

May 23, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Please accept this letter from a broad coalition of transportation, environmental, business, and community stakeholders in support of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) application for USDOT's FY2022 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) assistance to help fund its I-90 Allston Multimodal Project located in the City of Boston.

The I-90 Allston Multimodal Project creates an opportunity to dramatically improve livability and connectivity for residents of Boston's Allston neighborhood, an environmental justice population defined by Massachusetts law, while enhancing regional mobility and creating a significant new multimodal passenger train station for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). In 1965, Massachusetts officials opened the Allston section of I-90, shoehorning an eight-lane elevated highway between Boston University and the Charles River, dividing a vibrant working-class community, shutting down important passenger rail stations, and wounding important riverfront habitat in the process. The highway was designed and built prior to the protections now provided by the National Environmental Policy Act, and financed without federal funding through bonds secured by tolls. **Some 60 years later, Boston still endures harmful impacts from this obsolete, failed transportation policy that placed a highway above the needs of neighborhoods and the environment.**

The Allston Viaduct is nearing the end of its useful lifespan. Since the spring of 2014, MassDOT has been developing a concept to replace the Allston Interchange and Viaduct. The MassDOT team worked with a Task Force composed of local residents, advocates, elected and appointed officials, representatives of local institutions and businesses, and the Allston community at-large – many of whom have signed onto this support letter. In September 2021, MassDOT identified the Modified At-Grade Option as the focus for the Allston I-90 MultiModal Project and selected the Modified At-Grade design—the clear consensus option—as its preferred alternative. We are committed to continuing our work with MassDOT to see the project to completion – building a future where the needs of public transit riders, cyclists, pedestrians, and the health of the river are as important as motorists traveling on this section of interstate.

**The I-90 Allston Multimodal Project fulfills each of the USDOT's six selection criteria in terms of project outcomes:**

- A. **Safety:** *Addresses known safety problems and helps to protect both motorized and non-motorized users.* The Modified At-Grade Option addresses known safety problems and protects motorized users by providing the safest horizontal alignment and vertical profile for the replacement of the functionally deficient existing I-90 viaduct by reducing curves and steep grades, which will reduce excessive speeds and crash rates. By removing reverse curves and providing wider and separated paths, it also enhances the safety of non-motorized users by increasing pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.
- B. **State of Good Repair:** *Addresses current and projected vulnerabilities that, if left unimproved, threaten future transportation network efficiency, mobility of goods or accessibility and mobility of people, or economic growth.* The Modified At-Grade Option would replace the existing, deteriorating I-90 viaduct with a new at-grade highway, and will result in lower maintenance costs and reduced vulnerability to deterioration in the future.
- C. **Economic Impacts, Freight Movement, and Job Creation:** *Improves system operations, improves multimodal transportation systems that incorporate affordable transportation options such as public transit to improve mobility of people and goods, results in high quality job creation by supporting good-paying jobs, and fosters economic development.* The new highway interchange will free up some 75 acres for new ground and air-rights development in one of the largest remaining underdeveloped areas of Boston.
- D. **Climate Change, Resiliency, and the Environment:** *Reduces air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and results in a modal shift that reduces emissions.* The Modified At-Grade Option will reduce congestion associated with the highway interchange, create a new major multimodal transit station, and enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. It also allows for a living shoreline, or other nature-based solutions, to increase climate resiliency, improve habitat for living resources, and enhance active and passive recreation.
- E. **Equity, Multimodal Options, and Quality of Life:** *Increases affordable and accessible transportation choices* by providing a new major multimodal transit station, enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access to the Charles River basin, new environmental enhancements and noise reduction strategies alongside the Allston and Cambridge sides of the river. The project would reunite two parts of an environmental justice population that has been divided for more than two generations by the original, elevated Turnpike.

- F. **Innovation:** *Adopts innovative practices in project delivery and financing* by providing for design-build procurement and innovative approaches to highway and transit financing, as well as an ongoing task force of over 50 stakeholders to continue its important advisory role.

As residents, business, environmental, institutional, and transportation advocates, we remain deeply invested in this project and know the support of the USDOT's FY2022 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant will help move this long awaited project toward construction and completion.

Sincerely,

Douglas Arcand, Allston resident

Jay Arcand & Rita DiGiovanni, Allston business & property owners

Stacey Beuttell, Executive Director, WalkBoston

Rebecca Bowie, President, Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association

Tina Chan, Allston resident

Anthony D'Isidoro, Allston resident; President, Allston Civic Association; MassDOT I-90 Allston Task Force member

Kendra Foley and Caleb Hurst-Hiller, Interim Co-Presidents, Kendall Square Association

Laura Jasinski, Executive Director, Charles River Conservancy; MassDOT I-90 Allston Task Force member

Erika Johnson, AICP, LEED AP BD+C, Allston Resident

Jarred Johnson, Executive Director, Transit Matters

Wendy Landman, Senior Policy Advisor, WalkBoston; MassDOT I-90 Allston Task Force member

Anna Leslie, Director, Allston Brighton Health Collaborative

Harry Mattison, Allston resident, MassDOT I-90 Allston Task Force member

Steve Miller, 350 Mass/Cambridge

Galen Mook, Executive Director, MassBike

Josh Ostroff, Interim Director, Transportation for Massachusetts

Deb Pasternak, Chapter Director, Sierra Club of Massachusetts

Cheryl Pavlik, Brighton resident

Jessica Robertson, Allston resident; MassDOT I-90 Allston Task Force member

Staci Rubin, Vice President, Environmental Justice, Conservation Law Foundation

Hazel Ryerson, Allston resident, MassDOT I-90 Allston Task Force member

Stacy Thompson, Executive Director, LivableStreets Alliance

Julia Wallerce, Boston Program Manager, Institute for Transportation & Development Policy

Jack Wofford, Cambridgeport resident; Cambridge Community Representative to MassDOT I-90 Allston Task Force

Becca Wolfson, Executive Director, Boston Cyclist Union

Fred Yalouris, Cambridge Community representative, MassDOT I-90 Allston Task Force  
Cathie Zusy, President, Magazine Beach Partners

CC: Jonathan Gulliver, Highway Administrator, MassDOT; The Honorable Michelle Wu, Mayor, City of Boston; Jascha Franklin-Hodge, Chief of Streets, Transportation, and Sanitation, City of Boston; Christopher Coes, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy, USDOT; Paul Baumer, Program Manager, Office of Infrastructure Finance and Innovation, USDOT