



21 November 2008

Deval Patrick, Governor  
Office of the Governor  
Massachusetts Statehouse, Room 360  
Boston, MA 02133

Ian Bowles, Secretary  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Bernard Cohen, Secretary  
The Executive Office of Transportation  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 3170  
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Governor Patrick, Secretary Bowles and Secretary Cohen,

We are pleased and grateful that you have taken such quick action with the Accelerated Bridge Program. The Program is an opportunity not only to make the structures safe, but also to make sure that these facilities reflect the needs and goals of Massachusetts in the 21st century, better serving a wide variety of users, including people in cars, on mass transit, on foot, on bicycle or in wheelchairs. The planning for the improvements must, therefore, take into account the mobility needs of all these user groups and result in designs that meet those needs. Not only is this the right thing to do for social equity, health, the economy and the environment, it is also required under Massachusetts state law. (MGL 90E§2A (1996) requires making all reasonable provisions for the accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian traffic in the planning, design, and reconstruction of state funded-roadway projects. This law was reinforced with the 2006 MassHighway Project Design and Development Guide.)

In addition, the bridge program will require long construction periods and planning must specify how people will move around safely while the bridges are under construction.

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Patrick, Bowles, Cohen, Re: Accelerated Bridge Program  
C/o LivableStreets Alliance, 70 Pacific Street, Cambridge, MA 02139



During construction periods, people should be encouraged not only to use alternate routes but also to switch from single-occupant vehicles into more sustainable modes. Massachusetts has long and strong experience in making use of construction periods to promote such shifts, starting in the 1980s with the I-93 South project that brought us HOV lanes and ferry services south of Boston.

Unless these issues of better access for all users and construction mitigation are addressed, the bridge program will be an inefficient and wasteful use of valuable resources in a period where we cannot afford that. We urge you to make sure that this important program maximizes short- and long-term benefits for Massachusetts residents and workers.

Notwithstanding our support for the Accelerated Bridge Program, we have serious concerns about the lack of public input for the Charles River Bridges reconstruction by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Thus far, no predictable or sustained process has been put in place to gather the suggestions, experiential insights, or concerns of stakeholders (advocates, user groups, institutions, and municipalities) about the eventual design of the bridges, nor how to handle the disruption caused by the reconstruction itself. Because of this, key opportunities are being missed to improve conditions for bicycling and walking, and to improve conditions for persons of all ages and abilities. We have learned of the DCR's effort to reinstate the bicycle and pedestrian committee, and look forward to serving on the committee; however, the committee would deal with overall issues and not the current Charles River bridges at 90% design.

Input is easiest and cheapest to incorporate early in a design process. As discussed below, the lack of input has already resulted in problems with the BU Bridge and the Craigie Dam projects.

Boston University Bridge - The BU Bridge redesign progressed to 90% design before stakeholders even learned about the project's existence. Because of strong intervention on the part of numerous groups and individuals, we were able to develop a collaborative relationship with DCR. From this collaboration, DCR agreed to include bicycle lanes on the bridge. DCR also committed to look at making bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements to the rotary on the Cambridge side (with all of its attendant street and path crossings), and will hire a sub-consultant that specializes in these types of issues.

Craigie Bridges - Unfortunately, a few days after this BU Bridge agreement was reached, stakeholders were blindsided with the discovery that designs for the reconstruction of the Craigie (Museum of Science) Bridge were virtually complete and that a public meeting was to be held (11/17/08) to reveal the plans. We were given very little idea whether bicycle and pedestrian improvements were to be included and what form they might take,



notwithstanding the fact that we were told that that the project is intended to be advertised for construction within six weeks, meaning there is little time to incorporate any stakeholder concerns. After seeing the plans at the November 17 meeting we would like to make suggestions on how to improve the designs:

- Keep the car lanes narrow for safety (typically 10'), and give extra room to bicyclists and pedestrians
- Put in either separated cycle tracks or striped bike lanes in both directions
- Push the museum-side sidewalk back into the hill and remove obstructions to widen the sidewalk
- Add a traffic light at the point in front of the museum where the future inlet bridge will be built
- Redesign the museum entrances and exits
- Put bike lanes through Leverett Circle and along Martha Road

There is flexibility for a solution that would not delay the project if we deal with it immediately. There is room in the cross section to adjust lane and sidewalk widths to accommodate all users – vehicles, pedestrians, recreational bicyclists and commuter bicyclists.

We understand the tight time frame for the reconstruction of these important bridges, but object that it is being conducted in a way that neglects the required inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian accommodation and makes little effort to involve the public in a meaningful way. These bridges will not be touched again for decades. Decisions made now will affect generations to come. With this enormous infrastructure investment we should not lose the opportunity to address the future of transportation for the region, and the results should reflect the state's commitment to be less car-centric and more focused on sustainable modes. The time to address these issues is now. We respectfully request that DCR and EOT provide the public with a public input process that allows the advocacy community to participate in the design process in an effective and timely manner for all of the Charles River Basin roadway projects including the upcoming Longfellow Bridge and Storrow Drive projects.

Governor Patrick, in your election you showed the power of individuals to improve government. As advocacy groups, we are proud that our work improves transportation for people in our communities. We urge you to make sure that the Accelerated Bridge Program makes use of all our talents and produces bridges that work for all users and for the communities in which they are located. Please let us work hand in hand with you and your administration in delivering the best possible transportation system to the citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We urge you to involve us.



Please respond to our request via Jackie Douglas of LivableStreets Alliance who will serve as our point of contact. Jackie can be reached at 617.621.1746 and [jackie@livablestreets.info](mailto:jackie@livablestreets.info)

Thank You,

Jacqueline Douglas, Transportation Advocate, LivableStreets Alliance

On behalf of:

Charlie Denison, Board Member, LivableStreets Alliance

Wendy Landman, Executive Director, WalkBoston

David Watson, Executive Director, Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition

Renata von Tscharnner, President, Charles River Conservancy

CC: Mayor Thomas Menino (Boston)  
Commissioner Rick Sullivan (DCR)  
Commissioner Thomas Tinlin (BTD)  
Commissioner Luisa Paiewonsky (MHD)  
City Manager Robert Healy (Cambridge)  
Representative Tim Toomey  
Representative Marty Walz  
Representative Denise Provost  
Representative Alice Wolf  
City Councilor Henrietta Davis (Cambridge)  
City Councilor Mike Ross (Boston)