



May 31, 2012

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

RE: Draft Federal Fiscal Years 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Plan and
Draft Federal Fiscal Year 2013 Unified Planning Work Program

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.

At its May 9, 2012 meeting, the Advisory Council discussed the Draft Federal Fiscal Year 2013 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Draft Federal Fiscal Years 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), currently in circulation for public review and comment.

The Advisory Council strongly supports the MPO's commitment to add more focus to the area of freight. We are very appreciative of the addition of the Boston Region MPO Freight Program to the UPWP (page 7-4) as an ongoing program. We have long felt that freight transportation deserves more attention because of the critical role freight transportation plays in supporting a strong economy. We are pleased that the MPO's 2010 Freight Study, "A Profile of Truck Impacts," was recently completed. However, we feel more studies need to be done and the results should filter down and be implemented in actual TIP projects. To emphasize its importance, freight elements should be called out in all projects which have freight implications.

Regarding the TIP, we support funding of projects for pedestrian and bicycle improvements on roadways, bridges, and pathways throughout the region. We are especially supportive of multi-use, non-motorized trails that serve and link public transportation nodes. Thus, we encourage more work on connective multi-use trails such as the Assabet River Rail Trail project. We are very 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 with funding from MassDOT. We support the MPO policy goal of livability and economic benefit, and

Providing transportation policy advice to the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

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we encourage a more seamless integration of bicycle and pedestrian facilities into the overall transportation network.

The Advisory Council supports and thanks the MPO for the inclusion in the TIP of the Green Line Extension to Route 16, as we encourage transit expansion in our region. We support the completion of this project 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.

The Advisory Council wishes to promote accessibility in all modes. It has been brought to our attention that more steps could be taken to make multi-use trails truly accessible by designing and constructing them to actually be open to and surfaced to accommodate wheelchair users and others who use mobility devices.

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

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

Advisory Council members are also pleased with the public outreach process that staff conducted to generate the Draft Federal Fiscal Years 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Plan and 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,



Steven H. Olanoff, Chair
Regional Transportation Advisory Council