



Patrick McMahon
CEO

January 25, 2021

TO: Members of the Transportation Committee

Re: HB-5429 - AN ACT CONCERNING PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, VISION ZERO COUNCIL, SPEED LIMITS IN MUNICIPALITIES, FINES AND CHARGES FOR CERTAIN VIOLATIONS, THE GREENWAYS COMMEMORATIVE ACCOUNT AND MAINTENANCE WORK ZONE AND SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY ENFORCEMENT

Dear Committee Members:

I write on behalf of Connecticut Main Street Center, Inc. (CMSC) in support of H.B. 5429 that will promote the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists in our downtowns, village centers and neighborhood commercial districts.

CMSC is a state-wide nonprofit working to unleash the economic potential of Connecticut's downtowns. One of our legislative priorities is to facilitate walkable, connected communities. Walkable, bikeable neighborhoods are highly sought after, with 48% of CT's adults wanting to someday live in an area within walking distance of shops and restaurants, according to a 2014 study from the former Legislative Commission on Aging and the CT Chapter of the American Planning Association. Pedestrian-friendly and bikeable locations increase property values, improve business occupancy and sales and result in healthier residents.

Pedestrian safety will be enhanced by requiring motorists to grant the right-of-way to pedestrians who affirmatively indicate their intention to cross the road in a crosswalk. We have all seen far-too-often motorists neglecting to yield to pedestrians at crosswalks. The increase in pedestrian fatalities is something that must be addressed before more tragedies occur. We need to create a culture of pedestrian safety and this bill will go a long way to making that happen.

The provisions allowing for the establishment of pedestrian safety zones, as well as local traffic authorities to establish lower speed limits on streets under their jurisdiction will also be important steps in making our downtown areas more walkable and bike-friendly. The reduction in vehicle speeds through our downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts will foster the kind of livable communities that are sought.

Thank you for your consideration of these measures.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. McMahon, CEO