



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

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Frank DiPaola
Administrator, Highway Division
MassDOT
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Administrator DiPaola,

I write to you regarding the Connectivity Study of the Accelerated Bridge Program along the Charles River, and specifically the planned reconstruction of the Anderson Memorial, Western Avenue, and River Street Bridges. I am looking forward to the much needed improvements to the infrastructure along the Charles, and believe that the Accelerated Bridge Program is a valuable opportunity to take a look at transportation in a larger, more inclusive frame than we have done in the past.

Currently, the three above mentioned bridges lack a completely safe crossing option for pedestrians and cyclists. To the most experienced they act as hindrance along the larger seven mile path that hugs the river, but to those who may be novices when it comes to walking and biking in urban environments, these intersections can act as a deterrent. The City of Boston has begun the process of making our streets more complete by installing bike lanes and better signage for pedestrians. It is in this spirit that I write to ask that you include pedestrian underpasses in your renovations to the Anderson Memorial, Western Avenue, and River Street Bridges.

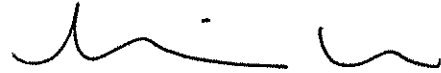
The underpasses will serve as crucial links along the seven mile path. Not only will they make the route safer for existing users, but they will encourage more to take advantage of the route. This is an opportunity to create an accessible and inclusive path for families, the elderly, and the disabled community who may think twice about having to cross major traffic intersections.

I write not only as an elected official, but as a resident of Boston who relishes this opportunity to better our community's alternative transportation infrastructure. There are many people in our city who enjoy outdoor activities, myself included, but who are not able to leave town and enjoy trails outside of the city. Adding an uninterrupted seven-mile bike and pedestrian path that is accessible by public transit would give residents an opportunity to enjoy our city's natural treasures.

In full disclosure, I sit on the Charles River Conservancy's Advisory Board. An outside feasibility study funded by the CRC found that the underpasses would cost significantly less if included in the bridge renovations, rather than added on separately. As we look to connect our city and state infrastructure using a complete streets philosophy, we should be taking advantage of projects already in the works, like the ABP, in order to keep costs to a minimum. Coupling underpass design with bridge reconstruction is a rare opportunity that will not come around again until the next reconstruction many decades away.

I support the overall concept of this project and want to encourage all those involved to take full advantage of this opportunity to update our infrastructure with an eye to public parks access. Our community is making a conscious effort to welcome all forms of transportation, but in order to fully accomplish this goal, we must create safe, inclusive, and accessible streets that support our efforts. The three pedestrian and bicycle underpasses at the Anderson Memorial, Western Avenue, and River Street Bridges will serve that purpose. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Wu', with a stylized, flowing script.

Michelle Wu

Boston City Councilor At-Large

CC: Renata von Tscharnier
President, Charles River Conservancy
4 Brattle Street
Cambridge, MA 02138