

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



February 27, 2012

Dear MPO Chairman Mohler,

The Regional Transportation Advisory Council is writing to express our views on the MBTA proposed fare increases and service reductions and asks that our comments on this topic be forwarded to the MBTA as they gather opinions on their proposals for action. In the capacity of advising the Boston Region MPO on transportation-planning and policy, the Advisory Council provides a forum for broad public participation in the transportation planning process. We are aware of the funding constraints faced by the MBTA and the transportation system in general. As advocates for a strong and healthy transportation system, we encourage the MPO not to support the two financing scenarios that have been advanced by the MBTA to date.

The Advisory Council wishes to register its objection to the service cuts that have been advanced by the MBTA within the context of the two scenarios now under public review. We believe the proposed service cuts would seriously harm mobility in the region, which in turn would damage the region's economic vitality and quality of life.

The Advisory Council strongly supports transportation decisions that reduce harmful emissions and that have a positive effect on the environment. Reducing emissions will require a strong transit network, and expanded bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The proposed reduction of transit service will have a decidedly negative effect on the network and as a result, on the environment.

We are also quite concerned about the proposed fare increases. Fare increases would take away a larger proportion of household budgets from low- or fixed-income residents in our region. This would disproportionately (and negatively) affect the riders in our region who are more reliant upon transit service for all their transportation. Students, job-seekers, non-auto-owning workers, persons with disabilities and the elderly, to name but a few, would be heavily burdened.

We ask that the legislative and executive branches of the Commonwealth take strong and decisive action in providing for the financial future of public transportation, and do so with compassion and with a commitment to properly maintain our entire transportation infrastructure. We ask that these finance problems be solved for the long-term and that they involve a diverse and broad set of revenue sources, not just fare hikes, to pay for the transportation system our region needs. We think a broad-based set of funding sources would serve as a buffer against unforeseen finance circumstances in the future.

Sincerely,

Steven Olanoff, Chair
Regional Transportation Advisory Council