

# REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



February 2, 2010

David Mohler, Chair Transportation Planning and Programming Committee  
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization  
State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 4150  
Boston, MA 02116

RE: Draft Amendment 3 to the 2010 Element of the FFYs 2010-2013 TIP

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 to the MPO.

The Advisory Council continues to support the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) willingness to flex highway funds to transit, specifically, in this amendment, for MBTA maintenance and improvement projects. We expressed concern about the growing backlog of MBTA maintenance projects in our original comment letter on the FFYs 2010-2013 TIP, and the recent MBTA Review heightened our concerns. Funding critical maintenance projects promotes safety, mobility improvements, and modal split balance, which are among the Advisory Council's priorities for TIP development. It also improves public confidence in the system, which we hope will encourage more people to use its services.

We continue, however, to be very concerned with the process by which projects are recommended by MassDOT for funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) program. While we understand the extraordinary circumstances created by ARRA deadlines, the Advisory Council believes that by distributing the proposed amendments at the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee meeting, the Council is unable to provide the public input to the process that is our charge. This practice demonstrates a lack of respect for the MPO planning process. Amendments should be circulated with sufficient time and explanation prior to the meeting for the MPO to make informed and considered recommendations. We ask that you stop the practice of making late submittals, and provide this information in a timely manner. In addition, in order to make the process more transparent, a list of the universe of projects being considered, along with information about their scope, status, and costs should be provided to board members and the public ahead of time. The process as is does not provide a sufficient opportunity for public input.

Sincerely,

Laura Wiener, Chair

*Providing transportation policy advice to the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization*

State Transportation Building • Ten Park Plaza, Suite 2150 • Boston, Massachusetts 02116-3968  
Tel. (617) 973-7100 • Fax (617) 973-8855 • TTY (617) 973-7089 • [ctps@ctps.org](mailto:ctps@ctps.org)