



BOSTON
TRANSPORTATION
DEPARTMENT

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April 6, 2012

Frank DePaola
Administrator, Highway Division
MassDOT
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Administrator DePaola,

On behalf of the City of Boston, I'd like to thank you and your staff for your continued collaboration with the city and the community on the rehabilitation of the Charles River bridges under the Accelerated Bridge Program. The inclusion of enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities while maintaining traffic flow on these historic and iconic bridges is a tremendous accomplishment. These facilities will serve us well as we prepare for a future where walking, cycling and transit play an even more prominent role in how we travel in our city and in the region.

With the future in mind, we request that you consider including pedestrian underpasses on the Boston side of the river in the design for the Western Avenue, River Street, and Anderson Memorial Bridges. Thousands of cyclists, pedestrians and joggers use the Paul Dudley White paths along the Charles River every day, and are required to cross the bridges at heavily trafficked, surface intersections. Though we are working with your staff to make the at-grade crossings as safe and comfortable as they can be, there are limits to what can be accomplished given the high volume of traffic and the number of conflicting traffic movements.

The inclusion of underpasses in the design of these bridges would make it possible for families and cyclists of all levels to travel along an uninterrupted, off-road park path for over seven miles, from the Craigie Bridge to Watertown. Creating uninterrupted "superhighways" is one of most effective and sophisticated best practices in bike planning and result in dramatic increases in ridership. Such a world class facility, combined with the expanded Hubway bikeshare system and enhanced facilities on city streets, would put Boston and the region at the forefront of the movement for healthy, sustainable transportation.

THOMAS M. MENINO, Mayor
Thomas J. Tinlin, Commissioner



The design of the underpasses would need to respect the historic integrity of the bridges as well as the navigation channels under the bridges, and would need to be easily maintainable. Given the once-in-a generation opportunity to reconstruct these bridges, we believe that including the underpasses is critical and should be included as part of the ongoing permitting and design effort.

Please feel free to call me at (617) 635-4810 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Tinlin
Commissioner