 1990 emission levels by 2020, and by 80% less than the 1990 baseline by 2050.

As the transportation sector is a major contributor of GHG emissions, MPOs have a role to play in achieving this goal by monitoring the emission impacts of roadway and transit projects funded through their Long-Range Transportation Plans and

Transportation Improvement Programs, and by supporting transportation strategies that will reduce emissions. These activities are required by a regulation that took effect in January 2015.

A recent report released by the Boston Region MPO, *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy Alternatives: Cost-Effectiveness Analysis*, outlines many of the strategies available to MPOs nationwide when making decisions about projects to fund and studies to undertake, and when conducting outreach. This report discusses 14 of the most promising strategies with the potential to be implemented or supported by the Boston Region MPO,

and considers the cost-effectiveness of each approach.

Among the effective strategies profiled in the report are the expansion of public transit, improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and workplace-focused programs such as teleworking and telecommuting, transportation-demand management services, and car- and van-pooling.

To read more in the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy Alternatives: Cost-Effectiveness Analysis* report, visit the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org.

April 25 (Monday)

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

April 27 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA Board of Directors: Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

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

April 28 (Thursday)

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization: Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10:00 AM

May 2 (Monday)

MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board: Suite 3830, 12:00 PM

MassDOT Board of Directors: Suite 3830, 1:00 PM

May 5 (Thursday)

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization: Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10:00 AM

May 9 (Monday)

MassDOT Board of Directors: Suite 3830, 1:00 PM

MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board: Suite 3830, 3:00 PM

May 11 (Wednesday)

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

New Unified Planning Work Program Taking Shape

Development of the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is well underway! In February, the Boston Region MPO staff created a Universe of New Studies through a combination of public outreach, and input from the Regional Transportation Advisory Council, municipalities in the region, and the MPO's UPWP Committee.

The FFY 2017 Universe of New Studies reflects priorities and interests throughout the region related to:

- 1) enhancing bicycle and pedestrian mobility;
- 2) staying ahead of the curve on new technologies to ensure that the region is ready to respond to and take advantage of coming changes in transportation; and,
- 3) continued technical support to cities and towns in the Boston Region to help them address mobility, access, and safety issues along key corridors and at key intersections.

Additionally, the Universe of New Studies contains study ideas related to transit, economic vitality, and environmental sustainability.

In March, the MPO's UPWP Committee prioritized



Watch for these upcoming meetings of the Boston Region MPO's Unified Planning Work Program Committee at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, in Boston:

Thursday, April 21
9:00 AM and 10:00 AM

Discussion and vote by the UPWP Committee on the FFY 2017 UPWP budget, followed by a staff presentation to the full MPO board about the UPWP Committee's recommendation for studies to fund through the FFY 2017 UPWP

Thursday, May 5
10:00 AM

Vote by the MPO to release the draft FFY 2017 UPWP for a 30-day public review period

Thursday, June 23
10:00 AM

Vote by the MPO, following review of public comments to endorse a final FFY 2017 UPWP

Meeting agendas are subject to change. Please visit the Calendar page on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org, for the most up-to-date information.

the candidate studies as it worked to recommend a group of studies to advance to the MPO board for funding in the coming fiscal year (starting October 1, 2016). This work will continue through April.

You may access results of the priority ranking of studies in the universe on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org.

Members of the public are welcome to review the ideas

presented and provide feedback to UPWP Project Manager, Ali Kleyman, at akleyman@ctps.org or 857.702.3709.

You also may send feedback via the MPO's online comment form at www.bostonmpo.org/contact.

MPO Studies Truck Routes in Everett-Chelsea Industrial Area

ROADWAY MODIFICATIONS COULD DIVERT SOME TRUCK TRAFFIC FROM CITY STREETS

Modifications to street patterns in the industrial areas of Everett and Chelsea may offer an opportunity to reduce heavy trucking on non-industrial city streets in this evolving urban area, according to a recent report by the Boston Region MPO.

This report, *Improving Truck Travel in the Everett-Chelsea Industrial Area*, details the first topical study produced as part of the MPO's Freight Action Plan. This action plan was instituted in September 2013 to address the need to consider freight more explicitly in the MPO's planning work, as well as the region's freight-planning issues in general. Trucks are an important part of road traffic throughout the region, but they are an especially large portion of traffic in certain areas. These truck "hot spots" receive special attention in the MPO's freight program.

The Everett and Chelsea industrial areas were a priority for study because of the large number of trucks traversing the area and the very poor

condition of the roads. The study area is roughly bounded by Routes 99, 16, and 1, and the Mystic River. Examples of expansion and modernization of industrial, commercial, and residential land uses abound throughout the study area. The challenge of this study was to identify ways in which these different land uses could better co-exist over the long term.

Examining the industrial uses in the study area clarified how vital those industries, and the cargoes they distribute, are to the region's economy. Companies in the food industry are among the foremost tenants in the area, including the massive New England Produce Center, which is surrounded by smaller produce distributors, a commercial bakery, a fish-packing plant, dairy-products distributor, craft beer distributor, and a meatpacking plant.

Large numbers of trucks also serve the energy and petroleum industries. Numerous tank trucks containing gasoline, diesel fuel, heating oil, liquefied natural gas, and asphalt are seen on roads throughout the study area. Many serve locations in



Refrigerated distribution trucks near the Kayem Foods meat packing plant near the Tobin Bridge on-ramp in Chelsea. [Photo: Bill Kuttner]

Everett and Chelsea, but others drive through from nearby energy facilities because their loads are classified as "hazardous," which prohibits them from using the Boston Harbor tunnels or the Tobin Bridge.

Trucks entering and leaving the industrial area travel on streets in residential and commercial areas, such as Spruce Street, which is gradually evolving into an urban boulevard. While truck traffic cannot be removed entirely from city streets, the study explored roadway modifications that could divert some trucks to routes that would connect them with highways more efficiently.

Discussions with local officials and extensive field observations strongly confirmed that the road connection between the industrial area and Route 1 could be greatly simplified by relocating one of the several grade crossings where local traffic crosses the Newburyport-Rockport commuter rail line. The MPO staff predict that this proposed improvement, called the Carter Street Extension, would attract 24 percent of

the trucks currently using Spruce Street—an estimated 380 trucks per day—away from Spruce Street and to the new route.

Further, construction of a ramp connector from Beech Street to Route 1 northbound would allow trucks to avoid using Spruce Street to reach the Route 1 on-ramp. If both the Carter Street Extension and the Beech Street ramp connector are built, staff estimate that the combined improvements would divert more than 500 trucks per day from current routes on Boston and Spruce Streets.

Future studies conducted through the MPO's Freight Program should provide further insight into the importance of freight movements in the region and reveal other infrastructure modifications that would move freight more efficiently.

The report, *Improving Truck Travel in the Everett-Chelsea Industrial Area*, is available on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org.



A tank truck carries gasoline past an asphalt plant on Beacham Street in Chelsea. [Photo: Bill Kuttner]

Considering a Career in Transportation Planning? MPO Staff Shares Experiences with High School Students

Bill Kuttner, Manager of the MPO's Freight Program, visited St. Clement School in Medford this March to address students as part of the school's career day events. To a group of curious students, Mr. Kuttner described the work of a transportation planner in the context of the recently released MPO study, *Improving Truck Travel in the Everett-Chelsea Industrial Area*.

The discussion piqued students' interest to learn about how to enter the transportation profession. Students asked questions about transportation funding, investment strategies, and how industry design standards are developed, while Mr. Kuttner discussed how, as transportation professionals, they would be able to participate directly in each of these areas.



Bill Kuttner, Manager of the MPO's Freight Program.

Mr. Kuttner advised students interested in exploring the profession further to start by developing knowledge of the transportation system by observing signal timing and traffic flow at intersections, and ridership levels on transit services, as well as by taking photos and attending public meetings about transportation topics.

He also pointed out that the St. Clement School students will have more opportunities in their own neighborhood in coming weeks to learn from other transportation professionals, listen to public testimony, and voice their own opinions at upcoming public meetings about the about the Green Line Extension project. (See the Calendar section for upcoming meeting schedules.)



Students at St. Clement School watch a presentation about a recent transportation study in Everett and Chelsea. [Photos thanks to St. Clement students Jordan Reyer and Jazz Velez.]

MPO Reviewing TIP Projects in April

Development of the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2017-21 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is well underway. In the month of April, sponsors and supporters of projects seeking federal funding will have opportunities to advocate for their priority projects, and offer additional information for the Boston Region MPO board to consider, as its members deliberate about how to allocate federal transportation dollars for the next-five FFYs.

Important dates include the MPO's meeting on April 7, when MPO staff will present evaluation results of projects that are vying for funding. Mid-month, staff will coordinate with the MassDOT Highway Division to assess which project candidates are advanced enough in the design process to be advertised for construction within this TIP's five-year horizon. Based on the Highway Division's guidance, staff will prepare a first-tier list of viable candidates for programming in the FFYs 2017-21 TIP.

Then, on April 21, staff will present the MPO board with its recommendations of projects to fund; these will be based on the discretionary funds available to the MPO for financing new construction, and for ongoing commitments programmed in prior TIPs. When proposing new projects for funding, staff will give priority to the ones on the first-tier list, and those identified in the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan, *Charting Progress to 2040*. Staff also will consider distributing funding equitably across the region.

Project sponsors and supporters are welcome to speak to the MPO board regarding their priority projects at the April 7 and 21 meetings.

Meeting agendas are available on the Calendar page of the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org.

May 16 (Monday)

MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board: Suite 3830, 12:00 PM

May 19 (Thursday)

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization: Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10:00 AM

May 23 (Monday)

MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board: Suite 3830, 12:00 PM

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

May 25 (Wednesday)

Summit on Transit Accessibility: Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM

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

Public Meetings at Other Locations

April 6 (Wednesday)

MassDOT Design Public Hearing: Roadway Reconstruction in Holbrook. Selectman Noel C. King Meeting Room, Second Floor, Holbrook Town Hall, 50 North Franklin Street, Holbrook. 7:00 PM

MassDOT Public Meeting: Intersection Improvements at Middle Street, Libby Parkway, and Tara Drive in Weymouth. Weymouth Town Hall, Council Chambers, 75 Middle Street, East Weymouth. 7:00 PM

Boston Region MPO Activities

Region's Transportation Plans Comply with State's Air Quality Regulations

The Boston Region MPO has self-certified that its transportation plans are in compliance with State Regulation 310 CMR 60.05: Global Warming Solutions Act Requirements for the Transportation Sector and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. This regulation requires MPOs in the Commonwealth to track and evaluate the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions impacts from projects implemented through their Long-Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs) and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs), and to factor in GHG impacts when prioritizing and selecting projects to fund.

The Boston Region MPO's LRTP, *Charting Progress to 2040*, contains a supplementary report titled, *Meeting Air Quality Goals in Transportation*, which describes analyses that helped to determine that implementing regionally significant transportation projects would conform to state and federal air quality regulations. Also, the MPO's active federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2016-20 TIP contains an appendix describing the projected GHG emissions associated with projects programmed to receive federal funding during the five-year period of that plan. The aforementioned documents are available on the LRTP and TIP pages of the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org.

Green Line Extension Update

This spring, MassDOT and the MBTA continue to work on a cost estimate for a redesigned Green Line Extension project to present to the MassDOT board of directors and the MBTA fiscal and management control board in May. The project team is applying value-engineering techniques to refine the design of the light rail project, which would bring Green Line service from Lechmere Station in Cambridge through Somerville and out to College Avenue in Medford, with a spur line to Union Square in Somerville. The team is assessing all facets of the rail extension, including bridges, a new vehicle-maintenance facility, and the adjacent community path.



The Boston Region MPO will be participating in discussions about other revenue sources besides the nearly \$2 billion already committed to the project by the Federal Transit Administration and the Commonwealth. As reported in the last issue of *TRANSREPORT*, one potential source is the federal funding that the MPO committed to a future second phase of the Green Line Extension, which would extend the line from College Avenue to Route 16 in Medford. However, funds for the second phase cannot be spent in the period in which they were programmed (FFYs 2016-25) because of the delay in implementing the first phase. Therefore, the MPO likely would amend its LRTP and TIP in the coming months to reprogram some, if not all, of those funds.

Agenda notices of upcoming MPO discussions about Green Line Extension funding will be posted on the MPO's online meeting calendar at www.bostonmpo.org.

MassDOT and the MBTA will hold public meetings about the project in April and early May. See the Calendar on page 7 for meeting dates. The most up-to-date information on Green Line Extension meetings is available on MassDOT's website, www.massdot.state.ma.us.

MPO Activities, continued on page 7

April 13 (Wednesday)

MassDOT and MBTA Public Meeting: Green Line Extension Project. Somerville High School Auditorium, 81 Highland Avenue, Somerville. Open House 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM. Presentation and Q and A Session 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM

April 27 (Wednesday)

MassDOT and MBTA Public Meeting: Green Line Extension Project. St. Anthony's Parish Hall, 400 Cardinal Mederios Avenue, Cambridge. Open House 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM. Presentation and Q and A Session 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM

May 5 (Thursday)

MassDOT and MBTA Public Meeting: Green Line Extension Project. St. Clement's Parish Hall, 579 Boston Avenue, Medford. Open House 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM. Presentation and Q and A Session 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM

Boston Region MPO Activities

MPO Activities, continued from page 6

New Projects and Studies Getting Underway

The Boston Region MPO recently gave approval to the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), the staff to the MPO, to begin work on several new projects and studies, summarized below:

Transportation Planning for the Redevelopment of the Lower Mystic Area: CTPS and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) are supporting a regional working group that is charged with assessing and developing transportation improvements that can support sustainable redevelopment and economic growth in and around the Sullivan Square area in Boston, and surrounding areas in Somerville and Everett. The working group—led by MassDOT and involving other state, municipal, and business stakeholders—was formed as an outcome of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review of the Wynn Casino development in Everett.

The support team at CTPS and MAPC will document existing land uses and transportation infrastructure in the study area, identify planned developments, and conduct modeling to test various scenarios for transportation networks, operations, and land uses. The team will also explore strategies to mitigate potential negative transportation impacts, and research options for funding mitigation strategies and transportation improvements in the area.

Removing Barriers to Access at MBTA Stations: CTPS's Transit Service Planning Group will provide technical support to the MBTA Office of System-Wide Accessibility as it develops a Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure (PATI). PATI is a long-term strategic plan to remove barriers that impede access to MBTA stations by people with limited mobility, including seniors and people with disabilities.

The MBTA has been improving station accessibility ever since the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) was passed. However, there still is a backlog of work at many stations, particularly on the Green Line and commuter rail system. PATI's engagement committee—comprised of MBTA officials and stakeholders in the disability community—will guide this effort, which will yield information that could help to prioritize accessibility improvements at MBTA stations and bus stops.

Modeling Transit Capacity Constraints: When transit customers encounter congestion on the transit system, full park-and-ride lots, or bus or subway cars filled to capacity, what choices will those customers make? Will they make their trip on a different transit route? Will they change their mode of travel and drive instead? A new study undertaken by CTPS aims to create a methodology that could be used to answer such questions in future transportation planning studies.

This study should result in improvements to the MPO's regional travel demand model, which represents the roadway and transit network within the 101 municipalities in the MPO region and 63 adjacent municipalities, and forecasts the impact of proposed changes to the transportation network on travel demand and air quality in the region. By developing a model that will reflect transit capacity constraints accurately, it will be possible to examine how customers might react, and what transportation choices they might make, when faced with constraints or congestion in the system.

Ongoing Monitoring of MBTA Bus Service: For the ninth consecutive year, CTPS will be performing the Comprehensive Ridecheck Program for monitoring ridership and schedule adherence on MBTA bus services. Data on passenger boardings and alightings and bus running times will be collected for selected bus routes and rapid transit stations. This data is used to identify crowding or schedule problems on bus, trackless trolley, and rapid transit routes, and for making recommendations to the MBTA to adjust schedules, frequency, and running times.

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.

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 (email).

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) Update

AACT Members Celebrate the Reopening of a Fully Accessible Government Center Station

Many AACT members were present at the ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the reopening of Government Center Station on March 21. This event celebrated a major milestone toward making the region's transit network more accessible to people with limited mobility and disabilities.

The station was closed for the past two years while major reconstruction was underway to bring one of the oldest stations in the MBTA's subway system—first built as Scollay Station in 1898, and last renovated in the 1960s—up to modern accessibility standards.

The remodeling replaced a cramped and dimly lit brick entranceway with a lofty, glass-paneled edifice that allows natural light to stream into the new lobby and fare-gate area, down to the platform level. Whereas the old station lacked adequate means of vertical transportation—having only stairs and an escalator—the renovations added elevators, as well as new double

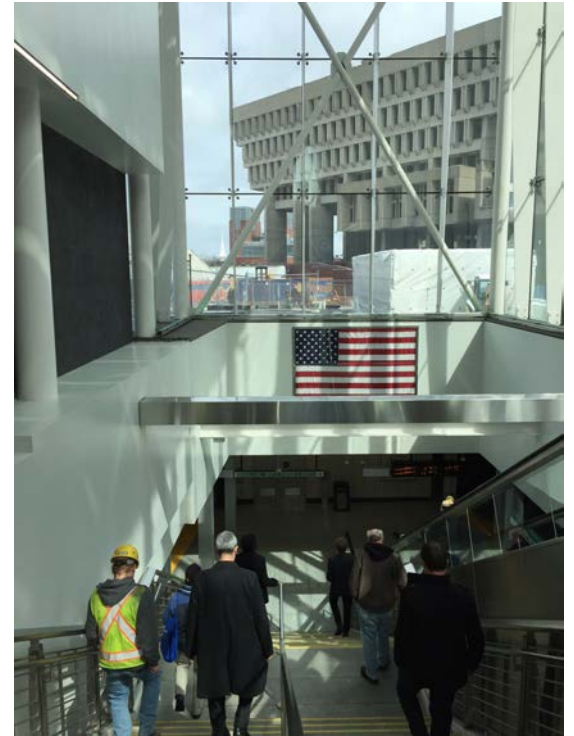
staircases and escalators. Walkways to the station lobby are ramps for the ease of customers using wheelchairs or other mobility devices. Platforms in the station allow for boarding low-floor Green Line trains with such devices. Safety features also were added, including a public-address system, a new emergency exit, and better lighting.

The new station is now fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and adheres to requirements of a 2006 settlement between the Boston Center for Independent Living and the MBTA, which required the MBTA to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. The station, a transfer point between the Green and Blue lines, is the last of the stations upgraded to modern accessibility standards as part of the MBTA's Key Station Plan. This plan prioritized accessibility improvements to stations on the subway and commuter rail system with sizable ridership, that are at the end of a service line, are intermodal stations, or which are located near key business and retail centers.

Government Center, a Milestone to an Accessible Transit System

While the Government Station renovation represents the last of the Key Station accessibility projects, it also marks the beginning of more work that needs to be done to improve access throughout the system.

Laura Brelsford, Assistant General Manager, of the MBTA's System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA), briefed the AACT board earlier this year on the MBTA's future plans to address other facilities and transit vehicles in the MBTA system that are not fully accessible.



Government Center Station

AACT Update, continued on page 9

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) Update

AACT Update, continued from page 8

Foremost among them is the Plan for Accessible Transportation Infrastructure, a long-term strategic plan getting underway this spring to address stations and transit vehicles that still present impediments to access by people with limited mobility. The Central Transportation Planning Staff of the Boston Region MPO will survey stations and bus stops to identify barriers to access, and develop criteria for prioritizing accessibility improvements.

Other ongoing initiatives include the work of the Vehicle Access Advisory Committee, which provides feedback on accessibility design features for new transit vehicle procurements, including buses, Red and Orange Line cars, and "Type 9" Green Line cars. The MBTA is also developing a long-term strategy for replacing elevators and escalators at stations. Other station accessibility upgrades have been completed, including at the now fully accessible South Acton commuter rail station, and more are in design.

The SWA will be updating AACT on the status of its initiatives periodically throughout the year.



The newly accessible Government Center Station

TRANSREPORT

PUBLISHED BY THE
BOSTON REGION
METROPOLITAN
PLANNING
ORGANIZATION

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Regional Transportation Advisory Council Update

The Advisory Council's March meeting featured a presentation by Jennifer Slesinger of MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning on the MBTA's new long-term plan for investing in the transit system through 2040. FOCUS40 will be an update to the MBTA's Program for Mass Transportation, a 25-year visioning plan that the MBTA must update every five years. It establishes investment priorities to be implemented through the MBTA's Capital Investment Program (CIP), a five-year, short-term investment plan.

The first phase in developing FOCUS40 involved assessing the current state of the transit system and surveying customers to understand how well the transit system serves them. As a result, MassDOT produced a series of State of the System Reports for each transit mode, which detail the condition and age of transit assets, ridership, and the system's performance. (These reports are available at www.massdot.state.ma.us/focus40.)

As FOCUS40 moves forward, the conversation will center on how the MBTA may need to adapt to Greater Boston's evolving needs when faced with various factors, including: demographic shifts that could result in more transit-dependent residents; coastal flooding and extreme temperature impacts from climate change that could affect transit infrastructure and service; changing mobility and commuting preferences, such as car-free living, or greater reliance on walking, bicycling, and ridesharing; and new technologies, such as autonomous vehicles.

To engage in the conversation, visit the FOCUS40 website to sign up to receive notices of upcoming meetings.

TRANSREPORT is published by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization to disseminate information on current transportation projects and issues in the Boston region. Comments and requests to be added to or removed from the distribution list are welcome and should be sent either to *TRANSREPORT* Editor, Boston Region MPO Staff, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116, or to publicinformation@ctps.org. *TRANSREPORT* is free. Its preparation is financed in part by grants from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.