



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

TRANSPORTATION • LAND DEVELOPMENT • ENVIRONMENT



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For information about ABC news,
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ABC contributes significant changes to Regional Transportation Plan

Over the Summer, one of the projects A Better City has been working on is the Massachusetts Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP is currently being amended by the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); a process that takes place every two years. Typically, the amendment includes a large number of expansion and enhancement projects that are vital to the Commonwealth's transportation system. Periodic revisions to the RTP are essential in order to maintain the Commonwealth's long term transportation vision. The document outlines all of the significant transportation projects to be studied, planned or built during the next 20 years.

In the 2009 review of the RTP, many projects were removed due to funding constraints facing the state's transportation agencies. These included several of ABC's highest priority transit projects including the Urban Ring, the South Station Track Bed Expansion and Silver Line Phase III. Those projects not removed were placed on a "Fiscally Constrained" list. Failure to be listed in the RTP's "Fiscally Constrained" list would make these projects ineligible for federal funding. A Better City believes it is essential that these projects be included in the RTP so that the Commonwealth is able to maintain and operate its existing transportation infrastructure and continue to improve and expand the system into the future. It is for this reason that A Better City pushed hard for the Boston MPO to reconsider their decision and reinsert the projects into the RTP.

We are pleased to report that ABC Staff was able to reinforce the importance of these projects with the Boston MPO. The Urban Ring, Silver Line Phase III and the South Boston Track Bed Expansion

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This Fall the TMA is partnering with [WalkBoston](#) to host a pedestrian walking series. We also will be organizing a cold weather cycling session to help prepare you for the approaching chilly air. Follow us on [Twitter](#) or check out our [website](#) for further details!

In other TMA news...



September wraps up ABC TMA's Summer Promotion, "[Go Green, Save Green](#)". This four-month program was hosted in partnership with [MassCommute](#), the association of Massachusetts TMAs.

The program goal is to encourage member employees to incorporate active commuting into all or part of trips to work. Participants simply log their daily active commuting mileage; each time they submit a report their chances for winning increases. To date, the 68 participating ABC TMA member employees have collectively prevented 33,466 lbs. of CO² from being emitted into the Boston area atmosphere. We wish the ABC TMA team the best of luck as they aim to surpass their emissions reduction goal by the end of the month; 34,000 lbs. of CO²!

(Regional Transportation Plan continued.....)

projects are now included on an "illustrative projects" list which was created to capture significant projects that were not originally considered. While these projects have not been restored 100% to the RTP, ABC remains dedicated to working with the Boston MPO in creating the best possible outcome for the RTP.

In the coming weeks and months ABC will continue advocating for these important projects to be placed back on the main RTP list. ABC will be submitting a letter of public comment to the Boston MPO; we continue to encourage our members and other stakeholders to submit their own letters of support by the September 22nd deadline. We also attended a public meeting held on September 16th to once again raise our concerns. Contact ABC Policy & Development director, Matthieu Zahler (mzahler@abettercity.org) if you are interested in learning more about this process.

ABC Sustainability Leadership Program on track!

Development of the Sustainability Leadership program is moving forward as the Sustainability & Climate Change Committee works closely with our consultant (ERG), to finalize the program's structure and to develop and complete program support materials. One of the greatest features about this multifaceted program is the interactive design. Participants will be able to measure their building's environmental impacts, develop strategies for increasing efficiencies and lowering costs, and have access to informational resources that address best practices and implementation. Our goal for the program is to equip the membership with the necessary tools that will enable them to reduce resource consumption on the human scale and building systems level.



Beginning in September, ABC will recruit a limited number of members to participate in a pilot program. The year-long pilot is scheduled to launch in November 2009; participants will be representative of large and small scale building owners, tenants, and institutions. Contact David Straus by phone (617-502-6246) or email (dstraus@abettercity.org) if interested in participating in the pilot.

NOVEMBER 5th
Sustainability Showcase
Microsoft Startup Lab

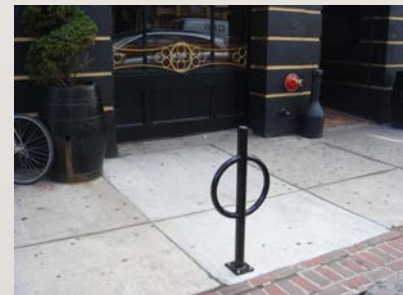
We invite you to join ABC on November 5th, at the Microsoft Startup Lab in Cambridge, MA. The Lab is part of a long term strategic investment by Microsoft's Chief Software Architect, Ray Ozzie to build a world class center for research and innovation in the heart of Cambridge. The recently renovated space was built with the environment in mind. Design elements include 100% recyclable sheet rock, acoustic ceiling tiles, sensors that shut off bathroom faucets when not in use and greenscaping —*that is environmentally minded landscaping*— around the property. Register for the showcase [online](#) today!

**"Tell us where your
 workplace wants bike
 parking!"**

Contact Dorothy Fennell, dfennell@abettercity.org, if you'd like assistance working with the City to install public racks in close proximity to your building. We are also exploring the option of managing a bulk order for members interested in expanding private parking; contact Ms. Fennell for further information.

**ABC & ABCTMA helping to increase bike
 parking in the City**

ABC and ABCTMA are working with the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) and [Boston Bikes](#) to increase on-street, bicycle parking options around the city. The City is compiling a list of installation locations that will begin in Spring 2010. In preparation of this, we are reaching out to the membership for assistance in identifying public-accessible locations that can serve the transportation needs of the business community, consumers and visitors. The City will manage all installation and maintenance of the racks including removing abandoned bicycles.



Access to reliable parking is important as an increasing amount of commuters switch to transit, bicycling and walking for trips to work. In addition, bicycling can be a convenient mode for consumers and visitors to access the services in the Downtown neighborhoods. Lastly, access to public parking is a useful resource for buildings lacking suitable options or looking to augment current availability so as to better meet demand.

UPDATES FROM THE FIELD...

Charles River Basin Projects

Work is currently underway in the rehabilitation of the [Boston University Bridge](#) and the [Craigie](#)



Photo courtesy of Boston.com

[Bridges](#) on the Charles River Dam by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). ABC has held several meetings in partnership with the DCR

and their consultant team to review traffic and construction strategies with our members. The DCR is working with ABC members in addressing several critical issues concerning traffic flow through and around the area during construction.

On September 24, ABC will hold a joint meeting of our Transportation and Construction Committee and a recently established working group focused on the dozen roadway, bridge, and tunnel projects slated in the Charles River Basin. The group will focus a high level of detail on each project as well as work with the cities of Cambridge and Boston and other interested parties to develop a comprehensive mitigation strategy for the entire group of projects within the Basin.

Central Artery Traffic Signal Retiming Project

The Boston Transportation Department (BTD) and its consultants Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates are about to enter the final phases of a [traffic signal retiming study](#) focused on surface streets and 81 intersections of the Central Artery Corridor. The study objectives are to reduce traffic delay and improve safety by identifying and implementing measures such as adjusting signal cycle length, reducing the number of signal phases, and improving lane usage.

The study conducted traffic counts in the fall of 2008 to identify existing conditions. It found that delays were concentrated at major intersections and that some signal timing changes might be beneficial, but that no major changes were required for the existing signal system in the Corridor. The changes proposed by the study are projected to reduce overall traffic delay by 22% and reduce queue lengths at critical intersections. For instance, during the AM peak hour, the queue length on Atlantic Avenue at Summer Street is projected to decrease from 430 feet to 300 feet. On Purchase Street at Oliver Street timing changes can result in a reduction from 300 feet to 90 feet in the afternoon.

Implementation of the new signal timing is planned for fall 2009, with a fine tuning period and completion of the final study to follow.

Transit Works Completes MBTA Bicycle Survey

You see them flying by as you sit in traffic inching your way through your daily commute. They lean nonchalantly against light posts, parking meters, and railings throughout the city. Bicycles are as much a part of the fabric of a city as the city streets themselves. These intrepid commuters opt to abandon the sluggishness of cars for a more utilitarian and environmental form of personal transportation. In doing so they must engage in a daily battle with drivers, pedestrians, weather, and the streets themselves.

While some of these commuters appear isolated by their commuting option, many cyclists also utilize public transit on a daily basis. However, in Boston, transit officials have yet to find an adequate way in which to seamlessly unite these two forms of movement. In attempting to find a solution for assisting this set of commuters, [TransitWorks](#) created a survey in conjunction with the MBTA and local cycling groups, to better understand ways in which the two sectors may functionally interact.

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(MBTA Bicycle Survey continued...)

In recent years, the MBTA has invested in bike rack equipped buses, trains and stations. As the number of cyclists who use transit continues to increase, it has become imperative to better understand the needs and experiences of this unique population. It is widely understood that cyclists in Boston are a powerful public voice, often garnering the attention of the media and the general public. Thus, it is essential to strengthen the relationship between the cycling community and the MBTA through study and dialogue. To this end, TransitWorks measured the ways in which MBTA's efforts have been used and received in the urban cycling community. Further, it was the goal of TransitWorks to identify actions that could be taken to increase cyclist satisfaction and accessibility.



The 2009 Bicycle Transportation Survey has captured a snapshot of cyclist usage habits and general user satisfaction. The online survey garnered 857 responses from 133 towns and cities throughout Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. With an overwhelming percentage (96.6%) of these riders using public transit, it was clear that this group would be an ideal example of the experiences of bimodal commuters.

The results from these measures were very successful in illuminating how existing issues hamper bicycle accessibility to public transit. Of the 96.6 % of cyclist who use MBTA services, only 54.7% actually ride their bike to access these services. Over half of these riders (52.4%) stated that the main deterrent was either policies that precluded their accessing transit stations and vehicles, or lack of storage for their bicycles once in the station or on the vehicle. In regards to the bus bicycle racks installed along many vehicles in the fleet, 79.8% of cyclists were not using them due to lack of driver compliance or insufficient notice of availability along designated routes. While a large amount of time and money has gone into the installation of the bike cages only 5.1% of cyclists surveyed were familiar with their existence.

Out of the results TransitWorks has determined that improvements should include the creation of detailed maps indicating the location of bicycle amenities, more general amenity and service information and the publication of this information, and up to date and accessible bus bicycle rack information. In addition to these modifications, an in-depth study needs to be undertaken by transit officials to reexamine current policies and practices that have excluded multimodal users from fully utilizing public transit. Such an understanding will place the city of Boston and the region one step closer to a fully integrated and inclusive



Upcoming Meetings

The following meetings are open to A Better City and A Better City TMA members. For information about membership please contact ABC Director of Policy and Development, Matthieu Zahler by phone (617-502-6244) or email (mzahler@abettercity.org).

- **ABC TMA Board Meeting: Thursday, September 24th**
- **ABC Transportation & Construction Committee Meeting: Thursday, September 24th**
- **ABC Board Meeting: Wednesday, September 30th**
- **ABC Real Estate Forum: Thursday, October 15th**