

## COALITION FOR ANDERSON BRIDGE UNDERPASS

c/o Charles River Conservancy, 43 Thorndike Street S3-3, Cambridge, MA 02141

March 13, 2017

Stephanie Pollack, Secretary of Transportation  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
10 Park Plaza  
Boston, MA

### **RE: Inclusion of the construction of the Anderson Memorial Bridge underpass for bicycles, pedestrians and runners in MassDOT's Capital Investment Plan**

Dear Secretary Pollack,

On behalf of the members of the Coalition for the Anderson Bridge Underpass, I am writing to urge you to fund the Anderson Bridge Underpass portion of proposed project number 1420, for "the design and construction of three pedestrian underpasses adjacent to the Boston-side of the Charles river at the River street, Western avenue and Anderson bridges" in MassDOT's 2018-2022 Capital Investment Plan (CIP). While plans for the River Street and Western Avenue bridges have been put on hold, the Anderson Bridge project has had several significant advancements since we last wrote to you in May 2016 and would have a shovel-ready design within the funding period. We ask that you move the Anderson Bridge Underpass into the "funded" category.

We appreciate the support of your office, Highway Administrator Thomas Tinlin, and Project Manager Michael Trepanier for this project, and are pleased that 25% design and permitting of this underpass is well underway. A major step was accomplished in December 2016 when the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the concept of the underpass, required that MassDOT proceed with planning in collaboration with DCR, the Boston Preservation Alliance, and the Charles River Conservancy, and asked to review 50% design plans when they have been completed.

When built, this underpass will be a major step toward enhancing the Charles River parklands and ensuring the longevity of one of the Boston area's major assets. The underpass would be an extremely important addition to the excellent surface changes at the Anderson Bridge, eliminating the need for many users (pedestrians, runners, cyclists, and others) to cross the busy surface intersection of ramps from Soldier's Field Road and JFK/North Harvard Street. Designed to tunnel through the bridge abutment, it would significantly increase the safety of pathway users and greatly expand mode shift opportunities for countless MassDOT commuters, tourists and other users looking to get out of their cars and get on a bicycle. As such, the underpass will significantly modernize the Charles River pathway system, thereby enhancing healthy activity, and improving the environment.

At an estimated \$4 million construction cost, it is cost-effective considering the many benefits it will produce. For all the reasons stated above, this project meets important CIP criteria: it extends the transportation network, adds significant reliability by improving safety and reducing traffic conflicts at the surface interchange, and enhances the modernization of the multi-use Paul Dudley White pathway system.

We urge that the Anderson Bridge Underpass be included in MassDOT's Capital Investment Plan as a funded project.

Sincerely,

Jack Wofford, on behalf of Coalition members:

Boston Cyclists Union – Galen Mook  
Boston Preservation Alliance – Greg Galer, Executive Director  
Boston Society of Architects, Historic Resources Committee – Jack Glassman, Chair  
Boston Society of Landscape Architects – Elena Saporta, Chair, Advocacy Committee  
Brighton Allston Historical Society – Jennifer Wilton, Board Member  
Cambridge Running Club – Jon Puz  
Charles River Conservancy – Renata von Tscherner, President  
Institute for Human-Centered Design – Katherine Blakeslee, Consultant  
LivableStreets Alliance – Ken Kruckemeyer, Board Member  
Sierra Club, Massachusetts Chapter – Cathy Buckley, Chair  
Walk Boston – Wendy Landman, Executive Director

cc: Thomas J. Tinlin, Highway Administrator, MassDOT  
Michael Trepanier, Project Manager, MassDOT