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May 10, 2012

David Mohler, Chair  
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4150  
Boston, MA 02116

RE: Draft Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and Draft FFY 2013 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Dear Mr. Mohler,

The Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council) is an independent group of citizen and regional advocacy groups, municipal officials, and agencies charged by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) with providing public input on transportation planning and programming. The Advisory Council is a forum for broad-based discussions of transportation issues and planning, particularly on programming of federal transportation funding for the region, and is a main avenue for public participation in the MPO's planning process.

The Advisory Council strongly supports the inclusion in the TIP of the Green Line Extension to Route 16 as we encourage transit expansion in our region. This project has exceptionally strong popular support for completion because of the transit opportunities it will provide for so many residents and the benefits of the transit-oriented development that the community is currently discussing. These include reduced traffic, improved air quality, and sustainable economic growth. It is the logical terminus for the Green Line, providing safer access to and from off-campus offices of Tufts University and surrounding neighborhoods which experience heavy pedestrian traffic.

We support funding for projects for bicycle and pedestrian improvement throughout the region and encourage more work on bike trail facilities like the Assabet River Rail Trail project. We are pleased that more trail facilities, such as the Tri-Community Bikeway, the South Bay Harbor Trail, and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail are receiving support in the proposed TIP.

The Advisory Council strongly supports the draft FFY 2013 UPWP because it addresses many of the greatest concerns of the Advisory Council. We particularly support the emphasis on the

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Regional HOV Systems Planning Study and the studies that are closely coordinated with the MAPC Subregions. These studies include:

- MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) Regional Planning Assistance
- Southwest Advisory Planning Committee (SWAP) Transit Feasibility Study
- Addressing Safety, Mobility, and Access on Subregional Priority Arterial Roadways

The Advisory Council also appreciates the MPO's commitment to more work in the area of freight. We have long felt that freight transportation deserves more attention because of the critical role freight transportation plays in supporting a strong economy.

Advisory Council members are also pleased with the public outreach process that staff conducted to generate the draft FFY 2013 UPWP and all of its plans and studies. Public outreach is one of the critical MPO functions funded through the UPWP and we appreciate your continued attention to it. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Steve Olanoff, Chair  
Regional Transportation Advisory Council