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January 25, 2012

Mr. Jonathan Davis, General Manager
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

Attention: Fare Proposal Committee

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of the Dedham Board of Selectmen and the Town of Dedham, I am writing to you to voice our strong support to maintain local and regional bus service at existing levels to our community and to voice our clear opposition to the significant rate increases proposed for bus, private carrier service and commuter rail service.

According to local survey results, the primary riders of the buses and beneficiaries of the bus and private carrier service are the seniors and youth of our community. Without question, they are the most vulnerable segment of our population and they are the ones who will suffer the greatest impact from these proposed cuts and who have the least amount of resources to seek alternative transportation options.

In addition, a significant segment of our residents have chosen to locate to Dedham because of the convenience of having access to the commuter rail service which allows these residents a more economical and environmentally friendly method of commuting to the City of Boston for work, education, cultural or sporting events.

At this point in time, the proposed level of fare increase and the reduction of services as described under Scenario 1 one of the proposed MBTA Fare and Service Changes would cause significant harm to our population. Having said that, I think most reasonable people would understand that the cost of providing these services has increased over time and that some price adjustments and service alterations should be examined to provide a more measured response to the financial challenges of the MBTA.

The MBTA provides important and valuable modes of transportation to this community and to the region as a whole. Dedham's local economy has been built around these transportation services and serves as a hub for commuter rail service with the Route 128 Station and the Dedham Corporate Stations serving as collection points for many of the region's commuters.

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It is unfortunate that the proposals made by the MBTA run counter to the transportation strategy of this entire region. From a simple economic perspective, if the MBTA rates rise too high and the schedules become too restrictive, riders will begin to reconsider the cost of parking and rail passes and a limited train and bus schedule against the cost of operating their vehicles and the convenience of maintaining personal mobility.

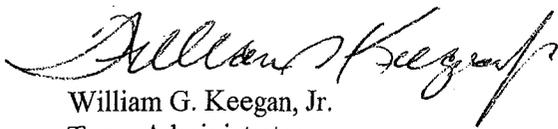
The obvious alternative to reducing mass transit opportunities is building greater capacity in our highway and road networks. The cost of improving and widening existing highway and local road infrastructure is not only cost prohibitive but limiting in terms of having the ability to acquire the necessary land to accommodate such changes.

From an environmental perspective, President Obama took important note during his State of the Union Address this past week that our country must move toward a cleaner environment to address the broader concern of global warming and to initiate a new "Green Economy". Governor Patrick has fully embraced this concept and Massachusetts is often hailed as a leader in the nation in this endeavor.

The proposals outlined in the Fare and Service Changes report does nothing to support the premise of smart growth on either a federal, state or local level. If the level of service cut backs and/or rate increases are enacted as presented, riders will be forced to seek alternative modes of transportation that will only add to the congestion issues that presently plague this region. Moreover, increased traffic congestion will only lead to further deterioration of the global warming crisis.

In closing, we strongly recommend that further consideration be given to a more measured and effective approach to maintain and enhance this important service to our community and to this region. If we can assist in this effort in any way necessary, we will be glad to offer our perspectives and solutions.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Dedham Board of Selectmen,



William G. Keegan, Jr.
Town Administrator

Cc: Board of Selectmen
Secretary of Transportation, Richard Davey
Senator Michael Rush
Representative Paul McMurtry
Marc Draisen, MAPC