



June 6, 2009

The Honorable Steven Baddour
State House, Room 208
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Stephen Brewer
State House, Room 109-B
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Robert Hedlund
State House, Room 313-C
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Joseph Wagner
State House, Room 134
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Charles Murphy
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable George Peterson, Jr.
State House, Room 124
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Transportation Conference Committee Member:

WalkBoston is the Commonwealth's leading advocate for pedestrians and safe walking. We work throughout the state – encouraging walking, supporting pedestrian improvements and sponsoring walks. We have extensive experience in helping residents and local governments with pedestrian issues, safe routes to schools, and safer street crossings and sidewalks.

We write to express our strong support for the robust attention to walking that is included in The Healthy Transportation Compact that is included in the Governor's and the House versions of transportation reform. The Compact is of great importance to the health of our citizens, and is of particular benefit to Massachusetts children, elders, and the more than 12 percent of households statewide that do not own a car (more than 20% in many of Massachusetts' cities). We particularly support:

- Construction of "complete streets" to enable pedestrians, bicyclists and bus riders to move safely on roadways in urban and suburban areas.
- Increased bicycle and pedestrian travel throughout the Commonwealth
- Expanded Safe Routes to School opportunities

Each of these measures will provide increased safety and mobility across the state, where walking is a component of everyday transportation for most of our citizens.

We have a specific objection to one aspect of the Governor's and Senate versions of reform regarding the proposed transfer of DCR bridges and/or parkways to MassHighway. The DCR bridges and parkways are integral elements of the pedestrian network in many locations around the Commonwealth. DCR's commitment to their management and maintenance as pedestrian and bicycle as well as vehicular facilities is absolutely critical to their multi-modal nature, and transfer of these facilities to MassHighway would harm this function. Very specifically, DCR is committed to sidewalk snow clearance on its bridges and along its parkways, while MassHighway specifically states that it does not clear sidewalks – a policy that poses a serious impediment to mobility in the many locations where local municipalities do not clear the sidewalks. We strongly believe that DCR's transportation facilities should continue to be owned, operated and maintained by DCR.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the vital issue of transportation reform. We would be pleased to provide you with further information and comment at your request.

Sincerely,

Wendy Landman
Executive Director