

July 12, 2014

Richard A. Davey, Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer, MassDOT
Frank DePaola, P.E., Highway Administrator, MassDOT
Thomas J. Tinlin, Chief of Operations and Maintenance, MassDOT

Dear Rich, Frank, and Tom,

On behalf of ourselves and our organizations, we thank you for the thrilling news you delivered to us at our meeting with you on Wednesday, July 9th: that the Department will publicly support construction of underpasses on the Boston side of the Charles River for the Anderson Memorial, Western Avenue and River Street Bridges, which would create seven miles of uninterrupted pathways on the Boston side for pedestrians, runners and cyclists.

We understand your first step will be to engage Gill Engineering to develop 25% design plans for an Anderson underpass on an expedited timetable so that, subject to environmental and other approvals, it can be added to the current extended construction activities for the bridge itself. We understand it will be your objective to file an Environmental Notification Form for the Anderson underpass within 60-90 days, which would then trigger a 45-day review period followed, hopefully, by a scoping letter from the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs by the end of the year.

We also understand that underpasses for Western and River will become part of the Department's plans for major reconstruction of those bridges, but that these bridge projects are expected to follow major construction in the I-90 area of Allston and therefore are likely to be undertaken five or more years from now. We also understand that you would consider Western and River underpasses aspects of mitigation actions for the Turnpike project.

We also would like to offer to the Department our continuing and supportive involvement as this project moves forward, both individually and – if useful – as part of an informal working group.

We look forward to being part of the announcement process to make the Department's commitment public once you have had a chance to let other agencies and officials know. We appreciate the Governor's support for this project, which we are convinced will be a significant part of his and your legacy. You are taking a major step to enhance the Charles River Parklands for at least the next hundred years.

With sincere thanks,

Ron Axelrod, for the Charles River Conservancy
Ken Kruckemeyer, for LivableStreets Alliance
Galen Mook, for the Boston Cyclists Union
Jon Puz, for the Cambridge Running Club
Gabriela Romanow, environmental activist
Jack Wofford, mediator and arbitrator