

September 21, 2010

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Charles River Basin Accelerated Bridge Program
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Delivery by Adobe PDF via email to Tracy.Osimboni@state.ma.us

Subject: Anderson Memorial Bridge Reconstruction

Dear Ms. Osimboni:

We would like to take this opportunity to provide some suggestions and comments regarding the Anderson Memorial Bridge Reconstruction Project, as presented to the community on Thursday July 22.

We are very pleased to see that many of the concepts at the December 19, 2009 Public Meeting have been more fully fleshed out. In particular **we are very excited that the 3-lane + bike lane cross-section is still planned**. The addition of bike lanes across the bridge will without a doubt benefit bicyclists, but it will also benefit motorists and pedestrians as well by allocating bicyclists some dedicated space in which to operate. This configuration will also allow the City of Cambridge to add bike lanes to JFK Street by restriping it with a similar 3-lane + bike lane configuration.

We are also very pleased to see that geometric and signalization improvements will be taking place at the Soldiers Field Rd and Memorial Drive intersections. Closing off the porkchop islands at Soldiers Field Rd will greatly benefit pedestrians and Charles River Path users by creating additional space to wait before crossing the street as well as by improving sight lines of motor vehicles entering and exiting Soldiers Field Rd westbound. **At Memorial Drive, we are also very supportive of restricting left turns** at all times of the day to improve overall safety for all users and to help facilitate traffic flow through the new three-lane cross-section of both the Anderson Bridge and JFK Street.

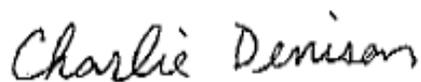
Moving forward, we do have a few suggestions that we hope you will take into account. On the bridge itself, the latest plans show the sidewalks being narrowed to 9.25' from the current 10' in order to provide 3 10.5' travel lanes, whereas the prior plans left the sidewalks at the current 10' and provided 3 10' travel lanes. **We**

strongly think these earlier dimensions were better, since they did not require taking away any space from pedestrians. We feel that it is essential that pedestrians retain the full 10' in each direction that they have today, particularly because of the high volumes of pedestrians that this bridge carries. As was mentioned at the latest public meeting, we agree that the new bike lanes will reduce the number of bicyclists riding on the sidewalks; however, we expect that many bicyclists will continue to do so, particularly those who are going along, to, or from the Charles River Paths. We also understand that bus safety is a very important factor (as it is for LivableStreets as well). However, all the evidence that we have seen shows that 10' lanes are equally as safe for buses (and trucks) as 11' or 12' lanes. We understand that an MBTA bus is 10' wide from mirror to mirror, and that there is a concern about passing buses clipping mirrors. However, there are currently 15 MBTA bus routes that regularly travel on roadways with 10' lanes in the Boston area, including the 66 and 86, which both travel on the Anderson Bridge, N Harvard St, and JFK St (all of which currently have 10' lanes). To the best of our knowledge, mirror clipping has not been an issue on any of these routes. We have further evidence of the safety of 10' lanes nationally that we would be happy to share with you. More and more cities across the United States have been adopting 10' lanes as a standard on arterial streets, including truck and bus routes, primarily because of the additional flexibility it gives to reallocate space to pedestrians and bicyclists.

We also thank you for looking into the possibility of pedestrian/bicycle underpasses for Charles River Path users as proposed by the Charles River Conservancy. However, **we are disappointed that you are not planning to incorporate pedestrian/bicycle underpasses into this project.** We understand that designing such underpasses as not to be dark and wet is a challenge. We would like you to continue looking into how this could be done, as it has indeed been done successfully for many other trails in Massachusetts, such as the Minuteman Bikeway, Cape Cod Rail Trail and Norwottock Rail Trail. It is our understanding that many of the ABP bridge projects have had bids coming in under the projected amounts, and we hope that this savings could be used to construct such underpasses.

Thank you for considering our input as this project moves forward. If you have any questions on the above comments and suggestions, please contact Charlie Denison, Advocacy Director, LivableStreets Alliance, who may be reached at 617.852.6125 and charlie@livablestreets.info.

Sincerely,



Charlie Denison
Advocacy Director