



Friends of the Community Path
112 Belmont Street
Somerville, MA 02143
617.776.7769
friendspath@yahoo.com
www.pathfriends.org/scp/

April 6, 2013

To:
Senate President Theresa Murray
House Speaker Robert DeLeo

Re: Urging your support for a bill adopting the Governor's \$1.9 Billion in additional revenue for State Transportation Funding, especially for bicycle, pedestrian, and cost-efficient transit

To Senators Murray and Jehlen:

The Friends of the Community Path is a regional group with over 1300 members in Massachusetts. Our mission is to extend the Community Path, to link the Minuteman and Charles River multi-use path networks, along the future Green Line Extension (GLX).

We commend the Legislature on the following aspects of the transportation financing proposal unveiled on Tuesday:

- Stopping the practice of borrowing \$234 million every year to cover salaries
- Closing the MBTA's structural deficit for FY14 without fare increases or service cuts
- Forwarding funds the Regional Transit Agencies around the state and provides a small increase in funding
- Providing a bump for local transportation projects (basically road re-paving and some sidewalks)
- Finally raising the gas tax for the first time since 1991 and indexes it to inflation; and
- Doing these things without further burdening low-income residents except smokers (at least this year).

However, as Transportation Davey wrote, the plan as in currently stands reflects "an alarming lack of support for fixing our roads, bridges and trains."

http://www.boston.com/yourtown/news/medford/2013/04/mbta_legislative_transit_plan.html

We urge the House and Senate to work together to craft a bigger and better package to build a 21st century system. With chamber votes next week, the Governor's \$1.9 billion plan is a great start.

The fact remains that it will cost \$19 billion just to repair existing roads, bridges, and rails. The Legislature's current proposal has no way to begin to pay for that. Nor is there funding in your plan for regional projects to boost local economies and connect more people to jobs, or to increasing walking, biking and public transportation around the state in any significant way. And worse, it looks like there is a built-in reliance on hefty fare hikes in coming years.

Lastly, if we do not retire more of our huge transportation debt, we'll continue to pay interest to banks □ instead of improving our transportation system. We need to modernize and improve transportation. Families and businesses are losing time, money – and sometimes lives - to a decrepit, congested system. Our economy can't grow if we don't increase capacity and connect the state better.

Green Line Extension: Carrots and Sticks

Notably, the \$1.3 Billion Green Line Extension (GLX) project *must* be funded and demonstrate fiscal constraint, since it is a federally mandated SIP Mitigation and Clean Air Act project.

There are both “Carrot” and “Stick” reasons to fund the GLX and create additional revenue and funding for the State's other projects:

Carrots:

- 1) By providing a ~\$500 million for the GLX project, the State is eligible for a similar match in federal News Starts funding for this project. (Note that the South Coast Rail Project, would not even be eligible for federal New Starts funding, because of its low ridership and high cost per rider.)
- 2) Efficient transportation funding is the economic driver for the State's economy

Sticks:

As Joe Pesaturo wrote, "Because the Commonwealth is legally obligated to extend the Green Line, \$1.3 billion in state funding will be necessary to move the project forward. As a result, funds will have to be diverted from other worthy projects and 'state of good repair' work in order to satisfy the legal obligation."

<http://somerville.patch.com/articles/mbta-federal-funding-for-green-line-at-risk-under-recent-proposal>

Losing out on federal New Starts funding wouldn't jeopardize the GLX project as a whole, but it could mean the state would likely have to pick up the entire cost.

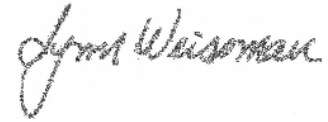
“It could really put an enormous burden on the rest of the state,” she said. “That’s another \$600 million the state would have to pick up and shove everything else to the bottom of the heap.”

<http://bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/04/03/legislative-transportation-plan-puts-green-line-grant-risk-mbta-says/M4BdOGkrhUrCiRXM6dSSLJ/story.html>

The Legislature needs to vastly increase transportation funding to attract people and investment, which foster creativity and innovation. MassDOT has finally realized this, and set an inspiring goal of tripling the share of walking, biking and public transportation in the state. Now we need a financing plan that can enable this 21st-century infrastructure to be realized.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



cc:

Senator Pat Jehlen

Representative Tim Toomey

Representative Denise Provost

Representative Carl Sciortino

T4Mass

Conservation Law Foundation

Massachusetts Smart Growth Association

Green Routes Coalition

Livable Streets

STEP

Boston Cyclists Union