



July 17, 2020

Helen Caulton-Harris
Commissioner of Health and Human Services
311 State St.
Springfield, MA 01105

Ms. Caulton-Harris:

We greet you during this challenging time to extend thanks for all that you have done for the City of Springfield. We are writing to you to respectfully request that the City revisit the decision to not reopen the ValleyBike system in Springfield, and we ask the City to open the system to residents as soon as possible.

In the process of reopening our society and dealing with mitigating the infections from COVID-19, we are seeing bike sharing systems leveraged as crucial transportation options for people to maintain physical distancing in ways not available in other modes of transportation, especially given the limited space available on buses and even when walking on sidewalks. For this purpose, we are also seeing bike sharing systems across the commonwealth - including other municipalities within the ValleyBike system - not only reopening with protocols for sanitization, but also providing discounted or free passes to essential workers.

In the relatively short time that ValleyBike has been in operation, we have seen nearly 80,000 bike sharing trips have a destination within the City of Springfield. Given the innumerable mental and physical health benefits to our community, we want to make sure Springfield's residents and workers benefit from bike sharing.

Related to issues of equity and inclusion in the transportation system: bike sharing systems are useful tools to address the lack of active transportation options for those most affected in Environmental Justice communities, which Springfield is both in terms of low-income and minority residents. MassBike strives to facilitate safe and attractive bicycling for both recreation and transportation. The "access pass" system ValleyBike has made available has been critical in Springfield, providing low-income riders an opportunity to experience a modern e-bike with limited barriers to entry.



We encourage the City of Springfield to join these efforts to promote safe, accessible, and affordable bike sharing as public transportation. We would appreciate the chance to discuss the reopening of ValleyBike with you and your team, and assist with approaches toward a safe and successful bike share reopening.

Sincerely,

H. Alex Weck
Development Coordinator, MassBike
77 Somerset St.
Springfield, MA 01108

Galen Mook
Executive Director, MassBike

CC: Domenic Sarno, Tim Sheehan, Darryl Moss, Scott Hanson - City of Springfield
Catherine Ratte, Kimberly Robinson - Pioneer Valley Planning Association
Betsy Johnson - WalkBike Springfield
Johnathan McHatton - PVTA
Samantha Hurr - North American Bicycle Share Association