

I-90 Interchange Project/ Allston Esplanade

Excerpts from LivableStreets member comments submitted to MEPA November, 2014

This is an opportunity to create multimodal transportation options. We must seize each opportunity if we are to keep young people here, and reach the 30% mode shift. A new west station will take the burden off the green line and allow a great connection to Kendall. The Allston esplanade and multi-use path will make many trips easier, faster and more enjoyable. If not now when? We need to invest in all our transit infrastructure equally to be a competitive city.

Boston MA 02116

I commute by bike and greatly value green space in our city.

Somerville, MA 02143

The value of improved public transportation and parkland in Allston is enormous. Mass DOT's current plan will lose billions of dollars of future revenue. It's stealing from the people.

Lexington, MA

As a former student and resident of Alston the walkability and bikeability of the area is of the utmost importance to me. Many (most) of the community does not use a car regularly and it would be servicing only those traveling through to not plan for pedestrian access.

Big highway projects like this one need to be designed in such a way that they are building infrastructure for the purpose of human mobility. Moving cars at high speeds is a grossly inefficient and overfunded subset of the transportation modes used by us real life humans here in Massachusetts, and I would like to see a much higher percentage of the funding and dedicated geography in the project to be devoted to pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.

This seems obvious in the context of MassDOT's stated mode shift goals, which were created not just because they are "nice to have", but because they're critical to economic development and to serving the transportation needs of our population.

In summary: Take advantage of this opportunity to add parkland and multi-use community paths; improve bicycle accommodations on the streets on the scope of the project area.

All that money to only rehabilitate the Mass Pike is a shame if amenities are not included for bike lanes, easy access to the Allston river parkway and many other points as noted below.

Cambridge MA 02140

We deserve transportation projects that deliver a positive vision for the future, and that supports a more livable city for everyone. MassDOT is being extremely shortsighted by not considering appropriate balance of pedestrian, bike, and parkland. As a taxpayer I would like to see the state pursue transportation projects that deliver benefits for all users not just cars. Equity demands and so does the challenge of climate change.

Cambridge MA 02139

As a biker, pedestrian and motorist in this area, I see the needs of each. Separate lanes for both pedestrians and bikers make it safer for everyone and discourage "bad behavior" as commuters and recreational users alike attempt to maximize their own safety. This area is filled with students who seldom have cars, so we need strong walking, biking and public transit infrastructure to enable everyone to commute, exercise or otherwise get where they are going safely. Further, as an employee in the Longwood medical area who has no parking available to me, I long for a safe, expeditious, car-emission-free or -reduced biking path that would get me across the Charles River on my bike throughout the year. In addition to commuting and transit issues, I'm concerned about the health of the Charles River, the urban jewel of Boston. We have come so far but have further to go to return the Charles to its original uses of swimming, boating and fishing. Runoff, flooding and pollution mitigation must be an integral part of this plan.

Arlington, MA

As a Gen Xer, I hate driving and only do it when I have to, and as I understand it, Millennials hate driving even more than my generation does. To improve the quality of life in the greater Boston area for generations to come, we need to invest now in public transportation, biking, and walking.

Fairhaven, MA

Boston has an extremely vital and energized population. Residents of the area know that our health directly relates to city's landscape and environment. I know for myself that taking part in activities around the river is something I have done since I moved here in 1984. The river paths and the places you can get to through their use are 'essentially Boston' to me, and a growing number of tourists to our city deserve to be able to explore it's beauty in a car free space. Many people are using Hubway bike share when they visit Boston, and I want those people to have the same or better experience I enjoy while transiting Allston.

So please consider taking another look at this project plan with the interests and outlook of people like me and the tourists to our city, who live outside of cars, more closely in mind.

Medford, MA 02155

I write to you as someone who has moved to Boston as a recent college graduate and now over 10 years later has settled down, started a family which I intend to raise in Boston. My husband and I have one car which he uses primarily to get to work in Waltham. While we live in JP, we specifically choose NOT to live in this part of town because it is notoriously NOT bicycle friendly. In our early 20's we tolerated Cambridge street, but even at this point now, we would never consider being pedestrians or biking around this area because it is a hostile environment to bicyclist. And this is coming from someone who confidently rides all over the city with my family. There is so much to this project being comprehensive and inclusive improvements to pedestrian, bicycle, transit infrastructure. but I tell you as someone who choose to put down roots in Boston, if you want more people to choose Allston as their long-term home you will expand the scope of this project so that everyday livability is an option for people whether they drive, bike, walk, take transit or any combination of those. And if you don't believe me on the livability front, I challenge you to take a stroll with a two year old in this area, or hop on a bike and see what it truly feels like. I am sure that if you are hesitant there are a number of organizations like Boston Cyclists Union OR the LivableStreets Alliance that would be happy to give you a tour of that experience.

My 5 year old daughter just started biking to school everyday and on shorter rides on the weekends. We live in Western Cambridge and would love to bike to Allston, eat at their restaurants, play at their playgrounds, visit the library and farmers market. However, there is no accessible, family friendly way into Allson so we usually stick to the Charles River path on Cambridge-side. This is a huge missed economic opportunity for the local businesses of Allston.

Additionally, I know many parents who would love to bike with their children, but they are too scared to be next to cars along with trying to navigate huge, scary intersections.

My husband commutes to Genzyme Allston via a 10 minute bike ride and he has co-workers who would bike, walk or take the T to work if it was more accessible and convenient.

Cambridge

For my daughter, I want safe streets, cleaner air, safety from climate change, and the quality of life that comes with investing in public transport. Not to invoke Europe, but honestly? THEY DID IT. They already invested in this, and having spent some time in Western Europe, life there just rocks in terms of getting from point A to point B.

NOBODY LIKES CARS ANYMORE. Studies even show that people who EXPECT NOT TO LIKE PUBLIC TRANSIT - when they take it, they really like it and even change the way they were commuting. But a lot of people don't have the chance because we're going backwards with plain Jane highway redevelopment projects that don't invest in the future, and the present.

With a better quality of life, it may seem intangible, but better work gets done, people are happier, health care costs are differeed, stress is lowered, and everything just gets better. I've seen it work with real people in other areas - there is no reason we can't lead the way.

Trends support a forecast of a return of an American way of life that includes people living and investing in infrastructures within areas of higher population density. The The highway fed, suburban model is not to be the primary community model of the future. Renewable technologies in public transportation, commuter cycling as well as pedestrian commuting ought to be encouraged and enabled - as all reduce the amount of congestion and airborne pollutants in such densely populated communities.

Boston, MA 02115

On this frigid morning I biked alongside at least 20 other people on my way to work. Every day I'm surprised at how many people are using the bike lanes lawfully now that they are here. Just goes to show: If you built it, they will come! Build something that will breed more healthy, non-polluting people!

I have lived in the Allston/Brighton Area since 2001; I do not own a car and rely instead on walking and public transportation. If my tax dollars are going to support this project, it seems only fair that it takes into consideration the needs of people from the neighborhood who are not car dependent (which is a very high percentage).

Brighton, MA 02135

The Boston area is increasingly struggling with issues of housing affordability. This is an excellent opportunity to develop new high-density housing that will increase supply and relieve price pressures in the area. Additionally, every time I bike or run in this area (which is often as it is the only way to get to Allston from where I live) I am terrified by the dangerous traffic conditions.

Cambridge MA

As a nurse practitioner and a bicycle commuter I am aware of both the mental and physical benefits of cycling as well as the safety concerns of cycling on streets designed cars alone.

A bike path would allow Cantabrigians better access to Allston, and Allstonians better access to Cambridge. Green spaces, bike paths, and pedestrian walkways connect people to the city in a way that highways never can.

Cambridge, MA

I work in Lower Allston and live in Jamaica Plain. Whenever possible, I like to commute by bicycle. One of the biggest challenges is that there is no way to cross the Mass Pike without passing through an area given over completely to prioritizing high-volume and high-speed auto traffic. This creates an unsafe environment for bicyclists, pedestrians, and anyone who lives or works in the area. The unsightly scar of the Mass Pike and its access roads literally divides the city in two and is out of touch with 21st century urban ideal. I would like to live in a Boston where dense residential space, livable streets, public transit, public space and the environment are given priority over the needs of car commuters who just want to zip through as quickly as possible.

Jamaica Plain, MA

I cycle in the neighborhood of this project regularly. Cambridge St, North Harvard St, and the multi-use path along the Charles are important routes for runners, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Canton, MA 02021

I bike everywhere in the Boston area, including the hellacious area in Allston near the Mass. Pike on-ramp. It is always a near-death experience, especially on a dark winter night.

Somerville, MA 02143-2128

I ride my bike into Boston along this route more than I drive over the Pike into Cambridge (although I do that occasionally, too), and think the state could reap more from this project than the current auto-centric interchange

<p>A multi-use community path connecting Allston to Cambridge via the Grand Junction Rail Bridge crossing the Charles under the BU Bridge—which would be a game-changer for north-south bicycle traffic.</p> <p>A new 'West Station' transit station that provides rapid transit service (every 10 minutes) to downtown & Kendall Square—we in Newton are also hoping this unlocks the full potential of current stations in Newtonville, Auburndale and West Newton, while possibly allowing for new ones at Newton Corner and Riverside—all of which would reduce demand for Pike lanes.</p> <p>Acres of new parkland along the Charles River (the "Allston Esplanade.") As you probably know, this would also help catch & clean run-off from Storrow which now pollutes the Charles.</p>
<p>Newton</p>
<p>I love biking along the river on the protected multi-use paths. I've used those paths to commute to Cambridge from Newton. Making more parkland and walkable and bikeable areas will help attract more people to get out and exercise. Many of us are too sedentary, taking cars everywhere. Our environment must be more conducive to getting people out of their cars. Having a new transit station will also help get people out of their cars, which will help our environment, add to public safety, and get people moving.</p>
<p>Newton, MA</p>
<p>Just as Boston once led the nation by building America's first subway, I hope that Massachusetts can help to lead the way for livability by making smart transportation choices whenever the opportunity arises.</p>
<p>Cambridge, Mass</p>
<p>It's finally time as a society to recognize that we are spending the largest share of transportation dollars on the least efficient, least sustainable, and most expensive means of transportation—in this case, all to the detriment of our city</p>
<p>Cambridge, MA</p>
<p>Many in the Boston area don't own cars, and supporting alternatives to driving improves our environment, reduces traffic congestion, and makes the area a more attractive place to live. Making our neighborhoods attractive and convenient helps support local businesses as well, encouraging people to spend time there rather than just drive through and ignore them.\</p>
<p>Cambridge, MA 02140</p>
<p>I personally commute to downtown Boston every day, and ride along the Charles River for my ride. Every year I see the increase of other cyclists and runners along the river—safer and more accessible changes to the landscape will directly serve all of us. They can also help the Boston area further stand out as a welcoming city for cyclists, which will help attract technology companies and the jobs they will bring. This project is the opportunity the city needs to provide better facilities to all of us and future residents to make Boston less reliant on cars and safer for commuters.</p>
<p>Boston, MA 02110</p>
<p>I have lived in Cambridgeport for almost a decade and experience regularly the challenges of driving, biking and walking with the existing traffic flow off and on the Mass Pike. This is a rare opportunity to make this area and the affected areas c Allston much better places to live and enjoy.</p>
<p>Cambridge, MA 02139</p>
<p>Recently we had an outreach event to attend over in that area of the city, and getting to the site on bicycle, especially with a group of youth and a bicycle trailer pulling 200+ pounds of bicycle tools and stands, was an ABSOLUTE nightmare. Please consider the following points.</p>
<p>I have to travel frequently from Cambridge where I live to Boston for doctor appointments and other reasons. In light of that, having rapid transit from the new West station to Cambridge would be really helpful.</p>
<p>Cambridge MA 02140</p>

As somebody who commutes by bike past this corridor most days, and takes the Worcester train or express buses through here on other days, this project would have a huge impact on how I get around. Providing a faster, easier and more direct connection to the Charles River would allow me to use the river paths for far longer than I currently do and would allow me to more easily get to friend's houses in the lower Allston area. A new commuter rail stop would allow a better connection option into the Packards Corner area for shopping and dining, and a reconfigured MassPike would better allow express buses to get through the tolls and downtown.

Newton, MA

As a resident of the city of Boston and of the commonwealth for the last 14 years, I have seen many hopeful strides forward in designing better public spaces, including major state highway infrastructure such as the I-90 Interchange, although this project's scope is far greater than the typical project. It will, in a very real sense, make or break the ability to create livable, walkable places in the area for many decades to come.

Roslindale, MA 02131

Your agency has a myriad of innovative policies, the 2006 Highway Design Guide, the Healthy Transportation Compact, and GreenDOT that explicitly require Context Sensitive design and the inclusion of pedestrian and bicycle facilities. These guidelines are groundbreaking in their focus on moving Massachusetts beyond car-centric design. Please hold this project to your stated standards and resist falling back on outdated highway design concepts.

Somerville, MA 02143

I am the Land Use Planner for the Town of Easton and am working with a recently formed Bike & Ped Access Working Group. The role of this working group is to help identify infrastructure improvements in the town that will provide safer bicycle, pedestrian and alternative motorized vehicle access for Easton's residents. The group has been encouraged by MassDOT's commitment to provide complete streets that, whenever possible, support these alternative transportation modes. This is the reason I am writing to encourage MassDOT be required to include the improvements listed below as part of the \$260,000,000 I-90 Interchange Project #15278. If we are really committed to the concept of complete streets and alternative transportation modes, it makes no sense to not include these type of enhancements as part of a major highway rehabilitation project.

Easton, MA 02356

I think this is an opportunity to create more land for recreation and joining the parts of the community together, not take more land for the roadway and perpetuate the barriers which separate pieces of the community from each other and from the river. At one point in time the car was king and moving it from place A to B was the highest priority. I do not believe that is the case any longer and the quality of life in our communities is of at least equal importance.

I notice that the project includes creating breakdown lanes where they don't exist. There are many places on this stretch of the highway where there aren't breakdown lanes and it's not clear to me why it is so important to add them to this small stretch. If they are really that important, shouldn't they exist everywhere (they can always be created from a travel lane). If they're not important enough to use a travel lane for, I certainly don't think they're important enough to give up my street level space and parkland for.

Newton MA 02458

Ever since the creation of the Mass Pike, no significant development has managed to deck over the Pike, because the engineering challenges of building on top of an active highway are difficult to overcome. However, decking the highway at the same time as highway construction is relatively straightforward, as shown in construction of the Prudential Center as well as various construction near Newton Corner.

Somerville