

COALITION FOR ANDERSON BRIDGE UNDERPASS

c/o Charles River Conservancy, 4 Brattle Street (Suite 309), Cambridge, MA 02138

April 9, 2015

Stephanie Pollack, Secretary of Transportation
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA

Dear Secretary Pollack,

We are writing to let you know of our enthusiasm and support for the work underway at MassDOT to develop 25% design plans for an underpass on the Boston side of the Charles River under the Anderson Memorial Bridge, to be used by pedestrians, runners, cyclists and others. This underpass, through the bridge abutment, would add significantly to the Paul Dudley White pathway system by eliminating the need for many users to cross the busy surface intersection of the ramps from Soldiers' Field Road and JFK/North Harvard Street.

The underpass would be an extremely important addition to the excellent surface changes now under construction at the Anderson Bridge. This combination of improving the movements – both cross-river (already underway) and along-the-river (with the addition of an underpass) – will increase safety, enhance the environment, and provide improved transportation service not only to the users of the underpass, but also to the vehicles, pedestrians and others who use the surface crossings, including the Harvard community on both sides. We believe that the evolving design is being developed in a manner that respects the historic nature of the bridge.

We strongly oppose the alternative for this project (being developed to comply with legal review as part of the current design process) that would create a boardwalk that would be located under one of the current bridge arches and occupy part of the river used by the boating community.

To maximize cost-effectiveness and maintain the momentum for the underpass project initiated when your predecessor endorsed the project in July 2014, it is our hope that the design and permitting of the underpass can be completed in time to enable its construction as part of the ongoing activities at the bridge. Expediting design and permitting consistent with all legal requirements will be required to accomplish this objective.

As advocates for the project, we have been kept informed of the progress of design work by Gill Engineering under the direction and support of the Highway Administration. We look forward to the earliest possible public meeting where this design work can be described for wide public review and participation.

We also would like to offer to you, the Department and the Highway Administration our continuing, supportive involvement as this project moves forward.

This underpass will be a major step to enhance the Charles River Parklands, one of the Boston area's major assets, for at least the next hundred years.

Sincerely,

Katherine Blakeslee, Institute for Human-Centered Design
Greg Galer, Executive Director, Boston Preservation Alliance
Jack Glassman, Boston Society of Architects, Historic Resources Committee
Ken Kruckemeyer, LivableStreets Alliance
Wendy Landman, Executive Director, Walk Boston
Galen Mook, Boston Cyclists Union
Jon Puz, Cambridge Running Club
Renata von Tscharnier, President and Founder, Charles River Conservancy
Jack Wofford, mediator and arbitrator

cc: Thomas J. Tinlin, Highway Administrator, MassDOT
Michael Trepanier, Project Manager, MassDOT