

16 April 2009

Massachusetts Highway Department  
Environmental Programs  
Attn: Jessica Kenny  
10 Park Plaza, Room 7360  
Boston, MA 02116-3973

Delivery by Adobe PDF via Email

Subject: Longfellow Bridge Rehabilitation Project,  
Environmental Notification Form:  
Request for Supplemental Information

Dear Ms. Kenny:

Thanks again to Michael O'Dowd and you for meeting with LivableStreets Alliance yesterday to discuss the Environmental Notification Form ("ENF") referenced above. This rehabilitation project is a critically important undertaking, both for current and future users whom, over its 75-year useful life, may wish to commute on mass transit, drive, bicycle, walk, or otherwise enjoy this most distinguished and graceful bridge.

Yesterday's discussion was a great start in helping us comprehend the details of:

1. Proposed project description: What you propose to build and to leave, as parts of the completed project.
2. Project alternatives: What alternatives, in terms of accommodating the needs of all users, and enhancing their usage opportunities, were considered in reaching the proposed final design. In addition, in combination with #3 immediately below, how the proposed construction-period traffic management plans and mitigation measures can help inform the consideration and development of those final design (and recommended) project alternatives.
3. Proposed construction plans, impacts, and mitigation measures: With an estimated construction cost of \$267 million dollars (per MHD Website as of 4/16/2009) and a projected 36 to 48 month construction schedule, this critical transportation link between Boston and

Cambridge may have severe construction impacts throughout its multi-year reconstruction period.

In order to complete our review of the ENF and develop written comments to submit as part of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, we request your help with obtaining the following supplemental information:

1. Final design alternatives considered during the design process. At yesterday's discussion, we asked about whether you (as it relates to final project design) performed traffic and other related analyses for having something different [less] than the existing two (2) motorized vehicle travel lanes in both directions on the bridge itself post construction. We believe the answer we were told was "yes" – i.e. such alternatives—including providing only one outbound (towards Cambridge) travel lane for motorized vehicles in the center span section between the towers—were evaluated during the environmental process. We are hopeful that there will be thorough consideration of enhanced multi-use functionality of the bridge that can be envisioned for bicyclists, pedestrians (including walkers, joggers, strollers, even those who may wish to stop and gaze, read, or ponder while on the bridge itself), and those with special needs under such alternatives. We request receipt of any such design alternatives, traffic and other analyses that have been created to date.
2. Construction staging for Option 1: You are currently investigating two options for maintenance of traffic (we use that term broadly to include drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians) throughout the extended construction period. We've prepared the following table to summarize those two options:

	Traffic: (inbound lanes) + (outbound lanes)				Red lines	Peds	Bikes
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4			
<b>Option 1</b> (2 stages)	1+0 (outbound traffic detoured across Dam Road)	1+0 (outbound traffic detoured across Dam Road)	-	-	Always working	Always one sidewalk open	Will follow the roadway traffic detour in each stage
<b>Option 2</b> (4 stages)	1+1	1+1	2+2	2+2	Some weekend shutdowns		

Presently, the ENF contains extensive written and graphic (including staging plans) for Option 2 ONLY. No such details are currently included for Option 1. Yesterday, we were told that presentation boards containing some details for Option 1 would be available for viewing at the public meeting on April 30, 2009. We request that Option 1 details (including full staging plans and cross-sections) be provided as soon as possible.

3. Maintenance of bicycle traffic during construction. The construction traffic plan text currently says that bicycle users will follow the (motorized vehicle) traffic detours. Under both construction-staging Options 1 & 2, we would like to know whether you contemplated creating marked bicycle lanes or even physically separated cycle tracks (e.g. with temporary Jersey barriers or cones) so that bicyclists can be accommodated in both travel directions on-site (on the bridge), thereby avoiding excessive burdens of off-site (i.e. Cragie Bridge) detours and serving to greatly encourage bicycle use during the construction period.
4. Traffic (motorized vehicle) volume projections for the “opening year” of 2012 and “design year” of 2022 for both the Outbound (towards Cambridge) and Inbound (towards Boston) side of the bridge. The ENF contains a Technical Memorandum dated April 6, 2006 that provides some information regarding current and future volume projections. Unfortunately, this Memorandum does not contain information that depicts AM and PM peak-hour traffic volumes for both travel directions for 2012 and 2022. We request that those volumes, and methodology and assumptions used to calculate them, be provided as soon as possible.
5. Proposed bicycle lane narrowing on Inbound approach to Charles Circle. The ENF contemplates a five (5) foot width widening of the bridge abutment wall between Span 1 and the Inbound approach to Charles Circle in order to satisfy, in our view, the Massachusetts Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations Law of 1996. We applaud your efforts to satisfy the mandates of this important statute. However, as currently proposed, this Inbound bicycle lane would narrow from five (5) feet to four (4) feet near this so-called choke point. Yesterday we

asked whether you considered maintaining the full five (5) feet width of this bicycle lane by:

- a. Increasing the Span 1 bridge wall widening by one (1) extra foot;
- b. Narrowing the inside travel shoulder from 2' to 1' in this area; or
- c. Decreasing the width of the two proposed motor vehicle lanes from eleven (11) feet each to ten-feet six inches (10'6") each in this area.

We request copies of any plans or analyses that relate to these alternatives that have been performed to date.

Finally, we respectfully request that either the above information be provided to us by April 24, 2009 or that you extend the comment period deadline until two weeks after the requested information has been received for review and consideration. Comments on this ENF are currently due by May 8, 2009. As such, we ask you provide the additional information requested above by Friday, April 24, 2009, or, as one alternative, if such information gets handed out at the April 30, 2009 public meeting, that you agree to extend the comment period deadline thru May 14, 2009.

Please let us know no later than close of business Friday, April 24, 2009 whether you can supply the requested information by then, or that, in the alternative, you agree to support our request to extend the comment period so that the desired information has been provided by your office at least two weeks before the comment deadline.

If you have any questions on the above requests for information, please contact Glen Berkowitz, Board Member, LivableStreets Alliance, who may be reached at 617.352.0000 (personal office) and [glen@livablestreets.info](mailto:glen@livablestreets.info).

Sincerely,



Glen Berkowitz,  
Board Member