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MassDOT  
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Boston, MA 02116

Re: Reid Overpass: Major Projects, Project File number 611987

February 2, 2026

Dear MassDOT Project Team,

The Charles River Conservancy (CRC), working in close partnership with DCR since 2000 to cultivate a resilient and vibrant urban Charles River, appreciates the opportunity to offer comments following your [Jan. 6, 2026 informational meeting](#) regarding the Reid Overpass project. We are grateful for MassDOT's engagement with the community on this critical project and appreciate your team's dedication to improving connectivity in this complex area.

As stewards of the Charles River and advocates for both ecological and public health, the CRC is deeply familiar with this segment of the riverfront and the surrounding neighborhoods. The dense area near the BU Bridge and Memorial Drive is a vital crossroads for public transit routes, cyclists, and pedestrians alike, with a high concentration of residents, students, and commuters. One of the CRC's primary partner parks is [Magazine Beach](#)—a beloved riverfront green space we regularly steward through cleanups, volunteer events, and community programs.

While we appreciate the public presentation, we do not support and cannot endorse any of the four design alternatives (rationale outlined below), as they do not sufficiently currently align with the project objectives. We believe there is still significant opportunity to refine the designs to better reflect the Commonwealth's [mobility](#), [climate](#), and [biodiversity](#) goals. Designing for fewer lanes, lower speeds, and green infrastructure can directly advance these statewide initiatives while improving quality of life along the riverfront. We would welcome the chance to collaborate with MassDOT and local partners to ensure this project aligns with shared sustainability and safety values.

## 1. Reinforce Memorial Drive as a Green Parkway

Memorial Drive is designed first and foremost as a parkway that complements the Charles River Reservation. Reducing the number of vehicle lanes would address many challenges at once:

- **Traffic calming and safety.** Fewer, narrower lanes will naturally slow vehicle speeds and make crossings safer for people biking and walking.
- **Environmental benefits.** Less impervious surface reduces runoff into the Charles River, minimizes heat island effects, and restores green space along the riverfront.
- **Cost savings.** A smaller footprint means lower construction and long-term maintenance costs.

This approach continues the positive momentum established by DCR's [Memorial Drive Greenway Improvements Phase III](#), which reimagines this corridor as a people-centered greenway rather than a traffic conduit.

## 2. Design for Safe Multimodal Access

We support designs that prioritize safe, intuitive movement for all users, and not just drivers at peak hours. We urge MassDOT to:

- Include physically protected bike lanes and clear, direct pedestrian crossings with no high-speed slip lanes to prevent dangerous right turns into bike lanes or crosswalks.
- Design for lower vehicle speeds and simplified intersections, avoiding multi-stage pedestrian crossings with long signal delays.
- Provide priority MTBA bus and shuttle routes to support efficient public transit and multimodal mobility.

This intersection lies adjacent to Morse Elementary School, Magazine Beach, and the BU Boathouse and deserves a design that places vulnerable users first.

## 3. Coordinate Project Closely with DCR

Because Memorial Drive and adjacent Charles River Reservation properties are owned and managed by DCR, it is vital that MassDOT work in close step with DCR throughout design and construction. Aligning with DCR's priorities for parkland preservation, riverfront conservation, and public recreation access will ensure that proposed changes enhance—and not compromise—the character and ecological health of the Memorial Drive Greenway. The Reid Overpass project is a tremendous opportunity to strengthen the partnership between MassDOT and DCR to create a unified, world-class vision for this section of the Charles River.

## 4. Consider Concurrent Environmental Opportunities

Given the scale of construction, we encourage MassDOT to coordinate with DCR, MWRA, the City of Cambridge, and other partners to explore opportunities for green infrastructure and stormwater management. Addressing the Cottage Farm CSO facility and integrating natural flood mitigation could provide valuable environmental and community benefits.

## 5. Deepen Community and Equity Engagement

We strongly recommend sustained and robust community engagement throughout all design phases. As the work site overlaps fully with Massachusetts [Environmental Justice populations](#), this project is an ideal opportunity to apply forthcoming recommendations from the [Charles River Task Force on Equitable River Access](#) to ensure that voices from underrepresented and underserved communities are included. Greater collaboration will help build a design that reflects local values and ensures broad public support.

We appreciate the dedication of MassDOT's team and want to reiterate that the CRC stands ready to collaborate. The Reid Overpass project presents a pivotal opportunity to create a safer, greener, more connected Cambridge riverfront, one that truly reflects the spirit of the Memorial Drive parkway and the Commonwealth's vision for a sustainable, equitable future.

Thank you for your consideration and for continuing to engage openly with the community on this transformative project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Jasinski". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Laura Jasinski  
Executive Director, Charles River Conservancy  
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