

11 September 2007

Daniel Grabauskas, General Manager
Metropolitan Bay Transportation Authority
10 Park Plaza, Suite 3910
Boston, MA 02116

Richard Sullivan, Commissioner
Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02114-2104

Re: MBTA Charles/MGH & DCR Longfellow Bridge pedestrian access follow-up

Dear General Manager Grabauskas and Commissioner Sullivan:

Firstly, I want to once again congratulate the MBTA on the completion of the Charles/MGH station rehabilitation which will have such a positive impact on so many people.

But today's article in the Globe reminded me about some important unfinished business. I would like to re-initiate discussion regarding improving pedestrian access to the Longfellow Bridge. Both agencies have over the past year individually indicated willingness to collaboratively implement a temporary solution (prior to Longfellow Bridge reconstruction) to include sidewalks, wheelchair ramps, and zebra-striped crosswalks.

This past March, before the official opening of the station, I wrote a letter to both of your agencies (then the DCR was under direction of Ms. Geigis) requesting that these connectivity issues be addressed. As noted in the letter, LivableStreets Alliance had been working with the DCR on various bicycle/pedestrian access issues in the urban Boston area, and the DCR had already committed to using an existing sidewalk budget to create a temporary sidewalk--coordination with the MBTA was needed. In response to my letter and subsequent conversations, Mr. Grabauskas this past spring had made a commitment to work toward a solution in coordination with the DCR. The DCR, unfortunately, then responded by indicating the agency would do nothing until the bridge was reconstructed, and to direct all further comments to MassHighway. Later in April, a DCR engineer indicated that a sidewalk would negatively

impact traffic flow. At the request of DCR staff, I wrote a technical memo indicating that such a sidewalk would not create such a problem.

Copies of these three documents are attached and can also be downloaded using the following links:

http://www.livablestreets.info/files/21mar07letter_charlesmghlongfellow.pdf

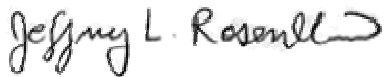
http://www.livablestreets.info/files/4apr07_DCRresponse_charlesmghlongfellow.pdf

http://www.livablestreets.info/files/memodcrsidewalks_26apr07_final.pdf

I have not heard from either agency since. For a relatively low cost, fixing this dangerous condition for pedestrian users would demonstrate to the public the new spirit of interagency coordination in Massachusetts, willingness to provide creative solutions to important problems, confronting the imbalance in priority given automobiles versus pedestrians regarding access to our urban streets and bridges, and finally the willingness to work collaboratively with advocacy organizations and concerned citizens.

Please feel free to contact me at your convenience to discuss this further, (617) 939-3824 or jeff@livablestreets.info.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey L Rosenblum, PE
Executive Director, LivableStreets Alliance

cc: Commissioner Tinlin (BTD), Commissioner Royer (DPW), Commissioner Paiewonsky (MassHighway), Secretary Cohen (EOT), Christopher Hart (Adaptive Environments), Wendy Landman (WalkBoston)

attachments (3)