



43 THORNDIKE STREET, S3-3  
CAMBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS  
0 2 1 4 1

617 608 1410 t

crc@thecharles.org  
www.thecharles.org

September 16, 2019

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Laura Jasinski  
*Executive Director*  
Virginia Foote  
Jennifer Gilbert  
Debra Iles, *Chair*  
Lonsdale Koester  
Steve Kropper  
Frans Lawaetz  
Edward G. LeFlore  
Harry Mattison  
Joan Pickett  
Gautam Sundaram

**BOARD OF ADVISORS**

Renata von Tscharnern  
*Founder*  
Ronald Axelrod  
Jay Baldwin  
Jarrett Barrios  
Jeffrey Bilezikian  
Dan Calano  
Dennis Carlone  
Philip W. Crutchfield  
John DeVillars  
Catherine Donaher  
Hon. Michael S. Dukakis  
Michael Epstein  
Paul Fremont-Smith Jr.  
John Isaacson  
Mark Kraczkiewicz  
Daniel Langenthal  
Henry Lee  
Linda Lerner  
Paul Moyer  
Robert O'Brien  
Geraldine Pangaro  
Randy Peeler  
Matthew Petrie  
Candace Roosevelt  
Richard Saltzberg  
Bruce Schwoegler  
Amy Segal  
John Shields  
Lisa Stone  
Ann Tikkanen  
Paul Walker  
William Ward  
Ania Wieckowski  
John T. Williams  
Michelle Wu

Dear Secretary Pollack, MassDOT Board Members, and Fiscal Management Control Board Members,

As active participants in the I-90 Interchange Project, The Charles River Conservancy (CRC) has been closely tracking the potential impacts to the river and adjacent parkland. We feel strongly that MassDOT must avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to the river and adjacent parkland, both short and long term. As such, the announcement of MassDOT's proposal to build a "mid-river highway" to support Soldiers Field Road and the Paul Dudley White Path for the duration of a decade-long construction project was alarming. We would like to clarify that the absence of official written comment to this point does not signal acceptance of these methods and plan. Rather, we ask that MassDOT address the following:

**Evaluate a range of construction strategies, including at least one with minimal river impacts.** Until the June 20, 2019 Task Force meeting, avoiding river impacts was the MassDOT project team's mantra. The presentation of a ten-year trestle structure was a significant leap from this position and deserves further due diligence and discussion by the Task Force and broader community. The bridge proposal was absolute, lacking evidence of analysis. Evaluation of alternatives by the MassDOT project team should be done in an open, collaborative setting with the Task Force, DCR, the Department of Environmental Protection and other appropriate agencies.

**Perform all possible planning to minimize construction impacts to the river.** If deemed necessary, any harm to the river must be as minimal as possible. Undoubtedly, the contamination levels, habitat disturbance and other impacts to the Charles River will be many and depend on if the bridge is constructed on piles or fill, if dredging or capping is involved, volume of traffic, etc. All options, including creating additional fill or structures that could be used to increase parkland in the final condition, should be considered with the Task Force.

**Commit to community-driven mitigation solutions for permanent impacts.** For too long, a public conversation on mitigation and community benefits has been postponed. Considering the proposal for a temporary, ten-year bridge on the table and the impending resumption on State and Federal environmental review, it can no longer be dismissed. We must have an open discussion about river and riverbank restoration and *improvement* that 1) prioritizes the integration of park design and management; 2) is based on robust, ecological data; and 3) provides for recreation, flood resilience, stormwater control and storage.

The CRC, standing with other respected community members and mission-driven organizations, hopes that the MassDOT Board and Fiscal Management Control Board take action and advantage of the opportunity in front of us – to collectively envision and plan a future for the Allston Multimodal Project that we can be proud of.

Sincerely,

Laura Jasinski  
Executive Director, Charles River Conservancy