

Friends of **ACADIA**

October 16, 2008

Mr. Jef Fitzgerald
Deputy City Planner
1 City Hall Plaza
Ellsworth, ME 04605

43 COTTAGE STREET
P.O. BOX 45
BAR HARBOR
MAINE 04609
207 288-3340
207 288-8938 FAX
friendsofacadia.org

Dear Jef:

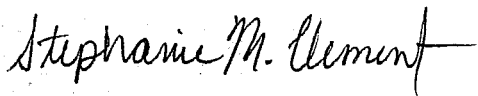
I am writing with pleasure to support the City of Ellsworth's application to Bikes Belong to help fund the 0.7 mile connection between the Downeast Sunrise Trail and the Ellsworth Rail with Trail. This connection is critical because it is a gap in the heart of the urban center of Ellsworth. Completing the planning, design, and construction of this connector trail will facilitate bicycling in Downeast Maine and will be a highly visible project reaching millions of people traveling through Ellsworth as the "Crossroads of Downeast Maine."

Friends of Acadia's mission is to preserve, protect, and promote stewardship of the outstanding natural beauty, ecological vitality, and distinctive cultural resources of Acadia National Park and surrounding communities for the inspiration and enjoyment of current and future generations. We support the connector trail in Ellsworth because it will present a new opportunity for Acadia National Park's two million visitors to enjoy cycling in a safe manner. A 1998 visitor use survey showed that 30% of Acadia's visitors bicycle on the park's historic crushed stone carriage roads, and 12% bicycle on the park's motor roads. Acadia is an important draw for families, and the carriage roads get quite busy in summer. It's critical that the Downeast Sunrise Trail and the Ellsworth Rail with Trail are linked so that a new safe bicycling avenue is opened.

Additionally, Friends of Acadia supports the connector trail because as it travels through downtown Ellsworth, it will be a highly visible opportunity to educate residents and visitors about the need to share the road. Ellsworth's roads are some of the busiest in the region because the city is a gateway not only to Acadia National Park, but much of Downeast Maine. "You can't get there from here" without traveling through Ellsworth. Because the connector trail will most likely incorporate on-road and off-road sections, millions of automobile drivers will learn to regard active cycling and maybe even try it themselves.

Thank you very much for considering our support. Should you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me at 207-288-3340 or stephanie@friendsofacadia.org.

Sincerely,



Stephanie M. Clement
Conservation Director