

THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

May 17, 2011

David Mohler
Chair, Transportation Planning and Programming Committee
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116-3968

Dear Mr. Mohler:

We are writing to provide comments on the Programmed Highway Discretionary and Major Infrastructure Funding for the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that the Boston MPO is considering this week, and specifically **urge you to preserve funding for the Green Line Extension to Route 16.**

The Patrick administration has made a clear and public commitment to the extension of the MBTA Green Line to Route 16/Mystic Valley Parkway. While our community was disappointed that the extension between College Avenue and Route 16 was relegated to "Phase II" of the project, it was argued this was the only option given funding limitations. The Patrick Administration not only stated publicly its commitment to the full build to Mystic Valley Parkway Terminus, which was recommended in the Draft Environmental Impact Report as the "preferred alternative," but funding was identified in the 2016-2020 timeframe by the Boston MPO with the support of the Administration. Additionally, MassDOT contracted with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to continue public study of the preferred alternative, a process which is currently underway and receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback by community members in support of the Route 16 terminus.

In reviewing the three approaches proposed by CTPS to the Boston MPO, we were extremely alarmed to see two of the three funding plans have completely eliminated the Green Line Route 16 extension project. It appears that the total funding allocation for each of the time periods is assumed to be equal to the current strategy, meaning it is not assumed there is less money to go around. Rather, in proposing the two new possible strategies, all of the funding is stripped away from the Green Line to Route 16 project and reallocated back to other projects. If either of these plans were adopted, it would be in direct contradiction to all of the public statements of support that have been made over the past several years. It would also severely undermine the purpose of the current MAPC study, as well as the countless hours of work that has happened at MassDOT and in the community in determining the Route 16 terminus as the preferred alternative.

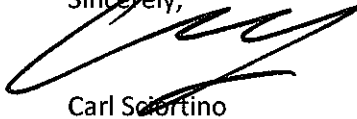
It would be a mistake for the Commonwealth to backtrack from the progress it made in flexing highway funds towards public transportation expansion. Investments in enhanced public transit are essential to our regional and statewide economic growth, and the Green Line Extension to Route 16 has already been demonstrated to provide significant benefit to air quality and regional mobility. If we do not preserve funding for the Green Line to Route 16 project now, it will be all the more difficult to identify new sources of funding later.

The extension of the Green Line to College Avenue fails to meet the Commonwealth's obligation to extend the line to the Medford Hillside neighborhood, as has been extensively commented on by the community. While MassDOT currently disagrees with this analysis, the only way to avoid a legal fight on this matter, along with the cost of mitigation for delay beyond 2014, is for MassDOT to actually extend the Green Line beyond College Avenue, which the Route 16 terminus would accomplish. It would also be more cost-effective and less disruptive to the community to combine Phase 1 and Phase 2 into a single project, rather than stagger the construction over time. Considering Phase 1 is already delayed into 2015 according to MassDOT, it is important to begin merging the planning for both phases and eventually reintegrate the Route 16 extension into the main project. **For these reasons, we would not only request that the funding for the Route 16 extension be preserved, but to allocate the funding in 2011-2015 rather than 2016-2020.**

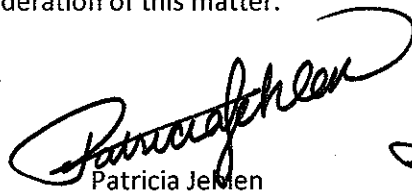
Eliminating funding for this project, as strategies 2 and 3 would do, will result in the indefinite tabling of this project, which our community would perceive as a complete renegeing on the promises made by this administration. A commitment has been made to complete the Green Line Extension to Route 16, and we write only to ask that that promise be kept by continuing the identification of funding in the Boston MPO's Long Term Transportation Plan.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Carl Scortino
State Representative



Patricia Jelen
State Senator



Sean Garballe
State Representative

cc: Jeffrey Mullan, Transportation Secretary, MassDOT
Pam Wolfe, Certification Activities Manager, CTPS
Marc Draisen, Executive Director, MAPC
Edward Markey, Congressman
Michael Capuano, Congressman
Joseph Curtatone, Mayor, City of Somerville
Michael McGlynn, Mayor, City of Medford
Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership
Medford Greenline Neighborhood Alliance