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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MASSDOT ANNOUNCES NEW FUNDING FOR COMPLETE STREETS CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

*Will boost safety and health in cities and towns across the Commonwealth*

August 20, 2014 – At today’s meeting of the Healthy Transportation Compact Meeting, MassDOT announced an initial investment of as much as \$5 million in funding for the critical Complete Streets Certification Program. The funding provides competitive funds to cities and towns to help residents walk, run, and bike more safely.

This will result in better health for Massachusetts residents, who will have more opportunities to be active, thus reducing the level of chronic disease. This is especially true in low-income communities, which currently have fewer places, sidewalks, and bikeways for residents to safely be outdoors and be active. It also supports the state's goal to triple the number of people that walk, bike and take public transit.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA), two of Transportation for Massachusetts’ member organizations, were strong advocates for this funding.

"This is a fabulous commitment of funds to make streets safer for pedestrians and bicyclists throughout Massachusetts. Municipalities across the state have either passed a Complete Streets policy, or have the desire to develop one, but lacked funding to do so. We know a lot of cities and towns that will use these funds to make these streets safer," said Marc Draisen, Executive Director of MAPC.

"Making it safer and more inviting to walk and bike will improve public health. This is a victory particularly for low-income communities since complete streets are an essential tool to address health inequities. More complete streets will help reduce pedestrian fatality rates and increase options for safe physical activity and better access to jobs, education, and healthy foods," said Rebekah Gewirtz, Executive Director of MPHA.

Other organizations championing this complete streets investments included WalkBoston, Livable Streets Alliance, MassBike, Massachusetts Alliance of YMCAs and the American Heart/American Stroke Association, and the Act FRESH coalition, led by MPHA. Senators Harriette Chandler and Jason Lewis were strong supporters of creating this initiative.

"This gives our cities and towns the funding to meet the needs of current residents and to attract new ones," said Kristina Egan, Director of Transportation for Massachusetts. "We thank the members of our coalition and Act FRESH for shaping the certification program, and we are grateful to the legislature and MassDOT for their leadership in funding this safety and health initiative."

**About Transportation for Massachusetts**

Transportation for Massachusetts, a diverse coalition of 40 organizations, promotes an environmentally sustainable, reliable, and affordable transportation system for people across the Commonwealth. The coalition believes that a strong and competitive Massachusetts economy requires a transportation system that supports and connects communities, providing access to education and job opportunities, while reducing climate pollution.