

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



October 17, 2013

David Mohler, Chair
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

RE: Freight Planning Action Plan for the Boston Region MPO

Dear Mr. Mohler:

The Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council) has long encouraged developing an ongoing program for freight planning in the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Advisory Council has reviewed the recently proposed Freight Planning Action Plan and discussed it at both an Advisory Council Freight Committee meeting and an Advisory Council meeting. The Advisory Council strongly endorses the Proposed Freight Planning Action Plan for the Boston Region MPO and recommends MPO approval as well.

This Action Plan represents a significant milestone for the MPO and for freight planning in the MPO region. In addressing freight needs, the first step must be to collect data, and this program proposes a feasible way, within the fiscal constraints of the MPO's planning program, to take that step. With the data collected and the analysis this program will provide, the MPO and others (in both public and private sectors) involved in freight planning can gain an understanding of the issues to be addressed and begin taking steps to develop solutions.

We believe that the current large volume of truck traffic is creating air quality, traffic congestion, safety, and roadway infrastructure problems in our region. Considering the projected growth in truck traffic, these impacts could escalate and have a negative effect on our regional economy. This Action Plan lays the groundwork for gathering and analyzing data to work on issues and develop solutions that would help protect our transportation infrastructure, our environment and communities, and our roadway safety—all necessary conditions for a vibrant regional economy.

As the MPO moves forward with this Action Plan, the Advisory Council would like to make two specific requests:

1. That freight planning in the MPO program is coordinated with other MPOs and other states. Freight issues are not confined to our MPO boundaries; major new developments in global and national freight transport will affect the transportation

network in our region going forward. These effects should be brought into the planning and project selection at the MPO.

2. That the Action Plan is improved by adding to the graphic to specifically show the workflow of the program and how staff plans to connect data collection and analysis with recommendations and implementation. The Advisory Council would like to see the plan present a stronger correlation between identifying the issues and developing possible solutions leading to action.

The Advisory Council views the Action Plan, implemented through the MPO's ongoing Freight Program, as an opportunity to work with the MPO to contribute to a conversation in the region about freight issues and solutions.

In summary, the Advisory Council realizes that all of the problems associated with the movement of freight cannot be solved immediately. The proposed Action Plan, however, is a significant step toward addressing them.

We wholeheartedly support the proposed Freight Action Plan and thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Steven H. Olanoff
Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council