

From: [Michael Orr](#)
To: [Strysky, Alexander \(EEA\)](#)
Cc: comments@walkboston.org
Subject: Mass Pike comments
Date: Friday, February 09, 2018 8:25:11 AM

Hi I'm Mike Orr, resident at 6 Liberty Ave in Somerville, MA.

I heard the WBUR story about the Mass Pike reconfiguration. The State should seriously consider a more multi-modal approach to the Mass Pike. As someone who doesn't regularly use the Mass Pike but does indirectly pay for this project through taxes, I think it's pertinent to make the project more inclusive. Furthermore, it seems it may be cheaper to lower the grade and make the Charles River more accessible. For more than a 1/4 mile you can't access the Charles River from Comm Ave. This is a huge opportunity to fix this.

MORR-1

Furthermore, with the newly planned construction of a building over the Mass Pike near Fenway, lowering the project to grade will make projects like that more feasible, making for a better use of land, which is an extremely valuable asset we're quickly running out of.

I appreciate your consideration

thank you,
Mike

--

Michael Orr

From: Norah Piehl <ncpiehl@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 8:09:15 PM
To: Strysky, Alexander (EEA)
Cc: comments@walkboston.org
Subject: Comment on I-90 project

Dear Mr. Strysky,

I hope it is not too late to add my voice to the comments regarding the proposed I-90 project in Allston. In particular, I am concerned about the lack of attention paid in the proposal to the construction of safe and appealing walking and cycling paths as part of the new development.

I live in Belmont and work in Cambridge. I frequently ride my bike to work and to errands and appointments in Boston; I also am an avid recreational runner and frequently utilize the Charles River paths during my training runs. The so-called Allston "throat" has been a consistent annoyance as I've used these paths during the sixteen years I've lived in the Boston area; actually, it's often crossed the line from "annoying" to "hazardous." When a runner or walker meets or is overtaken by a cyclist along this stretch, the potential for collision is high and the experience is extremely unpleasant for pedestrian and cyclist alike. When cyclists traveling in opposing directions meet along this stretch, the stakes are even higher, especially when less experienced cyclists encounter fast-moving road bikes.

I believe this congested section, where pedestrians and cyclists feel pinned between two railings and agitated by the adjacent fast-moving traffic, is an active deterrent to recreational and commuting use of the pathways by pedestrians and cyclists. I certainly would not feel safe using this stretch of path with my children.

Given the ambitious scope and breadth of the proposed I-90 project, not to mention the significant impact it will have on our city for decades to come, it seems like a missed opportunity not to include more functional, accessible, and enjoyable paths that can be safely used by pedestrians and cyclists, thereby helping ease traffic congestion, lessen the environmental impact of the project, and improve our citizens' quality of life. I would urge MassDOT to entertain the options for safe walking paths being developed by WalkBoston and the Charles River Conservancy, taking a thoughtful and long-range approach to a master plan for the riverfront that will help integrate this area into the city and provide pleasant, safe, and accessible walking, running and cycling routes as part of the proposed development.

NP-1

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Norah Piehl
Belmont, MA
ncpiehl@gmail.com

From: Paola M. Ferrer, Esq. <pmferrer@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 4:56 PM
To: Strysky, Alexander (EEA)
Subject: MassPike Allston DEIR Comments EEA#15278

Paola M Ferrer
Camilo A. Atehortua
19 Royal St. Apt 2
Boston, MA 02134

Secretary Matthew Beaton,
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Attn: MEPA Office
Alexander Strysky, EEA#15278
[100 Cambridge St., #900, Boston MA 02114](https://www.google.com/maps/place/100+Cambridge+St.,+Boston,+MA+02114)
alexander.strysky@state.ma.us

Dear Secretary Beaton,

We respectfully submit this letter as homeowners/residents of Allston in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) submitted by MassDOT for the reconstruction of the Mass Pike, and to request you require a Supplemental DEIR to optimize the positive impact of the project.

We will not purport to understand every detail of the 600-page plus appendices DEIR, and will defer to those with the technical expertise to break apart its complexities. One thing we do know well is this neighborhood. In fact, Allston and its environs have been Paola's home for most of her adult life – she has now been in Boston longer than with her family in Puerto Rico. Camilo, a United States Marine Corps veteran, who served during combat in Operation Iraqi Freedom, happily moved to Allston two years ago. We both enjoy the diversity, vibrancy and convenience living in Allston affords us.

In September 2013, a group of Allston residents who share our enthusiasm for the neighborhood took the opportunity presented by MassDOT's announcement that it planned to rebuild the crumbling Cambridge Street overpass to organize. We decided it was our time to speak up and demand better, people-centered design for our streets. We met in our kitchens, in our living rooms, in local businesses. We met in the early mornings before work over coffee and bagels, or late in the evenings over pizza and cider. We came with our pets, our children, our laundry, our groceries... to design bi-lingual flyers, build web pages, compose social media messages, call and email our local elected officials, and meet with every single one of them. On cold days and nights we took turns standing on the deck of Cambridge Street to speak to other neighbors.

We committed our "spare" time and energy to this effort because we love Allston, and we knew we were on the verge of something enormous that could change our neighborhood for the future. Most importantly, we wanted to buck the trend of our history with massive

development projects by ensuring any changes made were for the better. We had a singular goal: to build a better street, a livable street, a neighborhood street.

That ambitious, all-consuming grassroots effort opened the doors to our input in a larger, transformational project to redesign the I-90 Mass Pike in Allston, and though the project has expanded massively our original goals have not shifted. We remain resolute and committed to the same vision of a neighborhood that is transformed in positive ways: connected by safe, livable streets, more climate-friendly, socially equitable, and with transportation options suited to the 21st century economy.

Consistent with previously stated goals, we summarize our request as follows:

- Build West Station *now*. The traffic modeling used to justify postponing construction runs counter to common sense and to the vision of mode shift. Building West Station now will induce demand for it, just as building Boston Landing at New Balance exceeded all modeling projections. Moreover, the commitment from institutional partners to contribute cash to the project should be an incentive to the investment in the present.

PF/CA-1

- Instead of storing trains in Allston, consider increasing off-peak commuter rail service between Worcester and Boston. Induce demand for transit by improving service and reliability.

PF/CA-2

- Rebuild the highway at grade. The proposal submitted by A Better City (ABC) presents the most fiscally prudent option in the short and long-term, and frankly looks much better than the mammoth viaduct.

PF/CA-3

- Reduce the number of lanes in streets along the new grid in Allston to create a safer environment that encourages walking and biking.

PF/CA-4

- Include safe connections to the Charles River parklands. Allston abuts the river but has few options for safe, convenient access to it. The commute to Downtown Boston is less than 5 miles -35 minutes by bike or 1.5 hours walking, which beats the current MBTA options.

- Build footbridges to link Commonwealth Avenue over the highway and into the Charles River parklands to encourage walking and biking as transportation options.

PF/CA-5

- Create North-South roads/bus routes between North Allston and Commonwealth Ave. Take advantage of this and other opportunities to help restore the connectivity destroyed by the building of the original Mass Pike.

PF/CA-6

- Study the opportunity presented by the Grand Junction railroad to link West Station, Kendall Sq. and North Station, including the revitalization of the Grand Junction Bridge to become a walk/bike connection between Boston and Cambridge along the Charles River.

PF/CA-7

- Evaluate mitigation options for abutting homes burdened by the air pollution, noise pollution, and vibration impacts of the highway and rail.

Although well-intentioned, the protracted, complex process required by these projects is exhausting, frustrating, and at times demoralizing. Community members are tacitly expected to earn Masters' degrees in engineering, transportation planning, environmental science, develop intimate familiarity with regulatory processes, federal and state law, etc., to fairly debate with experienced professionals and consultants who have rarely spent more than a day in our neighborhood. There is something inherently unfair in a process that prioritizes the vision of a professional who is handsomely compensated to hone in their expertise -be it in cars, trains or highways. Meanwhile, a resident needs to understand the impact of the whole on ourselves and our neighbors. How will this percentage slope feel under my feet while carrying groceries? How many blocks will I have to walk to get to a crosswalk? Can I get to work on time? How fast are cars traveling down the street? These are the practical questions we struggle to answer.

Participating of this process is very intimidating, and comes at great personal sacrifice. Not surprisingly, the rooms where we meet to debate the appropriateness of gradients, number of lanes, car speeds, demand projections, watershed, etc., and the many letters we have sent are not a fair sample of the people of Allston. Not everyone can afford to have one job, hire a babysitter, or learn the equivalent of a new trade to become an advocate. You need to look beyond the viaduct to understand what we need, want and deserve. At this time, those of us who have some steam left, demand fairness and environmentally justice for Allston.

Sincerely,
Paola M. Ferrer, Esq.
Camilo A. Atehortua
Allston Residents

--

Paola M. Ferrer, Esq.
617-201-5692

Paul F. Walker, Ph.D.
237 Brattle Street
Cambridge, MA 02138-4645
617-661-1728
pwalker@globalgreen.org

February 9, 2018

Secretary Matthew Beaton
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Attn: MEPA Office, Alexander Strysky
100 Cambridge St., # 900
Boston, MA 02114
alexander.strysky@state.ma.us

RE: EEA # 15278

Dear Secretary Beaton:

The reconstruction of the Massachusetts Turnpike in Allston has come to my attention in recent months. As someone who drives through this intersection weekly, and also as a founding member of the Charles River Conservancy (CRC), I would like to add a few brief comments on the project.

First, this area is a major road and railroad transit hub impacting Allston, Brighton, Cambridge, and Watertown, as well as the surrounding Boston region. This project will therefore have important impacts on a large swath of Greater Boston and needs to be very carefully planned and implemented. Unfortunately, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) does not address many key factors important to the successful implementation of this redevelopment.

Second, we should not be rebuilding this large area to simply maximize automobile traffic, but rather to fulfill the vision of *Imagine Boston 2030* and *Go Boston 2030*, including the Massachusetts *Global Warming Solutions Act*. We should be minimizing carbon emissions and maximizing green space along the Charles River, including bicycle and jogging tracks. As now planned, the project would not allow sufficient open and green space, already lacking along that section of the Charles River.

PW-1

PW-2

Third, in discussion which we have held under auspices of the Charles River Conservancy, it seems clear that the redesign for public and private transportation needs to remove the Mass Pike overpass and include lanes for Storrow Drive, the Mass Pike, and the railroad at surface. To promote public transportation, the West Station should also be included in the project in the first phase, and green space between the roads and the Charles River needs to be maximized. This

PW-3

PW-4

needs to include sufficient space for multi-model transportation – walking, jogging, and bicycling, and maximizing the beauty of the Charles River.

Thank you for your attention to the matter, and I look forward to your forthcoming proposals to meet these critical needs.

Sincerely,

Paul F. Walker, Ph.D.

Secretary Matthew A. Beaton
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street (Suite 900)
Boston MA 02114

February 9, 2018

Attn: Alex Strycky, MEPA Office, Re: EEA No. 15278 (cc James Cerbone, MassDOT)

RECEIVED
FEB 13 2018
MEPA

Dear Secretary Beaton:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DEIR of the I-90 Allston Interchange Project. We write as long-time residents of Cambridgeport, the neighborhood across the Charles River from this complex, controversial, and costly project. Our comments are focused on the area of greatest impact on our neighborhood in particular and Cambridge in general – immediately across the river as well as on the Cambridge side.

The Charles River and its adjacent system of pathways and parklands constitute one of the great assets of the Boston Region. This system needs to be enhanced and impacts on it mitigated as a result of this project – some as part of the project itself and others as a separate process to study, plan, and implement major improvements in the area.

Our comments are focused on the area from the proposed new underpass on Soldiers Field Road (SFR) (that would connect to new Cambridge Street South proposed in the “Preferred Alternative”) to the River Street and Western Avenue Bridges. These bridges serve as the major access facilities between the Turnpike, SFR, and Cambridge. Our comments follow:

- 1. Support underpass between SFR and Cambridge Street South and relocation of SFR further from the river.** We support the proposed new underpass on SFR connecting to new Cambridge Street South, as well as the relocation of SFR, as set forth as the “Preferred Alternative.” It provides a new but narrow direct surface connection for pedestrians and cyclists between Allston and the river pathway system; separated pedestrian and bicycle pathways in this area; and access for cars directly to/from the Turnpike through the new street grid in Allston. Constructing that underpass and its access roads would permit the elimination of cars heading from SFR to Allston or the Turnpike from the existing 2-lane exit ramp from SFR westbound to River Street Bridge. Eliminating the Allston, Brookline, and Turnpike traffic from it will result in significant simplification, greater efficiency, and improved safety for all modes of travel. PK/JW-1
- 2. Retain narrow, single-lane, right-turn only exit ramp from SFR to Cambridge.** We do not support the elimination of the existing right turn at the exit, however, because doing so would require cars heading from SFR to Cambridge to use a longer route through the new Allston street grid with four signalized intersections, mixing with traffic to/from the Turnpike, Allston, Brookline, and the new Harvard development, or seek alternate routes to Cambridge from SFR adding congestion to other Cambridge streets. Separating out Cambridge traffic onto its own exit ramp from SFR to River Street will reduce the load on the complex, new Allston street grid, and permit Cambridge traffic to continue the direct access we have had for over 50 years. PK/JW-2
- 3. Design new exit ramp to create wider pathways.** At the request of Cambridge, the DEIR briefly describes an option to retain the exit ramp to Cambridge. It shows a 17-foot wide exit ramp (one lane plus shoulder for emergency access) and a 12-foot pathway leading to the bridge. That pathway is 6-feet wider than the existing 6-foot pathway. The DEIR opposes this option, preferring to eliminate the ramp entirely and devote the land saved to a slightly wider pathway (16 feet instead of 12) and 18 feet of green space, as well as a slightly longer distance of separated pedestrian and bicycle paths. These separated paths must merge prior to reaching the bridge in any solution. The choice between these options is clearly a trade-off. We strongly believe that the slight widening of the path, lengthening of separated paths, and creation of green space in this area are not worth the circuitous disruption of Cambridge-bound traffic, and may complicate bicycle access to a future underpass below the River St bridge. A one-lane exit ramp can be sensitively PK/JW-3

designed to maximize environmental attractiveness and also significantly widen the pedestrian/bicycle pathway leading to River Street Bridge from its current narrow 6-feet.

4. Study road, pathways and parkland as a system in the "box" area, requiring design creativity and detailed traffic/travel analysis. The area encompassed by a box-like frame of SFR, River Street Bridge, Western Avenue Bridge, and Memorial Drive is a system consisting of major transportation and parkland facilities on both sides of the river. The two bridges are deteriorating; their reconstruction has been a priority of both state and city for many years. Cars, trucks, and buses use the bridges to access Cambridge to/from the Pike and Allston; cars only use SFR and Memorial Drive; and pedestrians, cyclists, and joggers use the Paul Dudley White pathways on both sides of the river to travel from the Esplanade to Watertown and beyond. Commuting by bicycle is increasing. Traffic from this box impacts both River Street and Western Avenue, a pair of major one-way arterial streets connecting to Central Square in Cambridge and beyond to Somerville, as well as major neighborhood streets including Putnam Avenue, Magazine Street, and Pearl Street. The box area should be studied as an integrated whole, with design, travel forecasting, traffic management, landscape architecture, and environmental perspectives blended to create roadways, pathways, and parkland that function effectively and enhance the beauty of this important area. This study should be undertaken in a collaborative manner among MassDOT, DCR, the Cities of Cambridge and Boston, and the groups and individuals concerned about this area.

PK/JW-4

5. Include pedestrian/bicycle underpasses in reconstruction of River Street and Western Avenue Bridges. Reconstruction of these bridges should be part of the above system study and should include pedestrian/bicycle underpasses on the Boston side of the Charles River. An underpass under the Andersen Memorial Bridge is currently under design, with 25% drawings having received endorsement from the Massachusetts Historic Commission. Adding underpasses to River Street and Western Avenue bridges would complete an uninterrupted DCR pathway system under the Longfellow, Massachusetts Avenue, Boston University, and Eliot Bridges all the way to Watertown. The Charles River Conservancy has developed engineering plans and design renderings of underpasses for River Street and Western Avenue Bridges (attached), and should be considered in designing the reconstruction of both bridges.

PK/JW-5

6. Consider continuing a below-grade SFR beyond River Street Bridge. A plan (attached) to rebuild SFR below-grade from its proposed underpass at Cambridge Street to the existing underpass under River Street Bridge was submitted to MassDOT for consideration in the I-90 DEIR, but it was not analyzed and has not been included. We believe that plan is worth further study. It would lower SFR and, with approximately 1,600 feet of additional decking, cover it with parkland, expanded pathways, and a narrow surface roadway that would provide direct access for a right-turn only to Cambridge. The resulting parkland would be many hundred feet longer than the very short pedestrian/bicycle crossing provided at the Cambridge Street South SFR underpass and therefore provide easy access to the riverfront across the decking. This expanded parkland would benefit the new Harvard developments as well as current residents and others who enjoy the parklands by the river. And the roadway would provide a "local" street that pedestrians could cross safely while at the same time letting traffic heading to Cambridge make the right-turn onto the River Street Bridge.

PK/JW-6

In conclusion, we ask that you require MassDOT to include the above steps as the massive I-90 project moves forward. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Peter Klinefelter, Landscape Architect, 220 Erie Street, Cambridge, MA 02139 *PK*

(E: peterk@theworld.com)

John G. Wofford, Esq., Mediator, 13 Cottage Street, Cambridge, MA 02139 *John*

(E: johnwofford@earthlink.net)

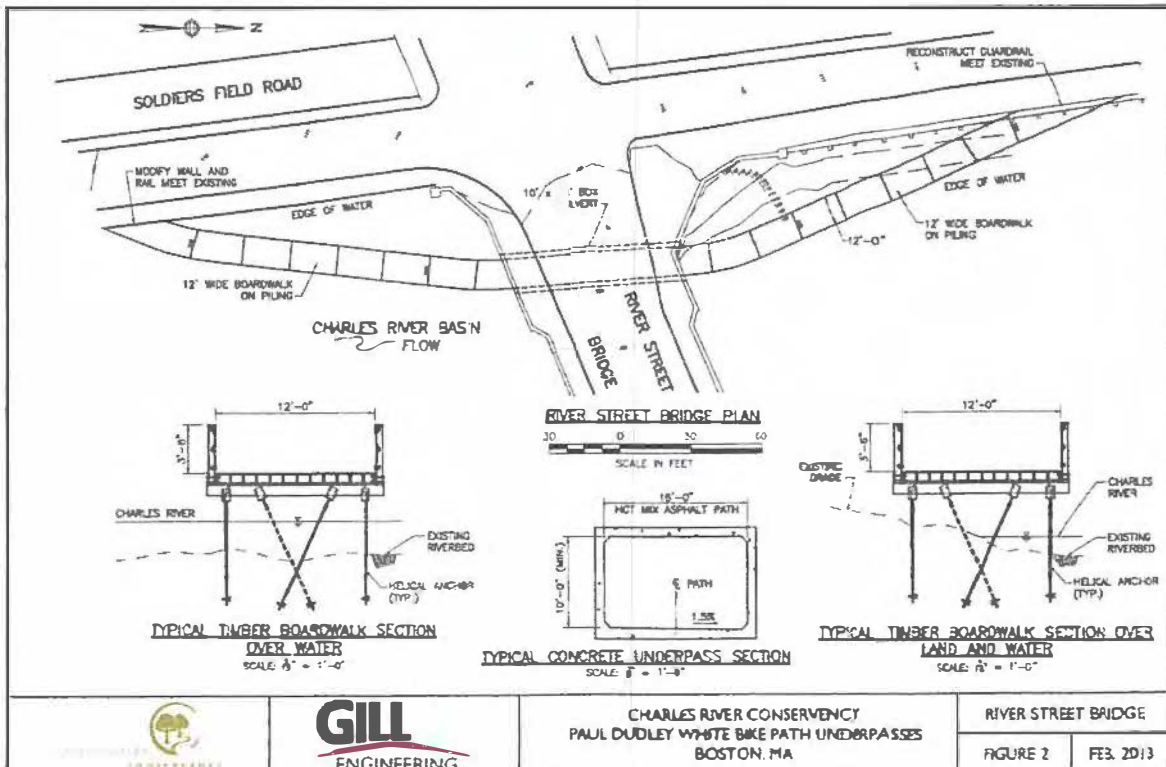
RIVER STREET BRIDGE



Alternate #1



Alternate #2



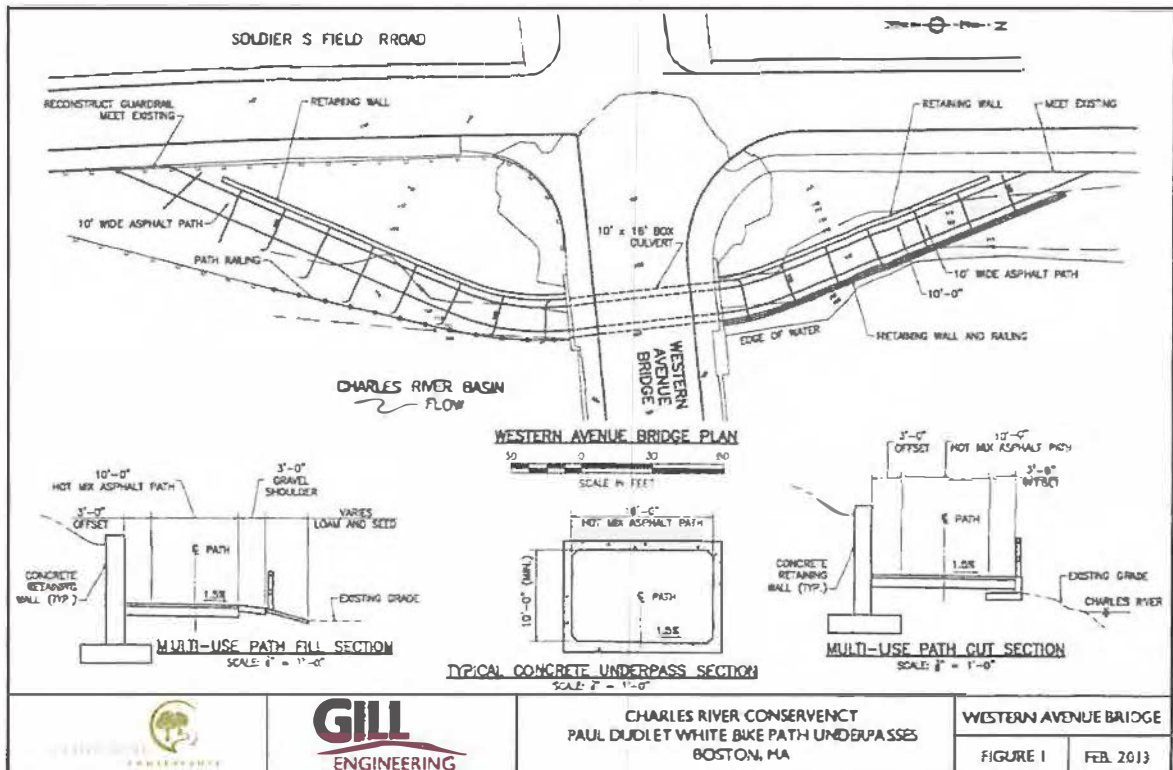
WESTERN AVENUE BRIDGE



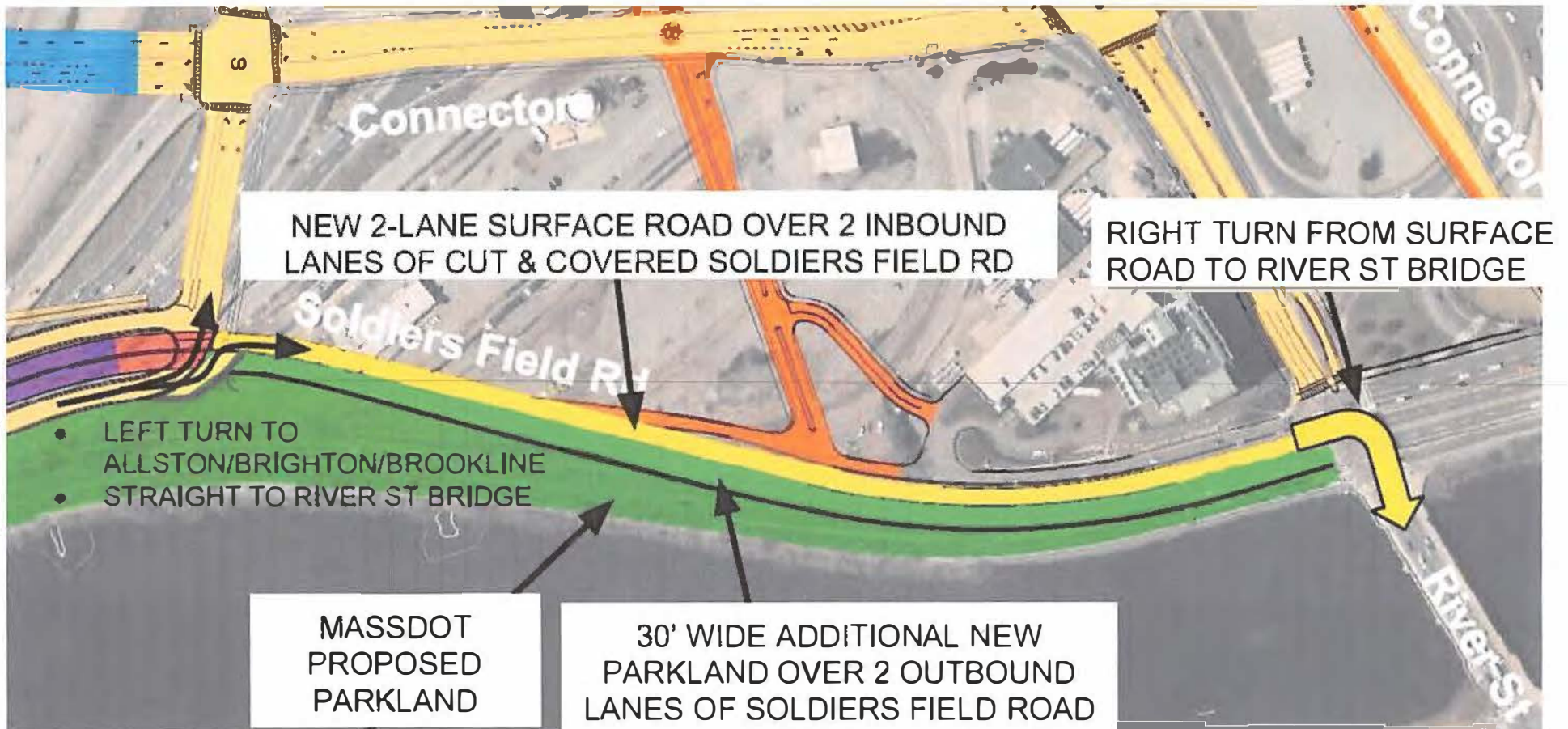
Alternate #1



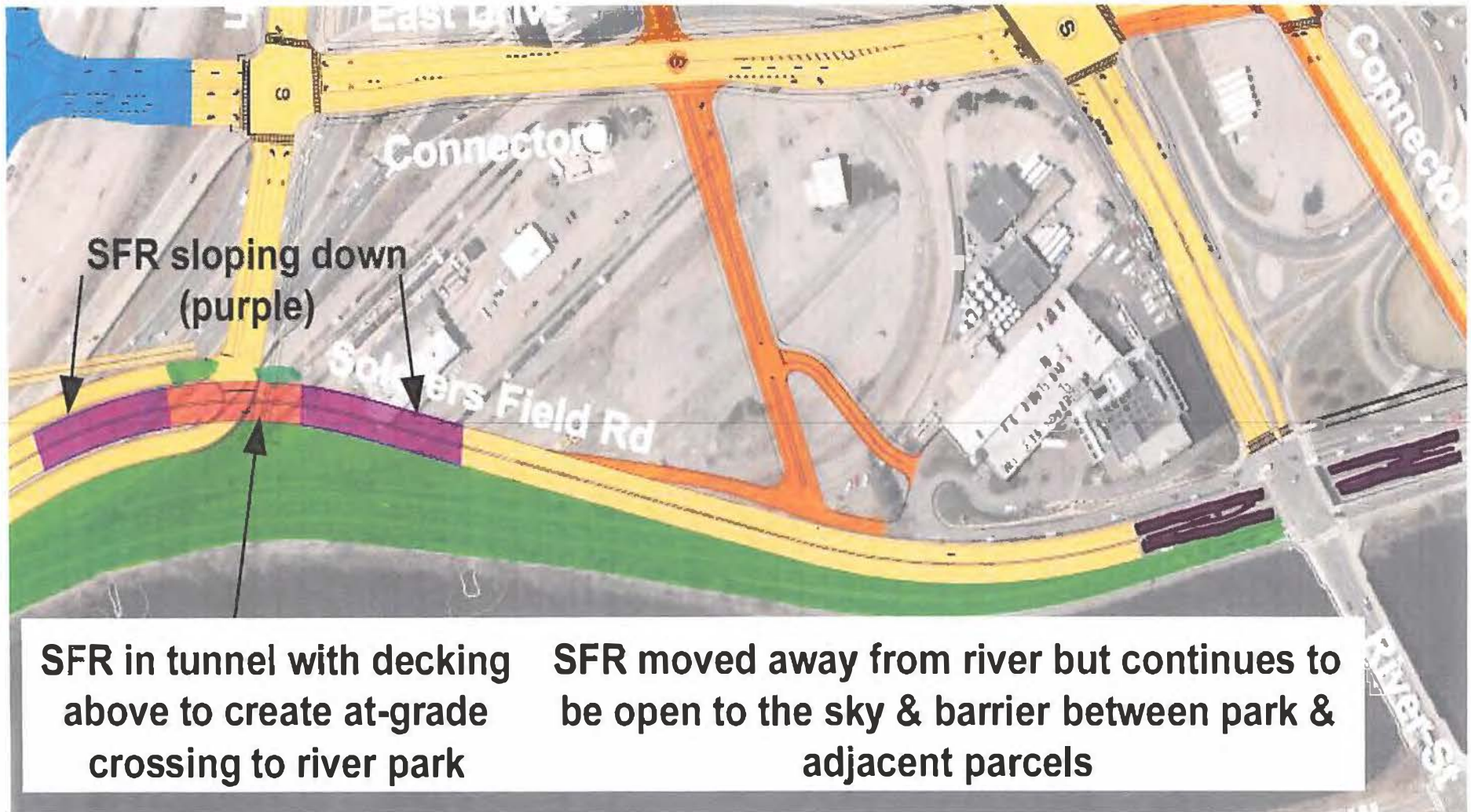
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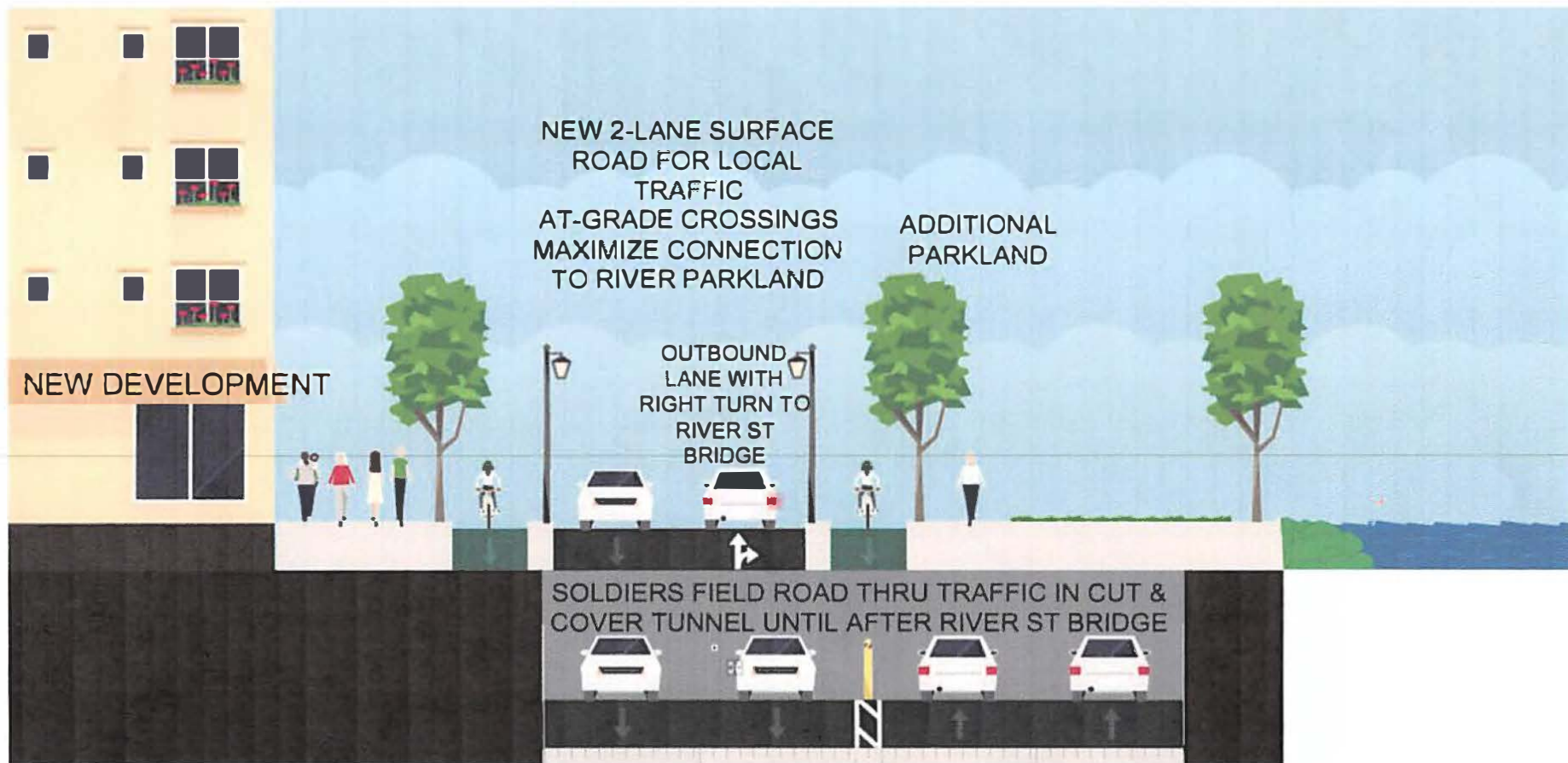


CUT/COVER PROPOSAL

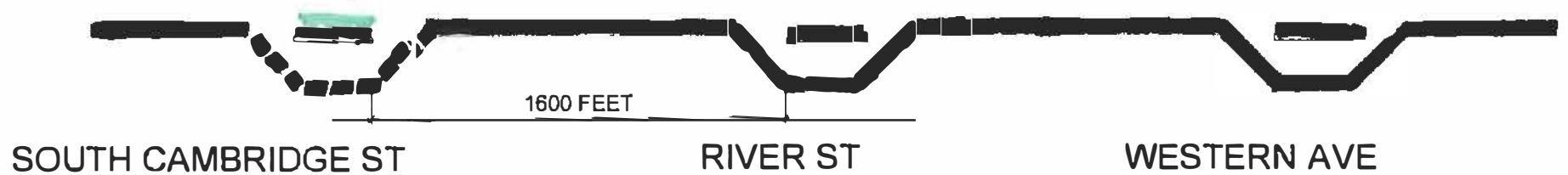


CURRENT MASSDOT PLAN





THREE UNDERPASSES (MASSDOT PROPOSAL)



TWO UNDERPASSES + 1600' ADDITIONAL DECKING



NOT TO SCALE



**GREAT RIVER ROAD IN ASSEMBLY SQUARE, SOMERVILLE
TWO LANE, LOW VOLUME ROAD
MYSTIC RIVER IS WELL-CONNECTED TO ADJACENT
DEVELOPMENT. CONTRAST TO SOLDIERS FIELD ROAD.**



TODAY'S 60' WIDE 4-LANE, SOLDIERS FIELD ROAD

From: Peter Leis <peteleis@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 3:33 PM

To: Strysky, Alexander (EEA)

Cc: projects@livablestreets.info

Subject: I-90 Plans: WE CAN DO BETTER

Secretary Matthew Beaton,
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Attn: MEPA Office
Alexander Strysky, EEA#15278
100 Cambridge St., #900, Boston MA 02114
alexander.strysky@state.ma.us
cc projects@livablestreets.info

Dear Secretary Beaton,

Regarding the I-90 Interchange rebuild, please seriously consider these key points:

-
- **MULTI**
- **MODEL Transit should be a priority.**
- We need West Station now, not in 22 years, as a construction mitigation measure and to ensure transit-oriented development. PLEIS-1
-
-
- **Don't**
- **build the viaduct.** A surface
- option will save millions of dollars, be more practical, and maintain opportunities for multimodal connections to and from the river. PLEIS-2
-
-
-
- **We**
- **need better accommodations for walking and biking along the Charles River.** PLEIS-3
- **Check**
- **out WalkBoston's proposal to #UnchokeTheThroat!**
-
-
- **Design**
- **a network of safe, human-scaled streets**
- in the proposed new neighborhood. PLEIS-4
-
-
- Create
- REAL, safe, connection
- **for pedestrians and bikes from**
- Allston Village/Cambridge St to the river as well as from Babcock St. PLEIS-5
-
-
- **Enable**
- rail and bike traffic on the rail spur to Kendall PLEIS-6

- Square.
-

The reconstruction of the Mass Pike in Allston will define our region for decades to come. There must be major transformations of Massachusetts' transportation system to make it far more climate-friendly, socially equitable, and suited to the 21st century economy, and Allston must show a bold commitment to these changes. Unfortunately, the project as currently proposed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) fails to do so. **I therefore ask that you require MassDOT to submit a Supplemental DEIR to address these deficiencies and study the items described below.**

Under the Global Warming Solutions Act, Massachusetts must cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 25% below 1990 emissions levels by 2020 and at least an 80% reduction by 2050. I appreciate that in 2017 you and MassDOT Secretary Pollack held a series of listening sessions to discuss reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. While the Allston DEIR is an improvement over the existing dreadful conditions, it recreates an outdated 20th-century car-centered transportation system incompatible with such a reduction in emissions. PLEIS-7

The DEIR is also inconsistent with the City of Boston's Imagine Boston 2030 and Go Boston 2030 plans and the Boston Planning and Redevelopment Agency's I-90 Allston Placemaking Study. While it is commendable that the MBTA is in the process of launching a Commuter Rail Vision Study, it is unacceptable that MassDOT's Allston DEIR perpetuates out-dating thinking (using valuable acres of urban land for rail layup) while it should instead support better mid-day service, construction of West Station in the first phase, and steps to move forward with passenger service on the Grand Junction. PLEIS-8 PLEIS-9-11

What the Allston I-90 must do is create a 21st-century network of transit by bus, rail, and bike that also dramatically improves active transportation in the Charles River Parklands. I ask that you require MassDOT to submit a Supplemental DEIR to address these issues:

- 1.
2. Build
3. West Station with two-track service in the first phase of the project PLEIS-12
- 4.
- 5.
6. Rebuild
7. the highway at-grade in the "throat" using the A Better City (ABC) concept PLEIS-13
- 8.

9.

10. Reduce

11. the number of lanes in streets throughout the proposed urban grid to create a PLEIS-14
safer environment more conducive to walking and biking.

12.

13.

14. Study

15. how separate paths for biking and walking can be provided in the entire section of
Charles River Parkland from the River Street Bridge to the BU Bridge, including PLEIS-15
the "throat", for all viaduct and at-grade options. This study should include
consideration of

16. a boardwalk (both temporarily during construction and as a permanent structure)
and the use of fill, and how to mitigate impacts on the river by restoring today's PLEIS-16
degraded bank into a "living shoreline" of native vegetation. Consider how this can
be done both

17. as part of the I-90 project or in a subsequent project.

18.

19.

20. Construct

PLEIS-17

21. new footbridges near Agganis Way and Amory Street that cross over the highway
and link Commonwealth Ave in Boston and Brookline to the Charles River
parkland to further encourage commutes by bike.

22.

23.

24. Introduce

25. new North-South bus routes that cross over the highway and connect North
Allston and Commonwealth Ave, and by extension Harvard Square and
Longwood. PLEIS-18
26.
27.
28. Fully
29. evaluate the possibility of shifting the rail lines away from the abutting homes and
creating an at-grade, off-road walk/bike path from the Regina Pizzeria end of PLEIS-19
Harvard Ave to West Station and over the at-grade highway to the Charles River.
A simple barrier
30. wall is insufficient mitigation for the Environmental Justice community that is so PLEIS-20
heavily burdened by the air pollution, noise pollution, and vibration impacts of the
highway and rail.
31.
32.
33. Study
34. how to upgrade the Grand Junction railroad linking West Station, Kendall Sq. and
North Station, and enhance the Grand Junction Bridge to become a walk/bike PLEIS-21
connection between the Charles River parkland in Cambridge and Boston.
35.
36.
37. Evaluate
38. increasing off-peak commuter rail service between Worcester and Boston— PLEIS-22
obviating the need to build a layover area to store idle trains in Allston.
- 39.

Let's take this epic opportunity to improve our living conditions, not replat 1950's highway mentality!

Sincerely,

Peter Leis

78 North Beacon St,

Allston, MA 02134

P.S. Much thanks to The People's Pike and LivableStreets for the great work bringing a welcome perspective to this conversation.

--

Peter G. Leis

617-302-6896

www.linkedin.com/in/peteleis

From: Peter Munkenbeck <peter@munkenbeck.com>
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 5:10:09 PM
To: Strysky, Alexander (EEA)
Subject: I 90 options

Dear Mr. Strysky

As a bike commuter from Newton and now West Cambridge to Downtown, I have cycled beside Storrow Drive for 31 years -- about 9,000 times -- and each time I wonder how many more people would do it and how much safer and pleasant it would be if the stretch from the Doubletree to the BU bridge underpass (overshadowed by the elevated Turnpike and sandwiched between the steep bank and the guard rail) were wider, quieter and better exposed to the sky like the rest of the journey.

Also, I am a frequent cyclist through and around Allston, forced to use detours and cross and recross the highway on steep, makeshift bridges with narrow sidewalks and metal guard rails.

I urge you to reframe the approach MassDOT takes to integrating all of the modes of transit through and around the I-90 project area so that future residents and visitors find it accessible and enjoyable.

- Most important, widening the paths along the Charles and protecting them with landscaping is critical to this result. PMUN-1
- Next, making it possible to access the river at points between the River Street Bridge and the 'BU Beach' -- almost 2 miles of uninterrupted highway barrier. PMUN-2
- And also improving the connections between the 'yards' development and the neighborhood along the Brighton Ave/Comm Ave corridor. The Cambridge Street overpass to Harvard Ave is circuitous and high altitude; very hard on pedestrians and bikes, and there is nothing else east of Everett St. PMUN-3

We only get one shot at this. Once the \$1 Billion is spent, we will all be in our graves before this gets thought of again. Please help us get this right.

Thank you,
Peter Munkenbeck



PIONEER INSTITUTE

PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

February 9, 2018

Secretary Matthew A. Beaton
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Attn: MEPA Office
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

RECEIVED

FEB 12 2018

MEPA

RE: Comments on DEIR Allston I-90 Interchange Project

Dear Secretary Beaton,

As a daily Boston commuter from the western suburbs, I have serious concerns about the impact the I-90 Allston Interchange Project will have on commuters from the west, particularly in regard to the increased traffic congestion during the construction phase and the delays the project will cause on the Worcester Commuter Rail line.

The schematics in Chapter 5 of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) indicate that during a significant portion of the project, the Massachusetts Turnpike in the area of construction will be decreased to three lanes in each direction and that the Worcester Commuter Rail line will operate on a single track causing mainline track speed reduction and possible weekend closures.

PI-1

PI-2

I am requesting that you consider having MEPA require the preparation of a Supplemental DEIR dealing with these concerns, so that the public along the turnpike/ Worcester branch corridor will have a reasonable chance to review a comprehensive document, and comment. Given the magnitude of the project, such transparency is of the utmost importance. Additionally, hearings on the DEIR were held in Brookline, Cambridge and Allston. Public hearings on the Supplemental DEIR should be held in MetroWest and Worcester so residents of those areas have ample opportunity to share their concerns on a project that will profound impact their daily lives.

Regards,

Mary Z. Connaughton
Director of Government Transparency

From: Priscilla Anderson <pa32bus@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 8:59:18 PM
To: Strysky, Alexander (EEA)
Subject: MassPike project (11/30 MassDOT DEIR)

From:
Priscilla Anderson
30 Windom Street
Allston MA 02134
617-312-8040
pa32bus@gmail.com

To:
Matthew Beaton, Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge St Suite 900
alexander.strysky@state.ma.us
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
Boston MA 02114
Attn: MEPA Office
Alex Strysky, EEA # 15278

Dear Matthew Beaton,

I'd like to submit comments on the proposed MassPike reconstruction proposal described by MassDOT's November 30th Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) .

My family of three has owned the single-family home at #30 Windom Street for 15 years. All three of us walk or bike to work/school every day. These modes are the quickest and most hassle-free ways to get where we need to go. We own one car that we only use a few times a week to get groceries or visit people in other cities.

I understand and support the need to replace the aging MassPike aqueduct, and take the opportunity to straighten the Mass Pike and modernize the Allston/Brighton interchange. I think it is in Boston's best interest to harmonize the new design with the strengths of the existing adjacent North Allston neighborhood. To me, some of those strengths are:

- Convenient access to the Mass Pike, Storrow Drive, and Memorial Drive
- Abutting the Charles River, which enriches the lives of anyone who lives, walks, bikes, boats, or drives along it. The Charles is a jewel in Boston's crown, and needs to be used, preserved, and celebrated to continue enhancing Boston's stature and quality of life.
- Our family-friendly, quiet, safe, tightly knit, diverse neighborhood. Many of my neighbors inherited their homes, and hope to pass them on to their kids. Our tight neighborhood fabric keeps our neighbors safe, connected, and friendly. We need local jobs and neighborhood design that promotes these values.

In order for the city of Boston and the surrounding urban area to benefit from and support these neighborhood strengths, I ask you to support the following concepts to be factored into MassPike plans:

- More transit-oriented design would facilitate long-and short-term energy-efficiency in Harvard University's new development. This requires regional cooperation and funding, and now is the time to pursue that.

PA-1

- Prioritize construction of West Station in phase 1 to encourage mass transit to bring workers and new residents into our neighborhood, not cars PA-2
- Connect Commonwealth Ave to North Allston near West Station at the very least by bike/footbridges, and preferably by transit crossings as well (buses/shuttles). PA-3
- Connect West Station to Grand Junction (and Boston to Cambridge by a local rail service). PA-4
- Increase/redesign MBTA bus service through North Allston. I ride the 66, 86, 70 and 70A buses and find them crowded and unreliable. PA-5
- Enhance, not restrict access to and enjoyment of Charles River Parkland PA-6
 - None of the proposed MassDOT options widens "The Throat" to allow safe and aesthetically integrated non-vehicular uses (walking, biking, and enjoyment of nature). I support the WalkBoston proposals found here that widen the Throat: <http://www.thecharles.org/advocacy-center/i-90/>
 - Landscaping should maximize shade trees to provide cooling and oxygen as well as stabilize the riverbank against erosion
- Streets should be designed for pedestrian and cyclist safety. PA-7
 - Maximum of four car lanes for interchange roads and the adjacent grid
 - Incorporate protected bike lanes and shaded sidewalks to enable safe and comfortable non-vehicle
 - Minimize curb cuts and left turns along bike routes.
 - Redesign Cambridge Street and Western Ave intersections with Storrow Drive to improve walkability and bikability, and preserve access to the Dudley White path.
- Street design should minimize cut-through traffic on residential streets, which currently threatens our neighborhood's safety and quality of life PA-8
 - Bring Cambridge Street to grade as soon as possible to facilitate construction of a grid of roads to relieve cut-through traffic on Windom Street.
 - Minimize stoplights and left turns on East Drive to encourage through-traffic to choose that route.
- Any parking lots should also be parks...with rows of trees planted in between the rows of cars to provide oxygen, shade, snow, and storm water management. PA-9

If MassDOT continues with the narrow scope of the existing proposal, not only will a window of opportunity be closed, but harm will occur to our neighborhood and to the city of Boston by preventing us from becoming a multi-modal, transit-oriented community. We will continue to lose businesses and jobs because there's not enough foot traffic (which would naturally occur with a more public-transited oriented design). In twenty years, the car culture we now suffer will be transformed, and we are right now in a position to influence what the new culture will look like. This will position North Allston to be a successful model for future development.

Procedurally, I'd like to ask MassDOT to provide a clear summary of distinct phases of construction for the North Allston neighborhood integrating the MassPike plans with Western Ave/Cambridge St bridge renovations and Harvard's plans. The evolution of the street system is particularly difficult to envision in the near, mid- and long-term. Many community conversations are stalled because we are talking about different phases and think PA-10

they conflict, but they will be happening at different times. We need a timeline with street maps at each distinct phase.

I'd also like to request that air quality and noise pollution studies be done at each phase to mitigate unintended but substantial health risks associated with nearby construction as well as dense development.

PA-11
PA-12

Thank you for reading my comments.

Sincerely,
Priscilla Anderson

From: [Randall Albright](#)
To: [Strycky, Alexander \(EEA\)](#)
Subject: Allston I-90 DEIR
Date: Friday, February 09, 2018 10:54:13 AM

Dear MassDOT:

I am writing to you now as a 37-year resident and committed citizen of both the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I am submitting these comments in response to the I-90 Allston DEIR.

The I-90 Interchange project affords a golden opportunity to change greater Boston for the better. We should proceed with this in the smartest way possible. Let us not be guided by what is cheap. These sorts of opportunities emerge rarely in the life of a city - maybe once or twice in a century. We need to take full advantage of everything we can leverage here. This may sound like “visionary” thinking to you, but I assure you that I am speaking in practical terms. We can create enormous long-term value here. We must leverage these opportunities to the fullest, and not squander them in the name of financial saving in the short term.

1. We absolutely need West Station. There is nothing “visionary” about this. It is a necessary. West Station opens the way both to quick gains and long-term transportation innovation. West Station need not be luxurious, but it does need to be designed to accommodate further innovative developments in public transportation, by both rail and bus. This entire area is densely populated and rapidly expanding both in terms of population and as an engine of regional economic growth. West Station will surely become a transportation hub as well as a catalyst for further economic development. This is a must-do project.

RHA-1

2. Both the Fenway and the LMA areas are burgeoning with development, and there’s no end in sight. The I-90 Allston Interchange affords us an opportunity to channel traffic directly from the eastbound lanes of the Mass Turnpike to Audubon Circle, the LMA, and The West Fenway. I think we should implement “temporary” ramps connecting the eastbound Turnpike either to Mountfort St. or to Beacon St. That would provide great relief to the Allston interchange connections that connect the Turnpike to Soldier’s Field Road. It strikes me as crazy that people exit from the Turnpike eastbound through that congested Allston interchange, and then enter Storrow Drive eastbound in order to get to the LMA area. Now is a time to develop rational alternatives.

RHA-2

3. This is a golden opportunity for “the people” of greater Boston to take back our parkland along the Charles. I propose that we “unchoke the throat” moving Storrow Drive roadway inland, away from the river. I also support a “People’s Pike” pedestrian/bike connection from Allston to the Charles River. The I-90

RHA-3

Allston Interchange is a transportation project, but it is also an exercise in civic design. Increased access to paths along the river for both pedestrian and bicyclists will displace significant amounts of traffic on our roadways.

If we do this correctly, the I-90 Allston Interchange project can be truly transformative – with effects in the metropolitan area not unlike the filling of the Back Bay. These opportunities are being handed to us. Let's leverage them to the fullest. Please think of this as a long-term investment. The payoffs can be enormous if we do this correctly. So please, let's do this right. Future generations will applaud your actions.

Randall H. Albright

[423 Marlborough St., #3](#)

[Boston, MA 02115](#)

[617-947-0402](#)

From: Richard Rogers <richard@yourfavorite.com>
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 4:24 PM
To: Strysky, Alexander (EEA)
Cc: Jason Desrosier; victoria@yourfavorite.com
Subject: West Station Rail Link, All At Grade Turnpike, River Access

Secretary Matthew Beaton,
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Attn: MEPA Office
Alexander Strysky, EEA#15278
100 Cambridge St., #900, Boston MA 02114
alexander.strysky@state.ma.us

Dear Secretary Beaton,

As a 28 year resident of Boston, and 15 year homeowner in Lower Allston, I was shocked to find the new Turnpike plan did not include a usable West Station in my lifetime.

Because of the potential for this project as a whole to be transformative in such a positive way, and with a completely new, undeveloped neighborhood on the horizon coming from the land to be made available from this Turnpike straightening, this project should focus around the construction of West Station first.

It would be better to restrict weight limits on the viaduct when it reaches end of life, than to proceed with a project that does not include West Station and river access as the focus.

Harvard has pledged to pay half of the construction for a new West Station, even with a \$100M price tag. Every year that goes by without building the station, it will become more and more expensive to construct.

Without having a rail option early, all of the buildings and developments in the new neighborhood will be centered around the car and the streets. Having a viable transportation for the neighborhood now, will spur much more sustainable developments in the future.

Driving on the Mass Pike, I can get from my house on Royal Street in Lower Allston to Back Bay Station by car in about 10 minutes, but to take the T the journey is 1 hour. Totally unacceptable for a world-class city. Allston has been cut off for too many years and it is ready to grow, but has no viable transit options.

The Turnpike viaduct is in desperate need of replacement, and the very best option is the 'all at grade' design. This may involve selecting the most expensive construction option initially, but the ongoing maintenance is less, making it the best option overall for all taxpayers.

The urgency of these projects sometimes overwhelms good judgement when selecting the solution. The at grade option also allows for less noise, looks better, and allows for future air rights developments which will further reduce noise and emissions. Thoughtful, air rights developments in the future can help to bridge and connect the neighborhoods better.

It seems obvious that West Station is necessary. It also seems the obvious choice to make our river accessible to bikes and pedestrians. With so much money on the table for a project of this magnitude, and the entire future of a new neighborhood and an old neighborhood, let's not sell out the future based on short term numbers.

If needed, any one of these solutions would be better than postponing West Station:

- Take more time to fully fund the project, and restrict weight on the old Pike viaduct.
- Use private investors and ask for people to step up, or to plan a development that would benefit from the station in exchange for some funding.
- Find a way to use the Federal Highway dollars towards the transit, rather than keeping the budgets separated.
- Bundle certain components of West Station's construction into the Turnpike budget
- Put in a basic station, with poured concrete, rather than building a masterpiece at a lower up-front cost.

In conclusion, including West Station early, increasing river access on foot and by bike, and an at grade Turnpike, without an elevated element, should be included in the project, period.

RROG-1
RROG-2
RROG-3

Sincerely,

Richard Rogers
47 Royal Street
Allston, MA 02134

From: Skip Burck <skip@richardburck.com>

Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 3:08 PM

To: Strysky, Alexander (EEA)

Subject: Allston Landing DEIR letter

February 9, 2018

Secretary Matthew A. Beaton

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Attn: MEPA Office

100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900

Boston, MA 02114

Alexander Strysky, EEA#15278

alexander.strysky@state.ma.us

Dear Secretary Beaton,

As an interested landscape architect I'd like to make two comments on the DEIR for the Allston Landing project as the proposed work falls alongside a National Historic Register open space of considerable significance.

The first comment is that I am in strong support of the ABC proposed at-grade solution for the turnpike.

My second point and key interest is this: Boston Planning & Development Agency's urban design consultant, Steve Cecil, has stated publicly that open space within the Allston Landing district would end up being approximately 20% of developable land. This percentage is in keeping with other metrics of open space such as the BOSTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT'S OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN, 2015-2021, which measures open-space area based on the number of local residents.

In working with my colleagues on the attached A VISION FOR ALLSTON LANDING - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, we are proposing open-space improvements of approximately 20%, consistent with the norms stated above. Yet we have recently heard critiques of the 20% open-space target questioning who is going to pay for it. In my professional opinion, the amount of total open space in the redevelopment of Allston Landing should not be cast as a budget issue at this time. The question of which entities might pay for the proposed amount of open space will not affect the amount of open space proposed and should not be described as a weakness in any scheme that looks to organize open space as a system of infrastructure in its own right.

Rather than piecemeal, fractured development of parcelized open space, we are strongly recommending that the open space takes the form of a cohesive open-space infrastructure system. It's not an issue of quantity of open space – it's an issue of organization of open space, and to be clear, this is a Phase I critical design issue which must be resolved early in the design process as certain initial roadway reconstruction schemes would preclude the proposed open-space infrastructure concept from happening in the future. The Soldiers Field Road alignment and how it allows a safe connection to the People's Pike are both key, initial design considerations. The design of I-90 / Beacon Yards needs to accommodate an organized open space infrastructure system that the current alternatives would make impossible.

Yours truly,

Richard Skip Burck, FASLA, FAAR

Richard Burck Associates, Inc

7 Davis Square

Somerville, MA 02144

617 623-2300

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A VISION For ALLSTON LANDING

...From the RIVER'S POINT of VIEW...

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE ALLSTON LANDING DESIGN TEAM

February 5, 2018



There are moments in the history of a city when decisive, integrated actions, regarding urban form, infrastructure and the natural environment, if taken, can lead to immediate and long term benefits to the city and its inhabitants.

Now is such a time for Boston's Allston Landing.

To not act boldly and critically with regard to what is possible in this district will be remembered by future generations as at best a lost opportunity and more damningly as a failure of civic imagination.



Let's enhance the river experience for all

Preface

Over the past 3 years, many organizations and individuals have shared their thoughts, ideas and dreams about how to best redevelop the former Beacon Yards, an area that occupies nearly 3/4 mile of riverfront along the Charles.

The I-90 Allston Interchange Improvement Project began as a straight-forward, but complicated, transportation reconstruction initiative. It has been much improved through strong input from Harvard University, continuous citizen involvement, a Boston Society of Architects charrette, academic studio investigations, proposals from advocates for affordable housing development and bike/pedestrian access, and a place-making study by the Boston Planning and Development Agency.

This Allston Landing visioning effort, however, is the first attempt to integrate the recommendations and desires of all involved into a workable, holistic vision for this site, uniquely placed in the center of our urban area and along the very special urban Charles River.

This vision describes how a set of agreed upon design principles and four core open space elements combine to create an interconnected open space framework that can organize the entire site, while fulfilling fundamental design principles. It concludes with five specific requests to Harvard and MassDOT to take the lead in fulfilling the Vision.

This Vision looks at the whole of this development from the perspective of the River, its flora and fauna... its parklands and the open space connections to the surrounding community. It's a good start, but it needs to be followed up with an officially sponsored Master Plan for the area, ideally in an open public/private partnership.

The Charles River Basin is our most integrating and orienting urban open space resource. The state, in concert with the owner, Harvard University, will be making decisions over the next few months that will set the boundaries of this river's potential to serve this urban area for the next one hundred years.

Through circumstance, the Phase One I-90 renewal project has not fully investigated the opportunities that this site offers for both environmental improvement and open space enhancement.

This central part of our Boston region deserves an intelligent, inclusive and comprehensive plan now!
CAN THIS VISION BEGIN THAT PROCESS?

Building on the work of many others, a set of core design principles form the foundation stones of this Vision:

1. To balance environmental, transportation and community objectives with open space goals through integrated planning and design.
2. To increase economic benefit for all concerned: the landowner, investors, neighbors, abutting universities and the general public.
3. To organize this new waterside community around a safe, pleasant and inviting open space infrastructure of enhanced regional pathways and strong local connections leading to large, destination, open space features
4. To build safe transit, pedestrian and biking connections to the adjacent neighborhoods.
5. To be guided and shaped by progressive urban design objectives:
 - Enhanced social, recreational, pedestrian, bike transit, fitness and river use
 - Eco-habitats for a variety of native wildlife
 - Transit-oriented development
 - Mixed-income neighborhoods with walk-to-work and walk-to-school opportunities
 - Climate change protection and resiliency against water-level rise and storm surges
 - Enrichment of the natural environment and existing neighborhoods
 - "Best Practices", day-lighted stormwater treatment for improved water quality of the river

MAKING THE MOST OF ALLSTON LANDING



From the 19th-century Watertown dam to Boston Harbor, the Charles River winds its way in front of some of the best education and health sciences institutions in the world, along densely packed neighborhoods with sailboats and rowing shells skimming the water's surface, past its bridges, lagoons, and such beloved venues as the Hatch Shell, the Community Boat House and the Boston Museum of Science. The Charles is an attractive, connective ten-mile corridor running through the heart of our urban area.



The Allston Landing Site Today

That is... except for a stretch right in the center...

Gratefully, however, several years ago, Harvard acquired Beacon Yards intending to develop it in the coming decades. In December, MassDOT submitted its Draft Environmental Impact Review for I-90, rail and roadway reconstruction that runs through this area and along the Charles River.

The Allston and Cambridgeport communities have been very involved in this planning effort, as have a number of agencies, not-for-profit interest groups and individuals. Together, they have significantly improved this narrowly focused transportation improvement project.

If the recommendations of these groups are integrated into this transportation upgrade, there will be much better connections between Allston, Boston University, Commonwealth Avenue, Longwood and Brookline, to the south and the river, its parklands and Cambridge to the north.

Working together, beyond the narrow scope of this MassDOT process and this Vision, we can accomplish much to lessen negative impacts and increase enjoyment...

**HOWEVER, TO DO THIS, WE NEED A
COLLABORATIVE and COMPREHENSIVE
MASTER PLAN FOR ALL OF ALLSTON
LANDING**

This Vision, seen from the Charles River's point of view, explores how this transportation project can reach higher to create, enrich and expand waterside parklands, connect them to the Allston, BU and Brookline communities, and make this riverside rejuvenation project a national model for community access, environmental sustainability, transportation convenience, and waterfront vibrancy.

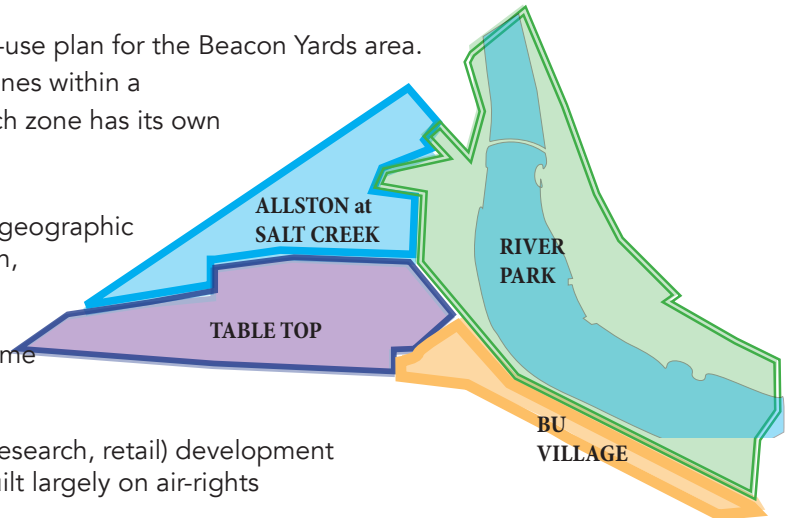


Setting the Open Space Framework...

Conceptual Site Use Program

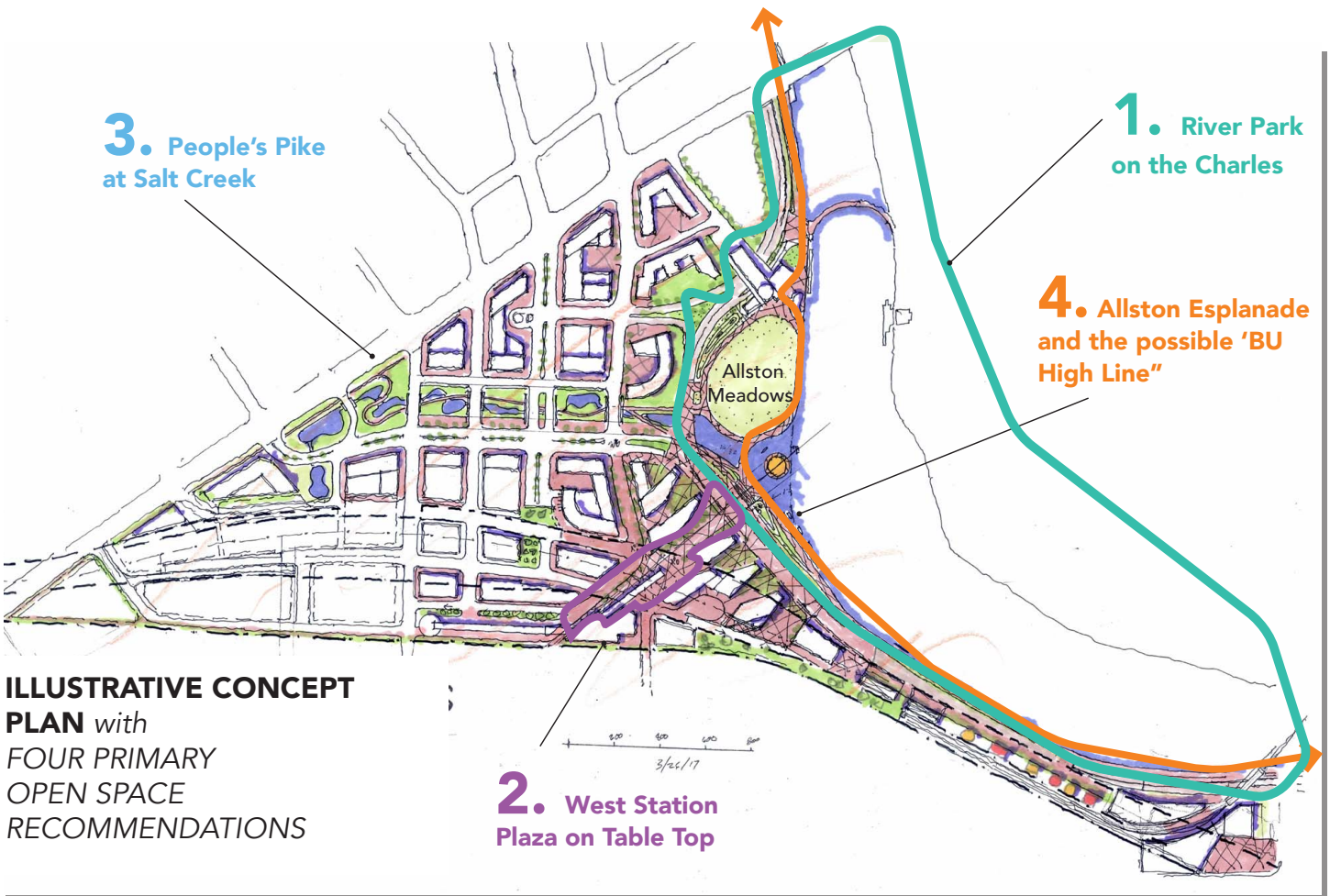
Interconnected open space is at the center of a general-use plan for the Beacon Yards area. Allston Landing is imagined as comprised of four use zones within a transportation-oriented development (TOD district). Each zone has its own characteristics, attributes, and champions.

- **River Park:** A new 'central park' spanning the most geographic and most populous stretch of the the Charles River Basin, including a new park node, Allston Meadows.
- **Allston at Salt Creek:** A new mixed-use, mixed-income residential-retail neighborhood
- **Table Top:** The core mixed-use (commercial, office, research, retail) development centered around West Station Transportation Center, built largely on air-rights
- **BU River Village (air rights):** Potential air-rights development in the narrow Throat area, accessible from BU and Commonwealth Avenue



Four core Open Space Elements

In addition to pedestrian/bike paths, neighborhood parks and playgrounds, this Vision identifies four critical, interconnected open-space elements that maximize river access to boating and activity nodes along the river.



River Park on the Charles

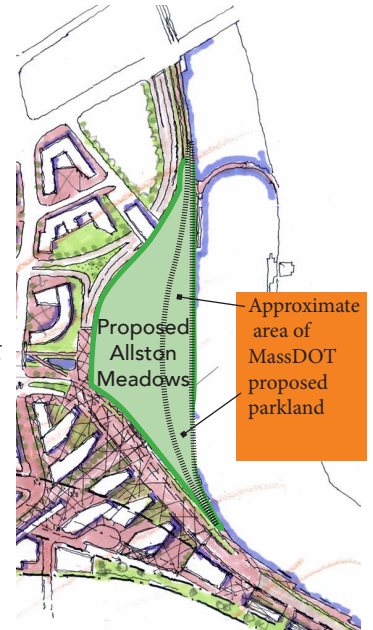
In this Vision, a new 6-acre park node in Allston, (Allston Meadows), coupled with Magazine Beach across the Charles, engages the river with its neighborhoods in new ways, both on the water and along its banks, creating a new central, destination river park sited in both Cambridge and Allston.

As shown, Allston Meadows could include a large grassy field for picnics, events and recreation; a quiet cove at the mouth of the reopened and restored Salt Creek providing additional turning space for rowing events; a performance ring with a grand staircase/seating to West Station Plaza, a year-round restaurant/activity space at the water's edge, a ferry landing with docks, a segment of a replanted and expanded Allston Esplanade, and convenient pedestrian connections from all of the above to Boston University and Commonwealth Avenue.



**Looking west, (above) and
a birdseye over Cambridgeport (below)**

*Allston Meadows can
be wide enough and
large enough to support
a wide variety of land
and water activities for
people throughout the
Region!*



**Allston Meadows nearly triples
the width and size of parkland proposed in this area**



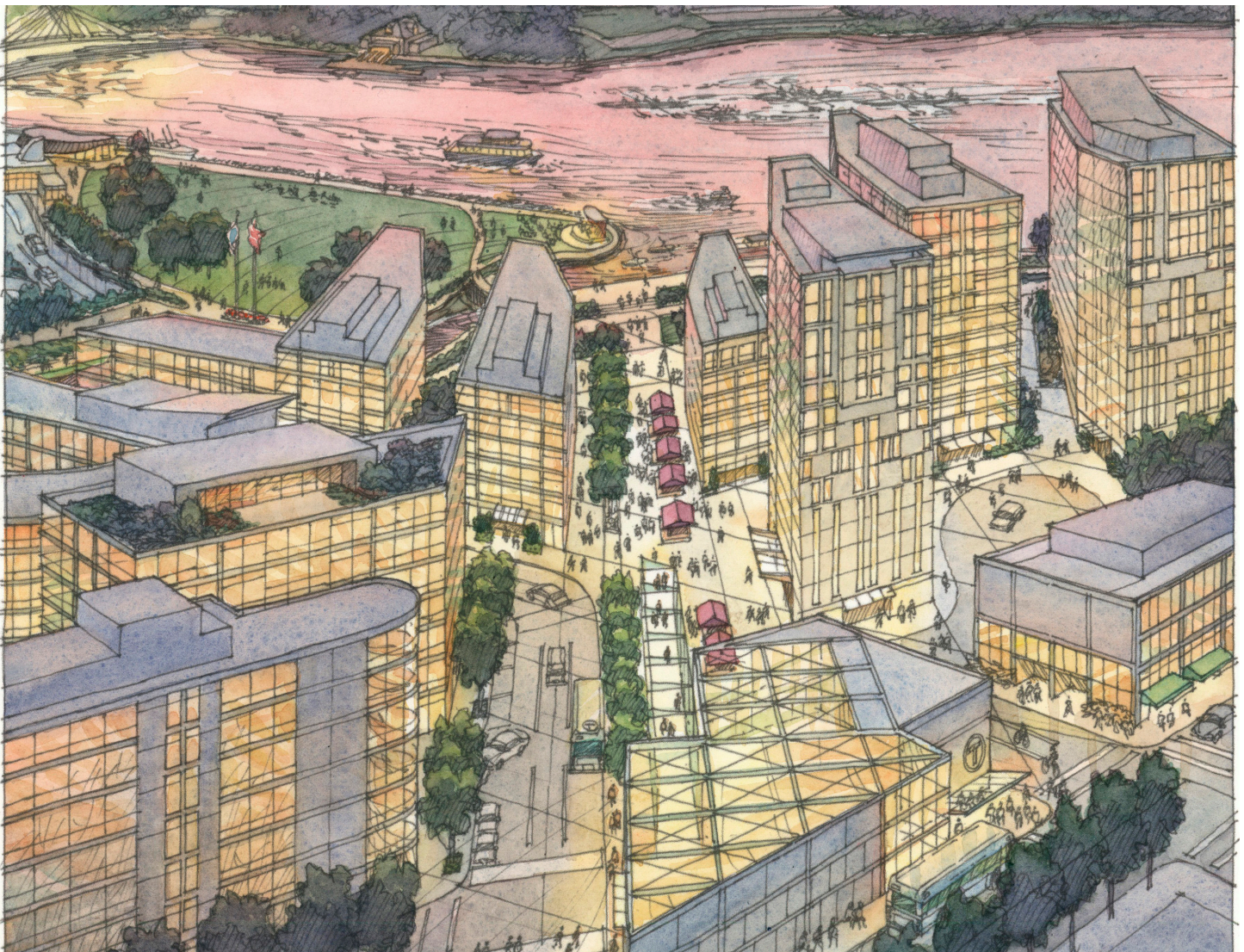
next, create exciting New Ways to the River...

Via West Station Plaza ...

This Vision proposes that West Station be built as a major transportation hub with intercity Commuter Rail and local light rail serving North, South and Back Bay stations, bus and taxi service to points in Cambridge, Allston, Longwood and Brookline, and a seasonal, no-wake river ferry along the Charles.

The lively West Station Plaza provides a direct connection to Cambridge, Boston, Harvard, BU and MIT via an attractive bridge plaza over the rail and roadways (like Harvard's Plaza over the Broadway underpass linking the Science Center with Harvard Yard) and leading down to the river as a large, well-used riverside park node for events, festivals, art displays, food trucks, or simple pedestrian accessways.

As the core of a Transit-Oriented District (TOD), the West Station transit hub, West Station Plaza, and the critical foundations supporting air rights should be built as a Phase One priority. Ultimately, development buildout and the required air rights structure would be the responsibility of private initiatives, similar to the process by which Copley Place was built above the Turnpike and its interchange ramps.



Heading home at the end of a busy day

Along Salt Creek Park...

Based on conversations with the Charles River Watershed Association, as a major environmental enhancement of the Charles River's water quality, this park uncovers and reroutes Salt Creek, currently buried in a century-old underground viaduct. It proposes a day-lighted stormwater mitigation and treatment facility, similar to one recently completed at Alewife Brook. Overlaying this is the Allston neighborhood's long-sought "People's Pike," a network of safe, generous bike and pedestrian pathways connecting Allston to the river, potentially grade-separated from vehicular traffic.

Along this open space spine in this low-lying part of the site, the owner, Harvard University, can create one of the nation's most diverse and environmentally sustainable mixed-use communities by incorporating 'best use' practices across all of its social, physical and environmental aspects.



Salt Creek Park weaves resiliency, storm water treatment, bike and walking paths and lounging areas together.

and especially ... enliven the River's edge

The Allston Esplanade

The Allston Esplanade can provide a lush greensward for the Paul Dudley White Bikeway. However, today, three areas pose significant challenges.

The Throat

This Vision urges reconstruction of roadways and railways at-grade, for reasons of cost, social and environmental impact, and development flexibility. Of the three options to be submitted in the DEIR, the **abc alternative** is judged preferable.

However, even when all other width dimensions are held to a minimum, less than 9 feet of width remains for parkland, even though 40 feet is the minimum width required for dedicated and separated bike and strolling lanes, landscaped buffer/rain gardens at the highway's edge, along with wildlife habitats and intermittent docks at the water's edge.

Given the narrowness of this part of the site, only two solutions would yield a generous, pleasant, safe park movement corridor for bikers and strollers through this area:

Alternative A- Expanding parkland into the river. This configuration, while ultimately the least costly to build and maintain, could delay the project. It would also impact the river environment, but ultimately could enrich the riverbanks for both wildlife and boaters.

Alternative B- A "High Line" styled belvedere above the highway. It would cost more than Alt 'A', but much less than an elevated 8 lane turnpike; however, it would minimize river impacts, provide better noise mitigation, and promote connectivity and air-rights development across this narrow neck.

NOTE: Both schemes would incorporate well-built, well-landscaped, full-height sound walls to reduce highway and railway noise, as does the sound wall along the Thomas J. Butler Freight Corridor and Memorial Park in South Boston.



Alt A

By expanding into the river in this wide segment, one gains a better engineered wildlife interface, a public promenade at the river's edge. Seating and native landscaping, a dedicated bike-way and a day-lighted stormwater treatment corridor at lower cost than with other schemes. Fill might come from selective dredging of the Basin to improve boat movement



Alt B

Staying out of the river completely requires an elevated promenade above Soldiers Field Road. This allows for future BU air-rights development. In the future, an over-the-water walkway (similar to that found at Herter Park) would provide waterside access and, if built in Phase one, could provide an area for construction staging and an edge for continuous, day-lighted storm water treatment.

Grand Junction Bridge

This project includes reconstruction of Grand Junction Bridge, for the following reasons:

1. It will upgrade rail service into Cambridge, as a potential rail link from Cambridge to North Station.
2. The existing bridge is old, poorly maintained and in need of significant repair.
3. Both its horizontal and vertical alignments will likely need to shift in order to become a significant new public transitway into Cambridge and North Station.
4. The bridge's present abutments prohibit development of pathways under the BU Bridge that could efficiently extend the Boston Esplanade pathway system upriver along the extensive Paul Dudley White Bikeway that runs the length of the Basin.
5. The reconstruction can eliminate a dangerous 'kink' in the path system by removing the existing narrow 'over-water' pedestrian/bicycle wooden bridge, with its poor sightlines and channel restrictions.

6. Removal of the wooden bridge would make it easier for boats to navigate the BU pier abutments. This should be a major priority for both the DCR and boaters.



***Grand Junction Bridge today (above) and, in the future (below) incorporating park paths.
In this view, the BU Belvedere sits atop the realigned Turn Pike (West bound)***

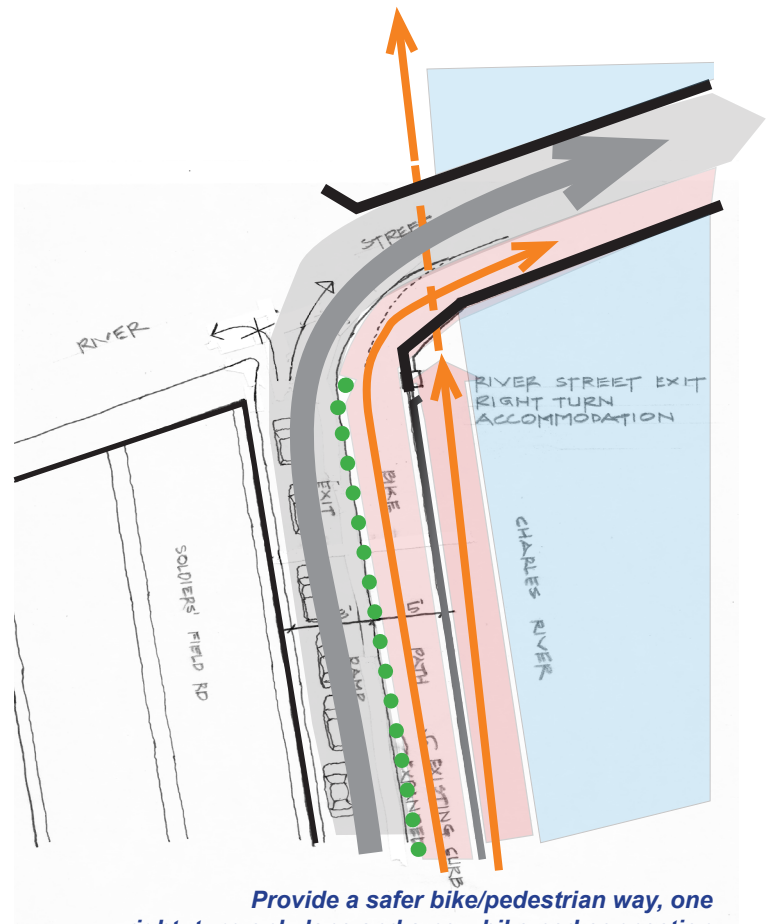


River Street Intersection

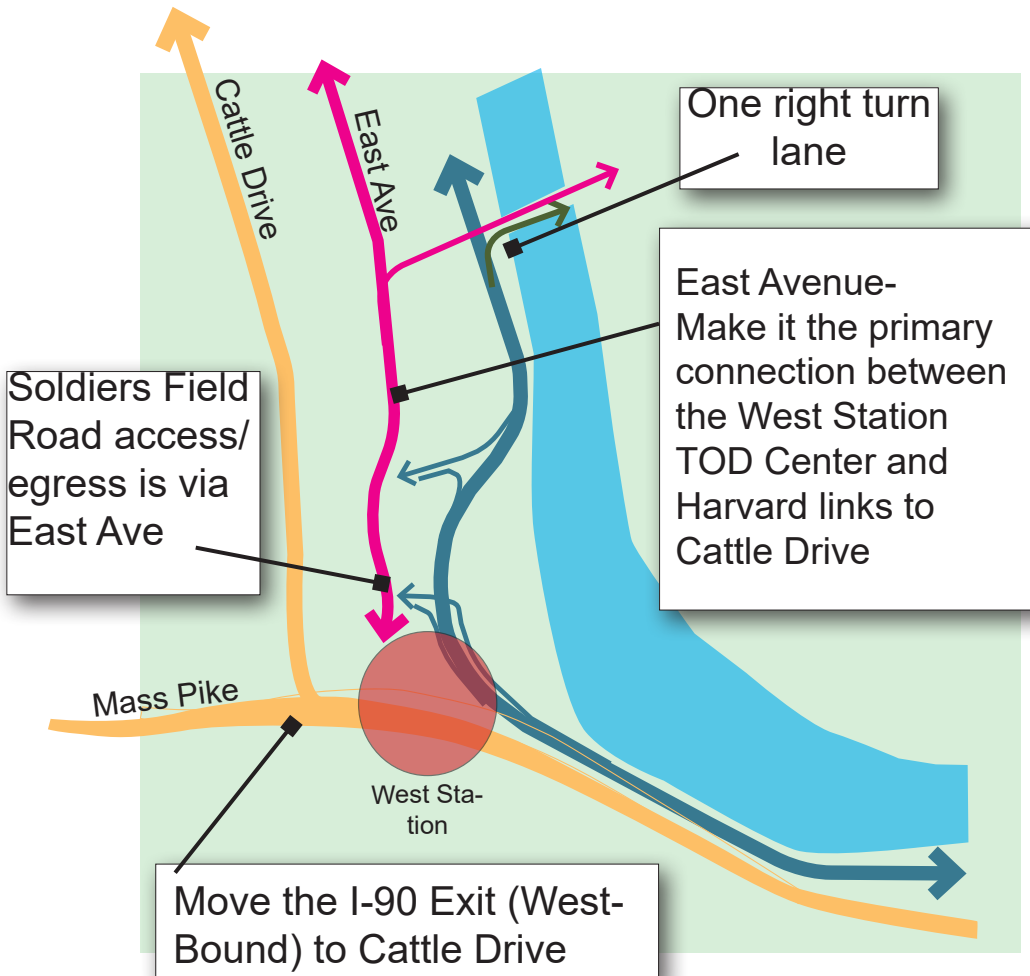
This is one of the Allston Esplanade's most unpleasant and unsafe stretches.

While MassDOT's current recommendation to remove the west-bound off-ramp altogether appeals to bikers and park lovers, this is also a major access point for drivers into Cambridge. Two improvements could ease this situation and allow a single right-turn-only off-ramp to remain:

1. The Charles River Conservancy proposes a bike/pedestrian passage under River Street. Most bikers and pedestrians would then be safely separated from right turning vehicular traffic, thus facilitating these right turn movements for motorists. Since this bridge is in poor repair and in need of reconstruction, this project should dovetail closely with MassDOT's planned Allston I-90 improvements.



Provide a safer bike/pedestrian way, one right-turn-only lane and a new bike ped connection under the River Street Bridge



2. Also, this Vision proposes **not** to make East Avenue an exit route for I-90 westbound, but to reroute that movement to Cattle Drive. This would facilitate traffic circulation off Soldiers Field Road by allowing a safer and easier right-turn, resulting in a shorter drive time, making it more desirable for motorists.

Key Turning Movements

Concluding Thoughts

1. MassDOT Phase One scope should be limited to its core mission, i.e ...

- I-90 reconstructed, (at-grade through the 'Throat'), with only the key interchange roadways built now across the development area
- Two track, through-rail serving South and North Stations
- A new West Station, with full transportation services on air-rights plaza above
- Bus, bike and pedestrian connections to Commonwealth Avenue and into Cambridge
- Bike/footpath improvements at Lincoln Street and River Street Bridge
- Landscaped sound walls adjacent residential areas and parkland.
- First phase stormwater treatment infrastructure

This would allow time for comprehensive and integrated planning and permitting of the entire Allston Landing site and river improvements. Specifically, realignment of Soldiers Field Road west of the 'Throat' and storm water treatment configurations should not be implemented until this process is comprehensively planned

2. We need an officially sponsored comprehensive Infrastructure Master Plan

This plan would finalize the scope, design intent and alignment of all public infrastructure: streets, roadways, transit facilities, parks and open space, bikeways and foot paths, docks and other river-

side impacts. This would greatly facilitate future build-out.

As with the Storrow Drive tunnels at the Hatch Shell, inexpensive, interim repairs to the viaduct can be made to allow time for this more comprehensive approach. It will also provide time for any required permitting regarding the river.

In the meantime, we must find funding for early improvements—e.g., relocation of existing sewer and stormwater lines—to keep options open for a better final result.

3. There's lot's of money to be saved

- The potential savings, both in capital (\$70-100 Million) and lifecycle costs, of an at-grade solution as opposed to an elevated turnpike, can offset many other project's costs.
- The Vision's initial capital costs will be more than offset by its long-term benefits, in terms of the increased attractiveness and economic value of the resulting development parcels, given their disposition along the river, which will contribute to the health and enjoyment of future generations.
- Moreover, shortfalls appears to be modest enough for a strong public/private initiative to close much of the expense gap. There are examples all over the country.

What could still make a difference in Phase One?

With a few key moves, the Phase One, I-90 Improvement Project can set the stage, assuming Harvard and MassDOT 's collaboration, to insure eventual realization of the key components of this Open Space Vision.

1- Realign Soldiers Field Road, much further away from the River than currently proposed, to make room for a broad, new 6+acre, multi-purpose river-side parkland with mitigation as necessary to insulate the park and river from highway impacts, engaging the river and improving the water's edge for boaters

2- Reconsider Stormwater Treatment options- At Salt Creek Park and in the Throat, weave day-lighted, storm water treatment with dedicated bike and foot pathways into a pleasant linear park tapistry, from Allston to and along the river

3- Support early construction of a multi-modal West Station Transportation Center in PHASE ONE and encourage significant TOD development on air-rights around the station and along BU in the 'Throat'

4- Make Allston Esplanade a safe, pleasant and engaging activity corridor the length of the water's edge: in the Throat Area, at Grand Junction Bridge and at River Street

5- Rethink street alignments, connections, scale, hierarchy and well-landscaped pathways to maximize the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) potential around West Station and connections to the river Parklands

MAKING IT HAPPEN ...

1. Think and Plan comprehensively-

The physical form and details of this vision for Allston Landing represents the current understood desires of the community and the various interest groups and stakeholders. It is also based on today's physical and financial realities. While these will evolve over the coming years, the core planning and design principles need not. It is important that development decisions be made in an open and inclusive manner. A well organized master planning process, led by a team free to examine all issues, opportunities and the desires of all interest groups can do this.

This is the largest and most significant development site in the heart of the Boston urban core. It deserves a comprehensive and holistic examination of the issues and opportunities involved in any work proposed impacting the river. This is particularly true regarding the 'Throat', Soldiers Field Road's realignment, storm water treatment strategies. The need for better rail and bus service to serve both the existing community and new development is obvious.

This plan would finalize the scope, design intent and alignment of all public infrastructure: streets, roadways, transit facilities, parks and open space, bikeways and foot paths, docks and other river-side impacts.

As with the Storrow Drive tunnels at the Hatch Shell, inexpensive, interim repairs to the viaduct can be made to allow time for this more comprehensive approach. It will also provide time for any required permitting regarding the river.

The need for a more comprehensive study is well evidenced by a recent analysis by Sasaki Associates of the Throat area, organized by the Charles River Conservancy and WalkBoston and sponsored by the Solomon Fund. It clearly shows that, even in this small part of the site, how there are multiple solutions than better meet everyone's goals than those currently proposed in the DEIR.

2. Establish Phase One priorities-

MassDOT and Harvard have priorities that differ from those of the Allston, Cambridgeport and river-user communities, making a comprehensive and inclusive master plan even more critical. Per the weight of community desires, and given the Phase One funding limitations, this Vision recommends the following items be included in Phase One:

- **Reconstruction of I-90 and mainline railways-** per the less costly 'Throat' configuration, i.e. the **abc all-at-grade solution**, with adequate space provided for future air-rights development the length of the 'Throat'
- **Development of West Station and plaza complex-** This facility would include the open air-rights platform for bus operations and the central plaza leading to the river. Requests for proposals for development of the air rights immediately around the plaza could be issued upon completion of the master plan, thus coordinating initial development.
- **Bus, bike and pedestrian connections to Commonwealth Avenue-** At a minimum this includes a new connecting ramp to Malvern Street and potentially to either Alcorn or Babcock Streets.
- **Sound wall(s)-** Fully landscaped along any abutting residential properties and the riverside parklands
- **Mass Pike Off Ramps-** Make Cattle Drive and **not** East Drive the main exit from I-90 WB and Stadium Way the main exit from Mass Pike EB.
- **Storm water system-** Develop an interim storm water treatment strategy that allows a more innovative, day-lighted storm water solution in the future.

Due to funding constraints, we propose that final construction of three items of the present scope be delayed to a later phase and implemented per the results of the proposed master plan:

- 1. Realignment and reconstruction of Soldiers Fields Road west of the 'Throat'*
- 2. Streets within the development zone that are not critical for MassPike access and egress*
- 3. Essential storm water treatment only*

3. Finding the Funds-

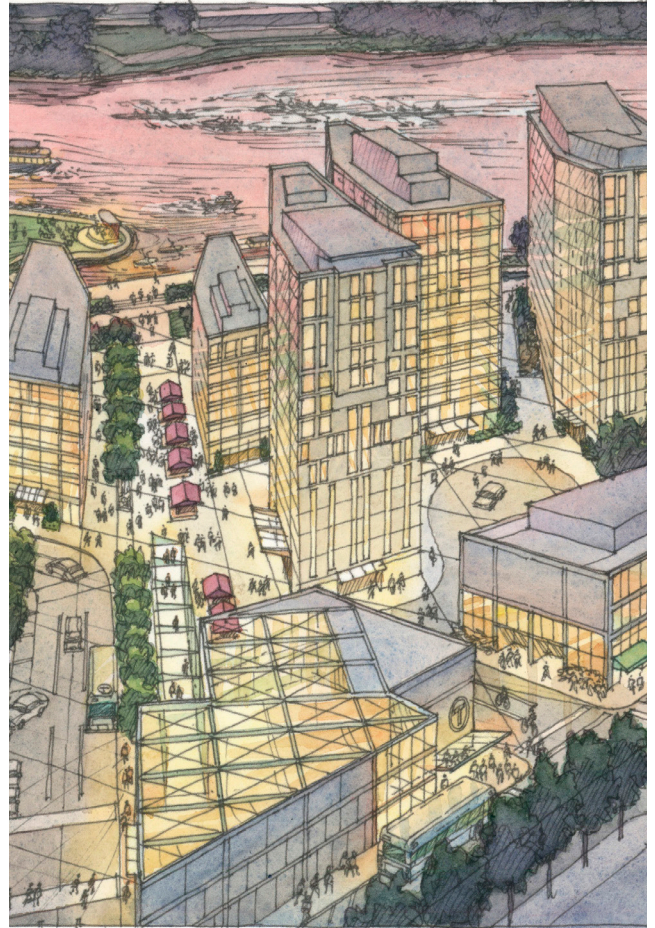
Phase One is narrowly defined as rebuilding I-90 and its interchange as quickly and cheaply as possible. At a minimum, sponsors must be quickly found to fund:

- A comprehensive master planning effort
- Early improvements, e.g. relocation of existing sewer and stormwater lines, in order to keep options open for a better final result

MassDOT prefers the viaduct alternative through the 'Throat', in spite of the fact that its construction is estimated to be \$70 to \$100 million more than the at-grade alternative. The savings by building at-grade (both construction and maintenance) could help fund West Station and bus/bike/pedestrian connections to Commonwealth Avenue.

Moreover, if reconstruction of Soldiers Field Road west of the 'Throat' were delayed until the master plan were complete, additional savings can be realized. By building the minimal internal street grid at this time even more funds can be available. It's a matter of priorities.

We believe that with proper support from the state, a public/private partnership could garner substantial amounts of funds for public park and open space development. Several, similar initiatives are happening all over the country.



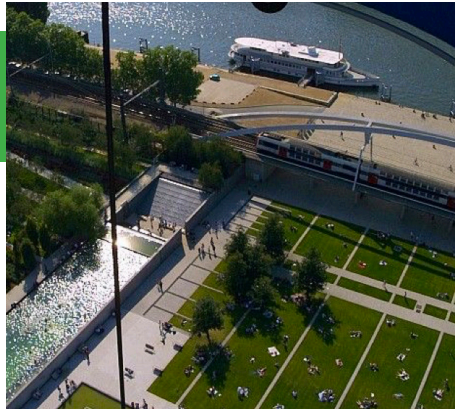
West Station and its core air rights development should be a first priority. Connecting it through parkland down to the river would enhance its economic viability and create year-round vitality.

This report presents sturdy, informed and broad-based evidence for a better solution.

Will the City, or Harvard, or the State, provide the means to help realize the best results – for all of us and the River?

Inspiration from other places

River Park



Paris-Parc Citroen



Zurich, Water's Edge Playground

Salt Creek Park:

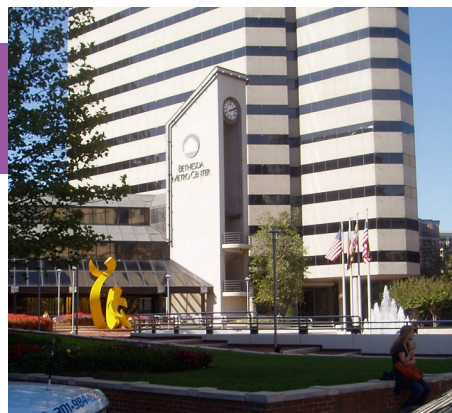


Hamburg- Planten un Blomen



Boston- Muddy River Daylighted

West Station



Bethesda- DC Metro Center



Seattle- Air Rights in Freeway Park

Allston Esplanade



Indianapolis- Canal State Park



Columbus, OH- Scioto Mile Riverway



San Francisco, Yerba Buena Park



Stuttgart- Stadt Park, Beer Festival Tents



Seattle- Olympia Art Park



Paris- Albert Kahn Gardens



Boston- Olmsted's Fenway



Amsterdam, Water Reclamation



San Francisco- Union Square



Boston-State Street



Prague- Vitava Belvedere



Drammen, Norway- River Promenade



Hamburg- Hafen City Resiliency



Portland, OR- Floating Multi-purpose Path

- Some of us sense the soul of the river -

Call me Charles

My ageless body in this western hemisphere was discovered long ago by human beings... whose bodies are substantially of my same substance, and who had the power of naming. For four centuries I have been known as the Charles River, honoring an English king from human's short past. This name for my waters has identified and endeared me to generations of people, who know where I am, what power, beauty and grace I provide, and who begin to understand the mysteries of my waters.

Generations have used my resources, wisely or carelessly, for their livelihoods and their pleasures. The varying pulse of my body runs swift and true, ever-dependable for the recurrent life cycles that bring my fellow beings deep enchantment through the seasons.

I am the eternal source, providing life for all plants and creatures. On my shoulders and in my body, humans engage with me in many delightful ways. As with humans, I too need to breathe, to keep my health - from which humans, wildlife, fish and plants can sustain their health. I am able to transmute and transform abuses, to heal and regenerate my substance, to offer myself at my most vigorous for human benefit.

Machines and hard surfaces are anathema to the flow I shall always follow. Having been constricted and reshaped over the centuries, I need to stretch my shoulders further from my banks, to soften the pinched edges that at present are the narrow corridors of connection to humans.

Sweet Charles, run softly, till I end my song.
Sweet Charles, run softly, for I speak not loud or long.
But at my back from time to time I hear
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring
The highway too close to the river in the spring.

Cf. The Wasteland - Section III The Fire Sermon, T.S. Eliot

I, the river, must rely on the reshaping powers of my fellow humans to allow for a broadening of my shoulders. Then I can slowly, softly, transform these soft edges, with which to embrace in thankfulness the uses of man. In expanding the body of my waters, I shall realize more silent strength, more enchanting beauty, more transformative power that brings life and healing to all who embrace me back.

I quietly sing my song, in the here and now, for all who listen, but also eternally,
beyond time, to a music of the spheres.

Frank Costantino

Alister McIntosh



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is the result of an extended conversation among Allston and Cambridgeport community members, over a two year period, concerning the need for a larger vision of what this area can become for the sake of the community, the river, and its parklands. Over the past half decade, a volunteer group of Boston professionals, aka the informal River Remarkable Work Group, has conducted numerous studies of issues and opportunities within the Charles River Basin. In this spirit, it formed the volunteer Allston Landing Design Team, ALDT. An inclusive ad-hoc advisory group kept the effort focused. While this document is the result of invaluable input from many vested parties, special thanks go out to its major authors: *Skip Burck, Landscape Architect; Frank Costantino, Illustrator / Imagineer; Todd Larson, Copy Editor; Paul Lukez, Architect / Urban Designer; Alister McIntosh, Landscape Architect; John Shields, Architect / Urban Designer*

February 8, 2018

Robb Johnson
20 Fairmont Ave
Cambridge, MA 02139

Matthew Beaton, Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
251 Causeway Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114
Attn: Alex Strysky, MEPA Office alexander.strysky@state.ma.us

Re: EEA #15278: DEIR: I-90 Allston Interchange Project

Dear Secretary Beaton:


Thank you for considering the following comments on the DEIR for the I-90 Allston Interchange. I have been resident and homeowner in Cambridgeport since 1992, living just off River Street within two blocks of the Charles River. Along with my family, I'm a frequent user of I-90, Soldiers Field Road, River Street and the Paul Dudley White Bike Path. Each is integral to our weekly routines. I'm excited about the opportunities that realignment of I-90 provides for improving this part of the City. In the interest of maximizing that opportunity:

- West Station should be implemented as part of first phase of the I-90 project. Capitalizing on the high interest of many advocates, commitments to a public/private financing plan should be leveraged now. RJ-1
- I favor an "all surface" alternative for the road and railway reconstruction, for long-term cost effectiveness, overall improvement to the aesthetics of the area, and potential noise reduction benefits. This option also maximizes the feasibility of future opportunities to establish a rapid transit and multi-use pathway connection between Allston, Cambridgeport and Kendall Square via the Grand Junction Rail Bridge. To mitigate the squeeze that an all-surface option puts on the riverfront parkland, the reconstructed travel lanes and shoulders in this area should be as narrow as possible, and certainly no wider than in other parts of the Turnpike between Route 128 and the Prudential Tunnel. RJ-2
- I favor the proposed elimination of the River Street off ramp from Soldier's Field Road. Though we use the current ramp quite frequently and will be inconvenienced, I feel automobile uses already get disproportionate preference in consumption of our precious and limited riverfront land, and the DEIR's proposed alternative results in a superior outcome for the Charles River and the Paul Dudley White Bike Path. This part of the path has been an unpleasant and unsafe pinch point for runners, bikers and pedestrians for far too long. RJ-3
- I don't know if the street names shown on the plans were intended to be placeholders, but if not, I urge you to revise them. In particular, choosing the name "Cambridge Street South" as the name for a new street that intersects and then runs (very roughly) parallel to the existing "Cambridge Street" would be a disaster for GPS wayfinders and emergency dispatch alike. As someone who lives on "Fairmont Avenue", which runs perpendicular to "Fairmont Street" in Cambridgeport, I can't count the number of misdeliveries, mix-ups and lost productivity this has caused. Twice Cambridge Police dispatch has even sent cruisers to the wrong house on the wrong street when summoned to my address. There are a number of great names you could choose and -- unlike its namesake to the north -- this new street doesn't even lead to

Cambridge. I also encourage you to delete the "Connector" appendage from most or all of the other new streets. These are merely new sections of existing or proposed streets to the north, and with suitable street numbering there is need for different naming. "Connector" makes it sound like an offramp zone, not a new neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration of the many comments you are receiving, and for your efforts to ensure a comprehensive and holistic review of the environmental impacts of this transformational project.

Sincerely,

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

Robb Johnson

cc: James Cerbone, Environmental Services, MassHighway; James.Cerbone@state.ma.us
Sen. Joseph Boncore, Joseph.Boncore@masenate.gov
Rep. Jay Livingstone, Jay.Livingstone@mahouse.gov.