

March 30, 2021

Jonathan Gulliver
Highway Administrator
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160
Boston, MA 02116

Subject: Allston Multimodal Project Recommended Next Steps Regarding Upcoming Notice of Project Change

Dear Administrator Gulliver:

Thank you for convening the recent Allston Multimodal Project Task Force meeting, and for your request for ideas to make Task Force meetings and the environmental review process more productive moving forward.

As evidenced by the voluminous formal comments made to MassDOT last October, as well as the letters from our coalition, there is a demonstrably strong consensus for the Modified All At-Grade option from stakeholders across the region. Based on that strong consensus and in response to your request for ideas to improve the public process associated with this transformative project, we write today with a few specific suggestions requesting they be incorporated now into the upcoming Notice of Project Change (NPC):

1. Please refine the Modified All At-Grade to ensure no roadway in the river—and include that version in the NPC. MassDOT's most recent drawings (shared in the fall of 2020) showed about 4-feet of roadway intrusion. Members of the coalition have worked collaboratively and individually, on numerous occasions, to offer design modifications that avoid unnecessary incursion into the river. Refining your current design will allow for continued productive collaboration with stakeholders and ensure that the NPC begins with a refined, improved, and community-supported design.
2. Please develop a list of issues requiring further analysis to be included in the NPC. Despite several years of hard work by both the project team and the public, this coalition and other

stakeholders strongly believe that a number of key issues have yet to be fully developed or presented to the Task Force. We suggest the top three issues on such a list should include:

- a. Constructability and maintenance for all Build and No-Build options, as well as the Substantial Repair Option to temporarily repair the highway viaduct in its current location initially introduced by MassDOT in November 2020;
- b. Methods of mitigating construction and traffic impacts; and
- c. Details for the remediation of the degraded riverbank, infrastructure upgrades needed to address untreated storm drainage, details about ecosystem services, such as constructed wetlands, and the integration of the improved river edge and the Paul Dudley White Path with the Agganis Connector, Cambridge Street South promenade, and River Street into a unified high quality urban design, as well as broader corridor-area analysis to minimize impacts on the Charles River and optimize mobility and open space access.

We know you and the team have a lot on your plate and are up against important and fast approaching deadlines. We are happy to work with MassDOT to identify a more comprehensive list of issues needing further analysis so that the MassDOT project team can maintain its ambitious schedule, while also continuing to resolve outstanding questions to keep us on a positive path to improved communication.

In short, we believe that advancing an improved All At-Grade Option as well as a list of issues requiring further analysis in the NPC will lead to a productive process—and the most ideal outcome for the project.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure the success of the project.

Sincerely,

A Better City
Allston Brighton CDC
Allston Civic Association
Boston Society for Architecture
Charles River Conservancy

Conservation Law Foundation

LivableStreets Alliance

MassBike

Sierra Club of Massachusetts

WalkBoston

Kendall Square Association

Anthony D'Isidoro, Allston resident and Task Force member

Harry Mattison, Allston resident and Task Force member

Jessica Robertson, Allston resident and Task Force member

Fred Yalouris, Cambridge community representative on the Task Force

CC: Secretary Tesler, Project Manager Davidson, Secretary Theohardes, Ken Miller, Commissioner
Rooney