



October 3, 2012

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
Attn: MEPA Office

RE: Comments on Strategic Development Plan, University of Massachusetts Lowell,  
Lowell, MA Notice of Project Change

Dear Secretary Sullivan:

WalkBoston has reviewed the Notice of Project Change for the University of Massachusetts – Lowell Strategic Development Plan, and submits our comments on the plan, with a focus on the “Action Steps” outlined in the Campus Transportation Plan (Section 3.6).

#### **Infrastructure Improvements**

WalkBoston applauds UMass Lowell’s commitment to improving infrastructure on and between its campuses to improve pedestrian safety and comfort. Because there is considerable distance between UMass Lowell’s campuses and other venues such as the Tsongas Center and the Inn & Conference Center, it is crucial that the University facilitate the movement of pedestrians between them to increase the sense of place for the University, encourage physical activity, reduce vehicle trips and reduce GHG emissions.

In order to more effectively work towards these goals, the proponent should develop a more robust wayfinding system within and between UMass Lowell’s campuses. Because walkers tend to think in terms of times (minutes of walking rather than miles), signs that give the walking time to given destinations such as: “Fox Hall – 11 minutes” or “O’Leary Library – 9 minutes,” should be installed where there are high pedestrian volumes and/or where directional information is needed. Signs with simple and highly relevant information would make the decision to walk between campuses an easier one by giving people the information they need to make an informed choice about walking as a convenient option. Timed wayfinding signs can make a fairly spread out university feel like its campuses are closer together, and increased pedestrian activity along the streets between campuses would make the walk safer and more enjoyable.

#### **Policy Initiatives**

WalkBoston also applauds the “park once” policy mentioned under Policy Initiatives: Action Steps. If embraced by the UMass Lowell community, this initiative will help decrease congestion and also generate more pedestrian activity on and around the campuses. A robust wayfinding system will contribute to this campaign. The university might consider a marketing effort that highlights the pluses of walking such as:

#### **MAKING MASSACHUSETTS MORE WALKABLE**

Old City Hall | 45 School Street | Boston MA 02108 | T: 617.367.9255 | F: 617.367.9285 | [info@walkboston.org](mailto:info@walkboston.org) | [www.walkboston.org](http://www.walkboston.org)

Choose your Mode for a South Campus to East Campus Trip

**1. Walk the 15 minutes to East Campus**

- Burn XX calories
- Get some fresh air
- Pass a friend and chat briefly on the way
- Relax and arrive on time

**2. Drive the XX miles which will take XX minutes**

- Walk to parking lot, exit and drive to East Campus, find parking space, walk from car to building
- Get stuck in traffic – grrr!
- Create XX tons of GHG emissions
- Arrive a bit frazzled

Which choice feels better? Help UMass Lowell Get Fit and Go Green – Walk!

We hope that our suggestions will be useful and please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

Sincerely,



Wendy Landman  
Executive Director

Robert Sloane  
Senior Planner