



May 10, 2013

The Honorable Mayor Anthony Foxx
Office of the Mayor
600 East Fourth Street, 15th Floor
Charlotte, NC 28202

Dear Mayor Foxx:

On behalf of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership and the tens of thousands of Safe Routes to School practitioners, advocates and schools around the country, please accept our congratulations for your nomination to be U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership is a network of more than 600 nonprofit organizations, government agencies, schools, and professionals working together to grow the Safe Routes to School movement in the United States. Our mission is to advance safe walking and bicycling to and from schools, and in daily life, to improve the health and well-being of America's children and to foster the creation of livable, sustainable communities.

Safe Routes to School initiatives focus on improving the built environment around schools so that streets are safe for children to walk and bicycle. Safe Routes to School programs also utilize education, encouragement and law enforcement techniques to promote safety, and to encourage parents and children to regularly choose walking and bicycling, which are active and healthy ways to get to school. This comprehensive approach results in building physical activity into children's daily routines and in improving the built environment around schools so they can be safe hubs for physical activity. Studies show that when children engage in physical activity, they also perform better on test scores and in terms of classroom behavior.

Based on reports from our North Carolina Safe Routes to School network about your leadership over the past decade, we very much look forward to working with you. You have overseen the construction of road diets and sidewalks, led the adoption of a Complete Streets Policy, advocated for a smart growth approach to land use and transportation, and supported the Healthy Children Healthy Families program to reduce childhood obesity. We commend you on these important initiatives!

Your leadership is building in Charlotte exactly the type of community that Safe Routes to School helps create: healthy, safe and livable communities where children, families and other community residents can walk and bicycle in their daily lives. And, that of course leads to co-benefits in terms of

P. O. Box 663 / Fairfax, CA 94978 / saferoutespartnership.org

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership is hosted by the Bikes Belong Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries, increasing property values, decreasing school busing expenditures, improving academic performance, and managing traffic congestion.

We look forward to supporting your nomination to lead the U.S. Department of Transportation. In addition, once your appointment is confirmed, we have a number of recommendations for how we could work together to advance Safe Routes to School and livable communities:

- Ensure that implementation of MAP-21 is as supportive as possible of Safe Routes to School, walking and bicycling. In the most recent transportation bill, MAP-21, the Safe Routes to School program was consolidated into a new Transportation Alternatives program and funding was reduced. We ask that you closely monitor the guidance for Transportation Alternatives, which has not yet been issued eight months into this two-year bill, and ensure that it is supportive of using these funds for Safe Routes to School, walking and bicycling. We also ask that you encourage state Departments of Transportation to fully utilize their remaining Safe Routes to School SAFETEA-LU funds and newly available Transportation Alternatives funding to prioritize spending to support Safe Routes to School initiatives, bicycling and walking. Further, it is important to encourage metropolitan planning organizations to fully implement the portion of Transportation Alternatives funds they have newly been given responsibility for, to help show the value of more localized decision-making on bicycle and pedestrian projects.
- Support our call to have a safety performance measure specific to bicycle and pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries. Even while fatalities and serious injuries for bicyclists and pedestrians are increasing—representing nearly 16 percent of all traffic fatalities—states spend less than half of one percent (0.5%) of their Highway Safety Improvement Program dollars for improving pedestrian and bicycle safety. Having a separate performance measure on non-motorized safety will help ensure that states Departments of Transportation examine their safety statistics and make appropriate investments in safety for all road users. This request has been supported by 75 Representatives and 15 Senators.
- Endorse and promote the benefits of Safe Routes to School, including by visiting Safe Routes to School projects around the country, to continue to build familiarity with and legitimacy for these initiatives. This would also be a great opportunity for the U.S. Department of Transportation to partner with the First Lady's *Let's Move!* Active Schools initiative to promote Safe Routes to School initiatives.
- Encourage states to reduce disparities in traffic safety in lower-income communities and communities of color—the very same communities where safe and affordable transportation options are most needed. This can be done by having state DOTs provide technical assistance to lower-income communities and proactively prioritize projects in low-income communities.

- Hold two safety summits on walking to support strategies to improve pedestrian safety in the United States. Secretary LaHood held two summits in April 2013 on bicycling, but walking was not featured, and pedestrian fatalities through the United States are on the rise. Pedestrian access is an important component for making transit and light rail work well – we hope that you will be a leader for pedestrian safety.

In closing, thank you for your outstanding leadership in Charlotte. We are enthusiastic about your selection by President Obama as the next Secretary of Transportation and look forward to working together to ensure that communities around the country have the infrastructure, funding and support necessary to make walking and bicycling safe and accessible for children and families. Once your appointment is confirmed, we would very much appreciate an opportunity to sit down with you and your staff to discuss the Safe Routes to School, the Highway Safety Improvement and Transportation Alternatives programs.

If there is any way we can be of assistance in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me at deb@saferoutespartnership.org or 415-454-7430.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Deb Hubsmith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "H".

Deb Hubsmith
Director
Safe Routes to School National Partnership