April 10, 2014

Secretary Anthony Foxx
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

We thank you once again for meeting with us and our colleagues in January to discuss the Partnership for Active Transportation’s federal policy platform, Safe Routes to Everywhere (www.partnership4AT.org/about/policy-platform). We understand that you are well into the process of developing a transportation policy proposal for the Administration.

At our January meeting, we requested that you consider our platform in developing your position on reauthorization. We thank you for your consideration of our ideas. Based on our outreach over the last two months, we are now writing to offer suggestions regarding specific opportunities to advance a particular aspect of our active transportation platform.

The overarching priority is to invest in building active transportation networks that provide ladders of opportunity by connecting people to jobs, schools, health care facilities and other critical destinations. For the many Americans who do not drive, safe facilities for walking, bicycling and using a wheelchair are essential to fully and independently participate in society. These facilities are used to complete short trips, which are plentiful given that more than a quarter of trips in America are within a twenty minute walk, and to ensure access to transit services for longer trips.

In particular, we suggest that your reauthorization proposal should advance the idea of capturing private value to build active transportation networks. Based on our outreach to Congress, combining public-private partnerships to leverage federal funding with focused investment to fill gaps in utilitarian active transportation networks is a package that is ripe for bipartisan action. Refining the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) to make it work for smaller but critical active transportation projects has appeal on both sides of the aisle. Reducing the minimum amount for qualifying projects under TIFIA to $10 million for the express purpose of building active transportation networks would provide incentives to accelerate the completion of utilitarian systems.

A similar opportunity to connect transportation programs with economic development also could gain traction. An infrastructure bank would provide an additional financing tool in local communities that require private sector developers to fund infrastructure fixes or expansions as part of development proposals. The costs of these infrastructure improvements can make economic development, such as infill projects, financially impractical. As a result, many projects that would provide significant fiscal benefits and private sector funds for public infrastructure renewal or expansion are not built. However, value created from new development around

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these smaller-scale infrastructure projects would pay back loans over time with interest, spur
direct reinvestment in neighborhoods and help communities address their infrastructure needs
by bringing private-sector funding to the problem.

As a follow-up to our suggestion to you that USDOT take administrative action to incorporate
health considerations into transportation decisions, the Partnership for Active Transportation
recently met with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) officials to explore the potential for
USDOT to work with the Center for Disease Control on a health impact assessment pilot
project. We thank FHWA for the time and effort, and look forward to continuing to work with
them on specific solutions.

Sincerely,

Kevin Mills
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Christopher Coes
LOCUS

Yolanda Savage-Narva
America Walks

cc:
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