



Activists Call For Protected Bike Lane On Canal Bridge

As MassDOT is poised to consider adding a bike lane, activists say they want to make sure bikers and pedestrians are really safe.

By [Jenna Fisher, Patch Staff](#) | Dec 18, 2018 6:01 pm ET

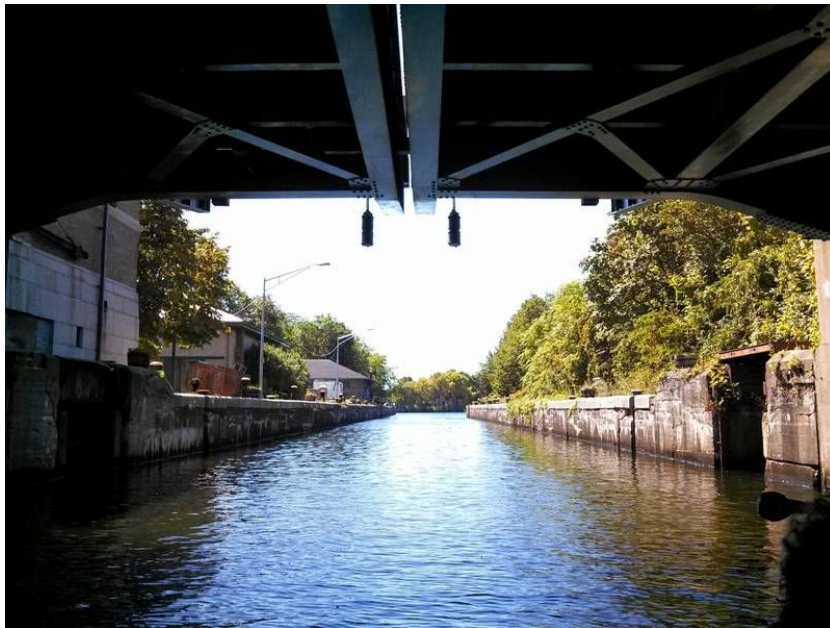


Photo of the underside of the bridge by Jenna Fisher/Patch Staff

BOSTON, MA — A coalition lobbying for safer roads, especially for pedestrians and bikers, are urging the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to create protected bike lanes and other safety improvements on the Craigie Bridge in the spring of 2019.

The demand from members of the Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition came ahead of a meeting Tuesday night at which MassDOT was slated to present two alternate striping plans for the Craigie Bridge that include painted — though unprotected — bike lanes.

The bridge, also called Charles River Dam Bridge, or the Canal Bridge, is a six-lane bridge across the Charles River, connecting Leverett Circle in downtown Boston, to Monsignor O'Brien Highway in East Cambridge.

The coalition rallied activists to attend Tuesday's hearing to voice displeasure with those plans and to stress the need for physical separation.

Protected bike lanes have been shown to halve injury risk to cyclists while increasing ridership up to twofold, according to the coalition. And adding only paint to the Craigie Bridge, where Boston University grad student [Meng Jin](#), 24, was killed when a dump truck turned into her while she was biking near the Science Museum in November, would not be enough to safeguard the hundreds of people who ride across the bridge every day, they argue.

"Guidelines developed by the National Association of City Transportation Officials recommend protected bike lanes on roads just like Craigie Bridge. Even MassDOT's own planning guide agrees on this point," said Becca Wolfson, executive director of the Boston Cyclists Union, in a statement. "While we're grateful that MassDOT wants to address this issue, we will not accept half-measures as a sign of success when they go against common sense and established safety standards."

Last week MassDOT reversed its plan to remove flex posts from the Longfellow Bridge following pushback from the cycle community. The coalition pointed to this as indicative of the need for physical separation on other Charles River crossings.

"This isn't a new issue to MassDOT and DCR. Transportation advocates have been discussing safe bike facilities on the Craigie Dam and Longfellow Bridge with state agencies since at least 2009," said Wendy Landman, executive director of WalkBoston also in a statement. "Not only is this the right action to take for the safety of people biking, it is also the right action for the safety of people walking because it means that bicyclists do not ride on the sidewalk."

The Massachusetts [Vision Zero Coalition](#) is made up of groups that [include](#) the Boston Cyclists Union, Cambridge Bicycle Safety, DotBike, the Green Streets Initiative and

LivableStreets Alliance, with the goal that crashes can be avoided if streets are designed to protect all people.