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Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary
Hayes Morrison, Undersecretary
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116

August 16, 2024

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Undersecretary Morrison:

As a member of the official project task force and of the Throat Area/Charles River Working Group, I am writing to express the Charles River Conservancy's concerns regarding the current design and feedback process for the Allston Multimodal Project. This \$2B transformative urban infrastructure project represents a critical opportunity for Massachusetts to align with community needs and environmental sustainability. We are grateful to MassDOT for a seat at the table and allowance to provide feedback. However, we wish to clarify that **the Charles River Conservancy's participation, comments, and involvement in MassDOT's working group meetings do not equate to an endorsement of any of the proposed designs** for the following reasons:

Narrow Scope of Engagement: The scope of the working group meetings is too limited, including the persistent reluctance to discuss reducing the number of roadway lanes. Additionally, Allston community members and accessibility and transportation advocates were notably either excluded from the invite-only working groups or brought in late to the process.

Misaligned Goals: MassDOT's refusal to consider roadway lane reduction—that is, refusing to critically examine the data story and heed the recommendations of climate experts—is unacceptable. The agency's insistence of keeping the existing 12 impervious roadway lanes in all design options, made without negotiation nor credible forecasting, prioritizes vehicles over the safety and enjoyment of pedestrians and cyclists and over parkland health within the tight confines of the Throat. Maintaining the current status quo is not an option.

Rushed Process: The time-sensitive decision-making process for the Allston Multimodal Project is deeply concerning. After years of requests to explore critical riverfront design issues, these conversations are being stunted by opaque

explanations of the permitting timeline. This “wait and hurry up” approach undermines the project's potential to be truly transformative for Massachusetts. We strongly urge MassDOT to take the time necessary to develop an aspirational, revolutionary design that prioritizes safety for all path users and preserves ecological resources, all while setting a national precedent for urban parklands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Jasinski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Laura" being more prominent than the last name "Jasinski".

Laura Jasinski
Executive Director, Charles River Conservancy
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