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MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Interested Parties  
**FROM:** Dennis DiZoglio, Chairman *JD*  
Transportation Planning and Programming Committee  
**DATE:** July 29, 2002  
**RE:** Addendum to the 2000-2025 Boston Region  
Transportation Plan Update

Attached is a public review copy of the Addendum to the 2000-2025 Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Plan Update. The Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration required the Boston MPO to develop this addendum in order to draw conclusions from its environmental justice assessment in the transit system and relate the conclusions to the recommendations of the Plan Update.

The MPO has voted to release this document for public comments to be received up to 3:00 P.M., Tuesday, September 3, 2002. During this review period, the MPO will consider comments received from interested parties as well as continue its own review of the addendum. The final document will be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration by Friday, September 13, 2002.

- A cooperative transportation-planning effort of the:
- Executive Office of Transportation and Construction
- City of Boston
- City of Everett
- City of Newton
- City of Peabody
- Federal Highway Administration (ex officio)
- Federal Transit Administration (ex officio)
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board
- Massachusetts Highway Department
- Massachusetts Port Authority
- Massachusetts Turnpike Authority
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- Regional Transportation Advisory Council (ex officio)
- Town of Bedford
- Town of Framingham
- Town of Hopkinton

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## **Addendum to the 2000-2025 Boston Region MPO Transportation Plan Update**

### ***Background***

The Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is committed to soliciting input into the transportation planning process from the public including traditionally under-served constituencies of communities of color, low-income residents, and transit dependent populations. To accomplish this, the MPO convened an Environmental Justice Committee in February 2001, made up of representatives of community or interest groups from minority and low income neighborhoods and have been meeting regularly since that time. In addition, federal regulations require the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to periodically review and evaluate the transportation planning process conducted in large urbanized areas to determine if the process meets federal requirements. The most recent review of the Boston MPO was conducted in September 2000. This review, commonly referred to as a “certification review,” focused on nine planning areas chosen by the federal review team. One of these focus areas concerned the MPO’s efforts to evaluate and address issues relating to environmental justice.

The Final Certification Report, issued March 15, 2001, certified the MPO’s process subject to the implementation of six corrective actions relating to three of the focus areas. Two of these corrective actions related to environmental justice.

- 1) Within three months of the issuance of the final report, the MPO was required to:
  - establish a definition of environmental justice;
  - develop measures to test the achievement of environmental justice;
  - assess both highway and transit investments; and
  - undertake outreach activities to low-income and minority communities and solicit input.
  
- 2) Within twelve months of the issuance of the final report, the MPO was required to:
  - apply measurement criteria to determine the existence of transportation inequalities;
  - incorporate environmental justice findings into an updated Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and subsequent Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs); and
  - disseminate the updated RTP to low-income and minority communities and solicit input.

As noted in the final report, the MPO’s work on environmental justice predated the federal certification review. In January 2000, the MPO began its effort to explicitly include the consideration of environmental justice in the 2000-2025 Boston MPO Transportation Plan (the “Regional Transportation Plan” or “RTP”). These efforts ultimately led to the creation of the MPO’s Environmental Justice Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of representatives from neighborhood and regional advocacy groups, interested residents, and MPO members. The Ad

Hoc Committee met three times in Fall 2000 to develop environmental justice indicators for use in the development of the 25-year RTP. During the development of the RTP, the MPO decided to use a two-staged approach for its long-range planning efforts. The first stage culminated in the adoption in January 2000 of a Regional Transportation Plan. For the 2000 RTP, the Ad Hoc Committee concentrated its efforts on the development of measures for which data was already available. These measures included transit access, service frequency, transit crowding, vehicle assignment, bridge conditions and MPO capital highway investments.

While the January 2000 RTP was fully compliant with federal regulations relating to long-range planning, the MPO committed to immediately begin work on a Plan Update that would expand upon the work done for the first stage. This stage-two work included a particular emphasis on the development of long-range policies, the analysis of additional land-use alternatives, the refinement of environmental justice measures and the selection of additional transportation projects for implementation. Specifically in relation to environmental justices issues, the MPO committed to continue to work with the Ad Hoc Committee to refine the measures used in the 2000 RTP and to develop additional measures for use in the update of the 2000 RTP.

As noted above, the Final Certification Report was issued shortly after the adoption of the 2000-2025 Regional Transportation Plan, during the early work on the development of the Plan Update. To a certain extent, the issuance of the final report preempted the ongoing work of the MPO and refocused its environmental justice efforts on meeting the short-term deadline imposed by the federal government. Given the three-month timeframe of the final report, the MPO in consultation with the Ad Hoc Committee decided to concentrate its efforts on refining the definition contained in the 2000 RTP, developing highway measures, and updating and expanding the existing transit measures. Specifically, it was agreed that additional data would be gathered and summarized to provide a fuller statistical picture of the daily operation of the regional public transportation system and that a measure of transit mobility would be developed to replace the previous measure of transit access. This work was documented in a letter from the MPO to FHWA and FTA dated June 15, 2001 (three months after the issuance of the Final Certification Report). The federal agencies responded on July 13<sup>th</sup> recognizing the positive efforts of the MPO and reminding the MPO of the need to address environmental justice issues in the Plan Update.

Much of the work on the environmental justice measures for the Plan Update involved extensive data gathering and reporting. While this work was ongoing at the staff level, the focus of the Ad Hoc Committee shifted to a consideration of project selection issues. While not ignoring the development and implementation of the measures, the committee determined that an equally, or even more, important element of the RTP was the selection of recommended projects to address some of the Committee's perceived inequities in the system. At the same time, the committee attendance evolved from a regional focus to an attendance that was composed almost exclusively of advocacy groups from the urban core. The Ad Hoc Committee reviewed all of the projects under consideration for inclusion in the Plan Update and developed a consensus recommended list of projects. While the committee specifically supported several transit projects, it primarily focused on two projects that had not previously been included in any of the other alternative scenarios tested for the Plan Update: the institution of light rail service on Washington Street in

Roxbury, instead of the bus rapid transit service, which is currently under construction, and the purchase of 100 additional alternative fuel buses.

The draft of the Plan Update was approved for release and comment in January 2002. The draft that was released to the public included a 69-page appendix containing all of the data gathered for the environmental justice measures, including tabular summaries of the data presented. The document also included a description of the Ad Hoc Committee process and other public outreach efforts that focused on the minority and low-income communities throughout the region. The draft, as released, did not include either of the two projects that were the primary focus of the Ad Hoc Committee deliberations. Because of the federally imposed timeframe, the MPO made a decision to release the draft fully expecting to further analyze the set of recommended projects in the Plan Update. As a result of the ongoing analysis of the draft, the MPO decided to make several changes to the RTP relative to environmental justice issues. These changes were supported by comments received during the public outreach effort on the draft. Specifically, the adopted Update included funds for the procurement of 100 additional alternative fuel buses to help relieve congestion on the most crowded routes throughout the system; committed the MPO to monitor the implementation of bus rapid transit on Washington Street; included the light rail project on Washington Street as an illustrative project for future consideration; and provided text to clarify which recommended transit projects address an environmental justice issue. The Plan Update did not, however, undertake any meaningful measurement of environmental justice on the highway system. The final Plan Update was endorsed by the MPO on March 14, 2002.

On May 16, 2002, FHWA and FTA responded to the submittal of the Plan Update. The federal agencies lauded the work accomplished by the MPO since the issuance of the Final Certification Report in March 2001, but noted some continuing issues relating to environmental justice. The letter continued the certification of the MPO planning process subject to two additional work products. The MPO is required to prepare an Addendum to the Plan Update to document its conclusions from the environmental justice assessment contained in the appendix and clearly relate those conclusions to the project selection process. The Addendum must be adopted within 120 days after the date of the letter (no later than September 13, 2002).

The MPO is also required within the same time period to prepare a work scope for a systems-level analysis of environmental justice issues, pivoting off of effective practices employed by other MPOs. This focus on a systems-level approach supersedes the separate modal assessments undertaken as part of the Plan Update process. The work to be performed under the work scope must be completed in time to inform the next iteration of the Regional Transportation Plan, which must be completed prior to the next certification review, tentatively scheduled for March 2004.

The MPO responded to the May 16<sup>th</sup> letter agreeing that the additional assessment work is appropriate. However, there is concern regarding the decision to continue certification of the MPO's planning process until this work has been completed. The MPO is disappointed that the decision appeared to be based upon criticism from groups that were not interested in broader goals, modes or issues beyond one transportation service in the City of Boston.

## *Recent Environmental Justice Outreach Efforts*

The MPO has reconstituted the Environmental Justice Ad Hoc Committee as a standing committee of the MPO with a membership core made up of representatives from Greater Boston neighborhoods and communities having high percentages of low income or minority residents. The standing committee is composed of six members representing the urban core, three members representing the area between the urban core and Route 128, and three members representing the area outside of Route 128. Eight MPO members and a representative of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council also participate on the committee. Currently, the committee is composed of the following:

### Urban Core

- Chelsea Greenspace Committee
- Somerville Community Development Corporation
- Four Corners Coalition
- Tent City Corporation
- Asian Community Development Corporation
- Alternatives for Community & Environment

### Inside Route 128

- South Coastal Workforce Board
- Waltham Alliance to Create Housing
- Tri City Community Action

### Outside Route 128

- Action, Inc.
- Salem Harbor Community Development Corporation
- South Middlesex Opportunity Council

### Transportation Planning and Programming Committee

- Town of Bedford
- City of Boston
- Town of Hopkinton
- Executive Office of Transportation and Construction
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
- Massachusetts Highway Department
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- MBTA Advisory Board
- Regional Transportation Advisory Council

The EJ Committee is one forum for traditionally under-served constituencies to provide input into the transportation planning process. While it will not replace traditional outreach efforts to directly involve members of the public in the transportation planning process, its purpose is to provide a deliberative committee process for representatives of traditionally under-served

constituencies to engage regional transportation policy-makers in a dialogue on planning and priorities.

### *The 2000-2025 Regional Transportation Plan Update: Findings and MPO Response*

As noted earlier, much of the work of the Environmental Justice Ad Hoc Committee involved the development of environmental justice measures. This work primarily focused on the development of performance measures for use with the regional public transportation system. These measures examined issues relating to: vehicle load, scheduled frequency, schedule adherence, shelter location and vehicle assignment (age and presence of air conditioning).

For the purpose of measuring Title VI compliance, the Federal Transit Administration defines a minority bus route as any route that has more than one-third of its mileage within a census tract in which the minority population is greater than the regional average. The MPO, with FTA concurrence, has adopted a modified version of this definition, which excludes express bus routes that travel through but do not stop in minority areas. The MPO has also adopted this classification for use in defining low-income routes.

#### Vehicle Load

The measurement of vehicle load evaluates the relative congestion of the public transportation system. There are two different ways to measure vehicle load – by load factor and by crowd factor. The load factor simply counts the number of passengers on a given route or line and divides the number of passengers by the number of seats. This measure assumes that seating capacity is equal to vehicle capacity and treats the presence of standees as evidence of overcrowding. The measure of congestion based upon the design capacity, which is referred to as the “crowd factor,” counts the number of passengers on a given route or line and divides by the design capacity for the particular service involved. Table 1 provides information on both the load factor and the crowd factor for each of the major components of the public transportation system for the peak 30-minute period of the weekday.

| <b>Service Component</b>      | <b>Load Factor</b> | <b>Crowd Factor</b> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Bus/Trackless Trolley Overall | 103.7%             | 74.0%               |
| Minority Routes               | 108.4%             | 77.5%               |
| Non-Minority Routes           | 99.1%              | 70.8%               |
| Low-Income Routes             | 111.4%             | 79.6%               |
| Non-Low-Income Routes         | 99.9%              | 71.4%               |
| Commuter Rail Overall         | 89.8%              | 89.8%               |
| North Station Lines           | 85.5%              | 85.5%               |
| South Station Lines           | 91.7%              | 91.7%               |
| Rapid Transit Lines           | 186.4%             | 77.4%               |
| Blue Line                     | 204.4%             | 90.8%               |
| Green Line                    | 179.9%             | 81.8%               |
| Orange Line                   | 183.5%             | 81.6%               |
| Red Line                      | 187.4%             | 69.9%               |

Based upon the information contained in Appendix A and as shown above, the MPO determined that there is a slight disparity in service on the bus system between minority and low-income routes compared to non-minority non-low-income routes. While this disparity is not overwhelmingly disproportionate, it was sufficient to raise concerns and cause the MPO to recommend funding for additional buses in the draft Plan Update. After public review of the draft plan, the MPO ultimately determined that \$38.7 million should be dedicated to the procurement of 100 additional alternative fuel buses to relieve existing congestion on overcrowded bus routes.

### Frequency of Service

The frequency of service measure examines the scheduled headway for a particular component of the system based on the route or line information. A “very frequent” headway is defined as a vehicle scheduled for arrival within one to fifteen minutes after the most recent arrival. A “frequent” headway is defined as a vehicle scheduled for arrival within 16 to 30 minutes after the most recent arrival. A “less frequent” headway is defined as a vehicle scheduled for arrival within 31 to 60 minutes after the most recent arrival. An “infrequent” headway is defined as a vehicle scheduled for arrival more than 60 minutes after the most recent arrival. By design, the rapid transit lines are all scheduled to operate at a very frequent level of service during all times of operation, while the commuter rail lines operate at a frequent or less frequent level of service during the AM and PM peak periods and at a less frequent or infrequent level of service during off-peak and weekend service. The scheduled frequency of the bus system, on the other hand, is highly variable by route. Some of the more heavily traveled routes are scheduled at very frequent or frequent headways, while others, such as those that serve a long-haul commute, operate on schedules that are somewhat similar to commuter rail lines. Therefore, the MPO undertook an exhaustive review of the entire bus system to determine whether there were any discrepancies for scheduled frequencies between low-income and minority bus routes compared to non-minority

and non-low-income routes. Across all time periods, the percentage of routes with a scheduled frequency classified as very frequent or frequent is higher for the minority and low-income routes. Table 2 shows the scheduled frequency of bus routes by classification.

**Table 2: Scheduled Frequency of Bus Routes**

(Typical Weekday, by Time, and Weekend, by Day)

|                         | Minority | Non-Minority | Low-Income | Non-Low-Income |
|-------------------------|----------|--------------|------------|----------------|
| <i>AM Peak Service</i>  |          |              |            |                |
| Very Frequent           | 46.7%    | 28.8%        | 47.8%      | 32.8%          |
| Frequent                | 45.3%    | 54.2%        | 47.7%      | 51.2%          |
| Lower Frequency         | 8.0%     | 17.0%        | 4.5%       | 16.0%          |
| <i>Midday Service</i>   |          |              |            |                |
| Very Frequent           | 20.0%    | 5.3%         | 25.0%      | 7.2%           |
| Frequent                | 48.0%    | 24.5%        | 40.9%      | 32.8%          |
| Lower Frequency         | 32.0%    | 70.2%        | 34.1%      | 60.0%          |
| <i>PM Peak Service</i>  |          |              |            |                |
| Very Frequent           | 41.3%    | 28.7%        | 40.9%      | 32.0%          |
| Frequent                | 46.7%    | 47.9%        | 45.5%      | 48.0%          |
| Lower Frequency         | 12.0%    | 23.4%        | 13.6%      | 20.0%          |
| <i>Evening Service</i>  |          |              |            |                |
| Very Frequent           | 6.7%     | 1.1%         | 9.1%       | 1.6%           |
| Frequent                | 29.3%    | 7.5%         | 29.6%      | 12.8%          |
| Lower Frequency         | 64.0%    | 91.4%        | 61.3%      | 85.6%          |
| <i>Saturday Service</i> |          |              |            |                |
| Very Frequent           | 17.3%    | 3.2%         | 20.5%      | 5.6%           |
| Frequent                | 41.3%    | 26.6%        | 43.2%      | 29.6%          |
| Lower Frequency         | 41.4%    | 70.2%        | 36.3%      | 64.8%          |
| <i>Sunday Service</i>   |          |              |            |                |
| Very Frequent           | 12.0%    | 1.1%         | 13.6%      | 3.2%           |
| Frequent                | 16.0%    | 4.3%         | 15.9%      | 7.2%           |
| Lower Frequency         | 72.0%    | 94.6%        | 70.5%      | 89.6%          |

### Schedule Adherence

Scheduled frequency, while important, only tells part of the story—its importance is, to a large degree, related to the reliability of the service provided. The measurement of schedule adherence is directly related to service reliability. In the analysis, buses that operate every ten minutes or less frequently are defined as “on-time” if the bus departs its origin zero to five minutes late (buses may not depart early) and arrives at its destination between two minutes early and five minutes late. Bus routes that operate more frequently are defined as “on-time” if the observed interval between buses is less than or equal to 1.5 times the scheduled interval. These standards are reflective of industry norms.

The MPO reviewed the on-time performance of all routes on the bus system and found that, on average, minority routes perform at a slightly better rate than non-minority routes, while low-income routes typically perform at a somewhat lower rate than non-low-income routes. However, none of these differences is statistically significant. Table 3 shows the on-time performance of bus routes by classification.

| <b>Table 3: On-time Performance of Bus Routes</b> |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>(Typical Weekday and Weekend)</b>              |                               |
| <b>Typical Weekday</b>                            | <b><i>% Trips on Time</i></b> |
| Minority Routes                                   | 62.0%                         |
| Non-Minority Routes                               | 61.6%                         |
| Low-Income Routes                                 | 60.8%                         |
| Non-Low Income Routes                             | 62.4%                         |
| Overall Bus Service                               | 61.8%                         |
| <b>Typical Saturday</b>                           |                               |
| Minority Routes                                   | 62.7%                         |
| Non-Minority Routes                               | 54.2%                         |
| Low-Income Routes                                 | 63.9%                         |
| Non-Low Income Routes                             | 56.2%                         |
| Overall Bus Service                               | 59.3%                         |
| <b>Typical Sunday</b>                             |                               |
| Minority Routes                                   | 64.5%                         |
| Non-Minority Routes                               | 63.2%                         |
| Low-Income Routes                                 | 63.4%                         |
| Non-Low Income Routes                             | 64.5%                         |
| Overall Bus Service                               | 64.0%                         |

### Shelter Locations

The examination of the location of shelters on the bus system relates to comfort, as opposed to performance. This measurement examined the location of the 216 existing bus shelters on the system to determine whether any inequities exist. The location of each bus shelter was mapped and classified as minority or low-income based upon the demographics of its location in a particular census tract. As reflected in Table 4, the measurement revealed that the location of shelters is proportional to the classification of the bus routes on the system [i.e., on average, bus shelters are distributed evenly across routes in the system.]

**Table 4: Bus Shelter Locations Compared to Routes**

|                | Shelter Location | Route Classification |
|----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Minority       | 44.0%            | 44.4%                |
| Non-Minority   | 56.0%            | 55.6%                |
| Low-Income     | 26.4%            | 26.0%                |
| Non-Low-Income | 73.6%            | 74.0%                |

### Vehicle Assignment

The final performance measure used to test the level of environmental justice provided by the regional public transportation system is vehicle assignment, which relates to both service performance and comfort. Under this measurement, the age of the vehicle is used as a surrogate for reliability and comfort. Generally speaking, older buses are more likely to have maintenance issues that might directly or indirectly impact upon service. The measurement also specifically examined whether or not the vehicles are equipped with air conditioning. The information provided by the measurement revealed that the average age of buses serving minority and low-income routes is lower than the average age of buses serving other routes and that the percentage equipped with air conditioning is higher. This fact is, in part, a reflection of the MBTA's policy of putting new buses in service on highly traveled routes. Table 5 shows the average age of vehicles in use for each modal component of the public transportation system.

**Table 5: Average Age of the Vehicle Fleet**

(Component Type and Bus Route Classification)

| Service Component             | Vehicle Age (years) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Bus/Trackless Trolley Overall | 11.3                |
| Minority Routes               | 10.1                |
| Non-Minority Routes           | 13.0                |
| Low-Income Routes             | 9.7                 |
| Non-Low-Income Routes         | 12.3                |
| Rapid Transit Lines           |                     |
| Blue Line                     | 23.0                |
| Orange Line                   | 21.0                |
| Red Line (Ashmont/Braintree)  | 16.2                |
| Green Line                    | No Information      |
| Commuter Rail Overall         | 11.8                |

Transit Mobility

In addition to the foregoing measures of service performance, the MPO also measured transit mobility between selected origin and destination points.

The selection of origins was based upon residential density and transit accessibility. The 80 census tracts with the highest residential density were selected for review. These tracts were divided into four tiers of twenty according to their relative density. Two tracts were selected from each tier as an origin point for the mobility assessment—the tract with the highest concentration of minorities and the tract with the lowest concentration. After selecting these locations, it was determined that these origins did not provide a broad geographic diversity and six additional locations were selected. A similar procedure was followed to select low-income and non-low-income communities. Due to the overlap in the minority and income classification, this selection process resulted in 18 origins.

The selection of destinations was based upon employment density and transit accessibility. The 100 census tracts with the most employment per square mile were selected for review. Within the urban core, six locations were chosen based upon substantial mixed-use development including commercial uses, health care centers and colleges and universities. Beyond the urban core, five inner suburban locations were chosen based upon the same parameters. Then, three additional locations were chosen in more distant suburban locations to provide a broader geographic distribution and represent areas of substantial commercial growth. This selection process resulted in 14 destinations.

The selection process was reviewed and approved by the Environmental Justice Ad Hoc Committee. Table 6 lists the origin and destinations used in the mobility analysis.

| <b>Table 6: Origins and Destinations Used in the Transit Mobility Analysis</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Origins</b>   | <b>Destinations</b>                      |
| North End (Prince @ Snowhill)  | Post Office Square (Milk @ Congress)     |
| South End Center (Tremont @ Clarendon)   | Copley Square (Dartmouth @ Boylston)     |
| East Boston Central Square   | Boston Medical (East Concord @ Harrison) |
| Charlestown (Central/Main @ Walker)  | Longwood Medical                         |
| Brigham Circle   | Malden Center (Exchange @ Washington)    |
| Brighton (Eastside/Warren @ Comm. Ave.)  | Kendall Square (Broadway @ Galileo Way)  |
| Grove Hall (Blue Hill Ave.@ Washington)  | Harvard Square                           |
| Bromley-Heath Housing (Roxbury)  | Lynn Central Square ( Union @ Exchange)  |
| South Boston (West Broadway @ B Street)  | Waltham Central Square (Moody @ Main)    |
| South Boston (Old Colony @Dorchester)  | Quincy Center (Washington @ Hancock)     |
| Dorchester Four Corners (Dorchester)   | Salem Center (Washington @ New Derby)    |
| Chelsea Bellingham Square  | North Shore Plaza                        |
| Somerville Winter Hill (Broadway @ School)                                     | Burlington Mall                          |
| Somerville Powder House Square   | South Shore Plaza                        |
| Mid Cambridge (Broadway @ Fayette)   |  |

**Table 6: Origins and Destinations Used in the Transit Mobility Analysis  
(cont.)**

| <b>Origins</b>                           | <b>Destinations</b> |
|--|---------------------|
| Cambridge Riverside (Putnam @ Kinnaird)  |                     |
| Brookline Coolidge Corner                |                     |
| Lynn (Central/Washington Street @ Essex) |                     |

After selecting these representative origins and destinations, the travel demand model was used to determine travel distances, travel times, and travel speeds for transit between each origin and each destination for the year 2000. This analysis showed that the average travel speed from minority neighborhoods (6.8 mph) is similar to the average speed from non-minority neighborhoods (7.2 mph). The same conclusion holds true for the comparison between the average speed from low-income neighborhoods (7.6 mph) and non-low-income neighborhoods (6.7 mph). The MPO also measured the projected change in future travel speeds between these origin and destination points based upon the projects selected for implementation in the Plan Update. However, due to its limited scope, this analysis proved to be relatively uninformative for a regional environmental justice review. The results showed that those communities that have access to a particular project, such as Phase 1 of the Urban Ring or Phase 3 of the Silver Line, will benefit from improved travel speeds. While this shows the positive impact of those projects for those communities, it tells us little about the regional impact of the MPO's project choices. This fact provides additional support for a shift in the MPO's environmental justice focus from concentrating solely on performance measures and instead including an assessment of system-wide impacts.

### *Relationship to Projects in the Plan*

The selected environmental justice measurements show that the existing public transportation system is generally providing equitable service to minority and low-income communities. However, these measures do not completely address issues relating to unfilled service needs or project-specific inequities. In response to this concern, the MPO assessed all projects under consideration for inclusion in the Plan Update for any possible impacts on environmental justice communities. Two projects, in particular, that were determined to have a positive impact and that were included in the endorsed Plan Update are the extension of the Green Line to Medford Hillside and the upgrading of service on the Fairmount Branch. Each of these projects represents an attempt to increase benefits for the low-income and minority communities that bear the burden of existing public transportation infrastructure.

### *Continuing Actions and Next Steps*

During the development of the Plan Update, the MPO became concerned that the Environmental Justice Ad Hoc Committee was no longer functioning as originally envisioned. Due primarily to issues such as the location and timing of the committee meetings, the Ad Hoc Committee had developed into a small core membership of Boston advocacy groups who could be counted on to

attend most meetings, supplemented by occasional attendance from other groups. This necessarily shifted the scope of the committee's efforts to a review of issues of primary importance to the urban core or, in some cases, to distinct neighborhoods within the City of Boston. While these issues are important and of concern to the MPO, they are not the sole focus of the MPO's environmental justice work. Therefore, in Spring 2002, the MPO began the process of restructuring the Ad Hoc Committee into a standing committee of the MPO. The standing committee consists of six representatives from the urban core, three representatives from the area inside Route 128 and three representatives from the area inside Interstate 495. Eight MPO members and a representative of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council also participate on the committee.

The committee held its organizational meeting on June 18<sup>th</sup> in Boston and its second meeting on July 17<sup>th</sup> in Quincy. The committee's immediate charge involves the preparation and review of this Addendum to the Regional Transportation Plan and the work scope for a systems-level analysis of environmental justice issues. Future work will include, but is not limited to, assisting the MPO in reviewing the work performed under the systems-level work scope and reviewing the Regional Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The draft UPWP currently commits \$180,000 for environmental justice work in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003: \$30,000 to provide staff support for the committee and \$150,000 for the performance of work under the systems-level analysis work scope.

The development of the systems-level work scope began in June 2002 with a presentation by FHWA experts on effective practices from other MPOs. This presentation was made to the MPO on June 20<sup>th</sup> and a similar presentation was made to the Environmental Justice Committee on July 17<sup>th</sup>. A preliminary draft work scope will be provided to the MPO and the committee in early August for discussion at their August meetings. The final work scope will be submitted to FHWA and FTA no later than September 13, 2002. The work performed under the scope will be primarily be conducted during FY 2003 (October 1, 2002-September 30, 2003) and will be used to inform the next iteration of the Regional Transportation Plan, scheduled for completion on or before September 30, 2003.

#### *Note to the Reader*

This Addendum briefly summarizes an exhaustive data set on the regional public transportation system that was produced for the development of the 2000-2025 Boston MPO Transportation Plan Update. The full data set can be found in Appendix A of that document, which is available online at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org) or by calling or emailing the MPO at (671) 973-7100 or [mcgahan@ctps.org](mailto:mcgahan@ctps.org).