

October 28, 2014

Richard Davey, Secretary
MassDOT
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
Email: Richard.Davey@state.ma.us

Re: Longfellow Bridge Rehabilitation (MassDOT File No. 604361) and Craigie Bridge Reconstruction

Dear Secretary Davey;

We are writing to you regarding two outstanding issues for bicycle and pedestrian accommodation related to the Longfellow Bridge Reconstruction project. As we approach the annual Moving Together Conference which focuses attention on MassDOT's support for and promotion of active transportation, we think this is a perfect time for MassDOT to demonstrate its commitment by taking positive action on these issues.

Craigie Bridge Reconstruction

From the outset, we have advocated strenuously for the provision of bicycle facilities on the Craigie Bridge/Dam. Many public hearings were held and DCR and MassDOT promised clearly and consistently that bicycle lanes would be established on the Craigie Bridge/Dam (aka O'Brien Highway between Land Boulevard and Charles Circle) as part of the Longfellow Bridge construction project, once the Longfellow Bridge was reopened. While we did not concur that the establishment of the bicycle lanes should wait – it would have been far better to construct them from the outset, a position we continue to maintain – we fully expect that the committed-to bicycle lanes (or cycle tracks) will be constructed. To our frustration, we have learned that the latest plans do not include this work.

We would like your assurances that bicycle lanes will be included and we would also like to see the actual plans that include this promised component of the design.

Longfellow Bridge

We do not think that the proposed design connecting bicycle lanes on the Longfellow Bridge with Main Street in Cambridge is the safest option. The proposed design puts cyclists in an exposed, highly uncomfortable, and dangerous situation, situating them between two high-speed travel lanes and having a long area with conflicts with turning vehicles. Many cyclists will not follow the path of travel, staying either in the right lane or traveling on the sidewalk risking conflict with pedestrians under these conditions.

We recognize that this design follows traditional AASHTO guidance, which was developed quite a while ago, without the benefit of the wealth and breadth of experience and design guidance we have today. Fortunately, there is a better solution, proposed by the City of Cambridge, which we endorse for its benefits to pedestrian, cyclist, and car safety. The updated proposal (design attached as Exhibit A to this letter) is demonstrably preferable from a cyclist's perspective and is also beneficial for pedestrians. A clear, comfortable bicycle facility that accommodates all riders will minimize the likelihood that any

cyclists will ride on the sidewalk. In addition, a better crossing facility that slows traffic and focuses the yield situation will help pedestrians crossing as well. MassDOT's proposed design, which incorporates a lengthy car-bike conflict zone and obligates cyclists to ride between two high-speed traffic lanes, can be expected to place bicyclists at considerable risk and thus is likely to induce bicyclists to ride on the sidewalk or deter them from riding across the bridge westbound at all. We are concerned not only about the fact that the MassDOT design will encourage high-speed traffic and make it less likely that motorists will yield to bicyclists, but also that they will be less likely to yield to pedestrians.

We would like MassDOT to modify the current proposal and adopt the Cambridge proposal instead. We would be happy to meet with you to review our concerns.

Very truly yours,

Steven Bercu, Boston Cyclists Union

Renata Von Tscherner, Charles River Conservancy

Steven Miller, Livable Streets Alliance

David Watson, MassBike

Wendy Landman, WalkBoston

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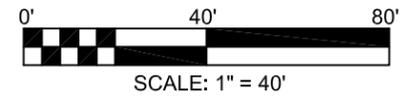
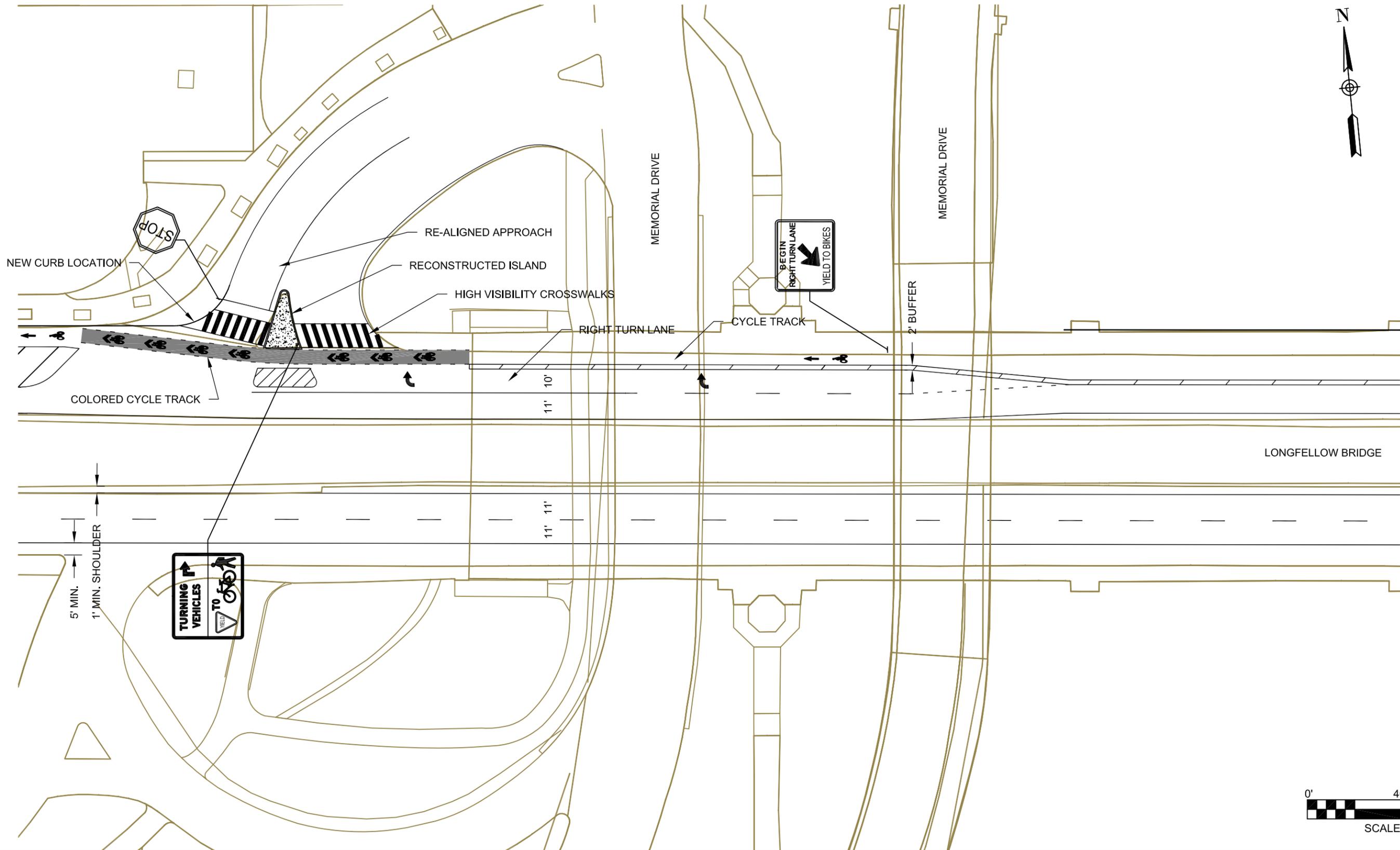
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Exhibit A

City of Cambridge Proposed Design for Longfellow Bridge

Attached.



DRAFT - NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

CAMBRIDGE - MAIN ST RECOMMENDATIONS

MEMORIAL DRIVE INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

JUNE 1, 2012
SHEET 1 OF 1