

Policy Order Resolution

O-16
IN CITY COUNCIL

April 7, 2014

MAYOR MAHER
COUNCILLOR CARLONE

WHEREAS: It has come to the attention of the Cambridge City Council that Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has informed the City that the completion of construction of the rehabilitation of the Anderson Memorial Bridge has been extended to fall 2015 and that the planned date for advertising construction bids for the rehabilitation of the Western Avenue and River Street Bridges is now "at least 2019;" and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge City Council has previously proposed to MassDOT that underpasses on the Boston side of the river for pedestrians, joggers, cyclists and other users be incorporated in the construction plans for all three bridge projects as a matter of urgent attention at this unique moment in the future of the State's and the City's infrastructure, ecology and economy and to establish an important precedent in support of the multi-modal future of the region; and

WHEREAS: Given that the service life of such bridges is between 50 to 100 years, we are amidst an important moment in the history of the Charles River parklands with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to service a growing urban demand for alternative forms of mobility that reduce carbon emissions and traffic conflict while dramatically increasing safety and contributing to overall health and well-being through self-powered mobility and enhancing active recreational potential parallel to the river; and

WHEREAS: The "Healthy Transportation Policy Directive" issued by MassDOT on September 9, 2013, requires that all MassDOT projects "shall seek to increase and encourage more pedestrian, bicycle and transit trips" so that all such projects "are designed and implemented in a way that all our customers have access to safe and comfortable healthy transportation options at all MassDOT facilities;" and

WHEREAS: MassDOT has to date not included plans for such underpasses in such bridge projects but, in response to requests from the City of Cambridge and others, has incorporated in the current construction project of the Anderson Memorial Bridge and in the design plans for Western Avenue and River Street Bridges the movement of utilities and other components so as to facilitate the addition of such underpasses in the future; and

WHEREAS: MassDOT in the past has stated that one reason it has not included plans for the construction of such underpasses is that the design work, permitting, and environmental and historical review required for such underpasses would delay the construction projects for such bridges; and

WHEREAS: The extended construction completion date for Anderson Memorial Bridge and the future construction of Western Avenue and River Street Bridges now provide ample time to complete such design, permitting and review of underpasses with no impact on the construction timetable for such bridges; and

WHEREAS: The Western Avenue and River Street bridges serve important state-wide functions as access to and exit from the Massachusetts Turnpike for institutional, economic, and tourist destinations such as Fenway Park, Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and large areas of the Cities of Cambridge, Somerville, Boston and other municipalities; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the Cambridge City Council urgently requests that MassDOT start the permitting process for underpasses for Anderson Memorial Bridge, Western Avenue Bridge and River Street Bridge immediately, given that MassDOT has changed its construction and design plans for all three of the above bridges where it is now possible for the timely addition of underpasses to such plans; and be it further

ORDERED: That upon completion of such permitting process, an underpass be added to the current construction activities for Anderson Memorial Bridge; and that underpasses be added to the plans for the Western Avenue and River Street Bridges so they are built as an integral part of the bridge rehabilitation activities; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Clerk be and is hereby requested to forward suitably engrossed copies of this resolution to Governor Deval Patrick and MassDOT Secretary and CEO Richard Davey.