

December 23, 2008

Bernard Cohen, Secretary of Transportation
Executive Office of Transportation
10 Park Plaza, Room 4150
Boston, MA 02116

RE: May 2007 RfR for Consultant Services for the Transportation Enhancements Program

Dear Secretary Cohen:

We in the bicycle and pedestrian advocacy community have long been concerned about the slow process and low level of spending on bicycle and pedestrian (bike/ped) enhancements projects in the Commonwealth. Some of these problems have been described in the May 2001 legislative report "Common Sense Ideas to Expedite Rail Trail Development in Massachusetts".

We are very pleased that the Executive Office of Transportation now is committed to making improvements in the programs that administer funds and manage the implementation of these needed projects. We have reviewed the RfR for Consultant Services for the Transportation Enhancements Program that the Office of Transportation Planning issued in May 2007.

As others have expressed, we question the need for an extensive study of the "problems". We feel that, within both government and the advocacy community, there is sufficient understanding of the problems and the changes needed to streamline the decision making, funding and implementation of these bike/ped projects. A better system to administer these funds can be designed by holding a number of meetings with representatives of the advocacy community and the various government agencies involved in the process.

However, we understand that you have selected a contractor that responded to this RfR and are negotiating a contract with the firm. Assuming that EOT plans on going ahead with this contract, we would like to make the following recommendations to improve it:

- Reduce the overall scope or length of the contract (i.e., \$700,000 is more than necessary, spend some of this money on design or construction of actual projects in the pipeline),
- Obtain commitment from the agencies involved that they will cooperate in this improvement study contract and agree to implement the selected procedural changes,
- Shorten the study phase (Tasks A & B, steps #1-6) to 4-6 months,
- Start Task B, steps 7-10 immediately and continue for a 12 month period,
- Make the second year and third year optional depending on the success of the study and final agreement by the agencies to implement the selected changes.

We hope you can make some or all of these changes and we would like to meet with to discuss this project in any case. Please let us know when would be a convenient time to meet.

Sincerely,

Livable Streets Alliance
Walk Boston
Mass Bike
Commonwealth Paths

CC: James Cope, Josh Lehman, David J. Mohler, Rosalie Anders, James Aloisi, RTAC, MAPC, Boston MPO