



Boston Bicycle Planning Initiative

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April 21, 2005

Stephen R. Pritchard, Acting Commissioner
Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02114-2104

Dear Commissioner Pritchard:

Now that spring is here, there will naturally be more bicyclists and pedestrians outside to enjoy the weather, the natural resources of Boston, and opportunities to exercise and recreate. It is important to remember that many Department of Conservation and Recreation paths and roadways are used year-round not only by automobile drivers, but also by bicyclists and pedestrians for transportation.

Our constituents have expressed concern regarding the significant amount of sand and debris still remaining on DCR bridges that creates very unsafe conditions for cyclists. While the condition of the Longfellow Bridge roadway is particularly unsafe and of highest concern, a survey of DCR bridges in the metro Boston area over the Charles River indicates that most have unsafe conditions on roadways, sidewalks, and/or handicapped ramps. The table below presents the results of our survey conducted on April 17 and 18, 2005 of several DCR bridges (detailed photographs are included as an enclosure). In addition, we are concerned about the safety conditions of all DCR roadways used by bicyclists and pedestrians (e.g., we have received reports that the path along Alewife Parkway by Fresh Pond mall is a particular problem).

BRIDGE	COMMENTS
Longfellow	Very unsafe roadway conditions with significant sand and trash buildup along entire stretch in both directions; unsafe sidewalk conditions in areas.
Science Museum	Unsafe roadway conditions especially at intersections; Edwin H Land Blvd and Nashua street approaches.
Massachusetts Ave	Unsafe roadway and sidewalk conditions (it appears that an incomplete post-winter street sweeping was attempted, no work has been done on the sidewalks).
Boston University	Unsafe roadway and sidewalk conditions (it appears that an incomplete post-winter street sweeping was attempted, no work has been done on the sidewalks).
Western Avenue	Unsafe roadway and sidewalk conditions.
River Street	Unsafe roadway and sidewalk conditions with several very unsafe handicapped ramps.
JFK	Some sand remaining on roadway and sidewalks, but is in acceptable condition (with the exception of several pieces of debris in the roadway).

The chance of injury or death is increased because: (1) bicyclists riding through sandy patches can lose control and fall, (2) bicyclists are forced further into the travel lanes, (3) bicyclists will swerve around sandy patches making their travel path unpredictable, and (4) bicyclists are more apt to use the sidewalk, creating conflicts with pedestrians. The DCR bridges in the urban Boston area are more heavily used by traffic (bicycles, pedestrians, transit, and cars) because of the limited waterway crossings—therefore, bridges are a particular concern to bicycle riders. In addition, debris, trash, sand, and fine dust on DCR roadways, sidewalks, and paths are unsafe and unsightly for pedestrians as well as bicyclists.

Safety hazards must be removed so as to encourage as much bicycling and walking as possible.

We recognize that this winter has presented unusual challenges, but we have been assured by the DCR that you do have adequate resources to meet maintenance needs. We are confident that you will be able to address these safety concerns promptly and look forward to hearing back from you with a timeline for sweeping these bridges, so that we can pass the information along to our concerned constituents. As DCR has agreements with other agencies and organizations regarding the upkeep of several of these bridges, we would also like to receive a statement from the DCR informing us who is responsible for snow removal and sweeping of each of these bridges.

Please do not hesitate to contact any of us with questions.

Sincerely,



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Boston Bicycle Planning Initiative

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Roxbury, MA 02119

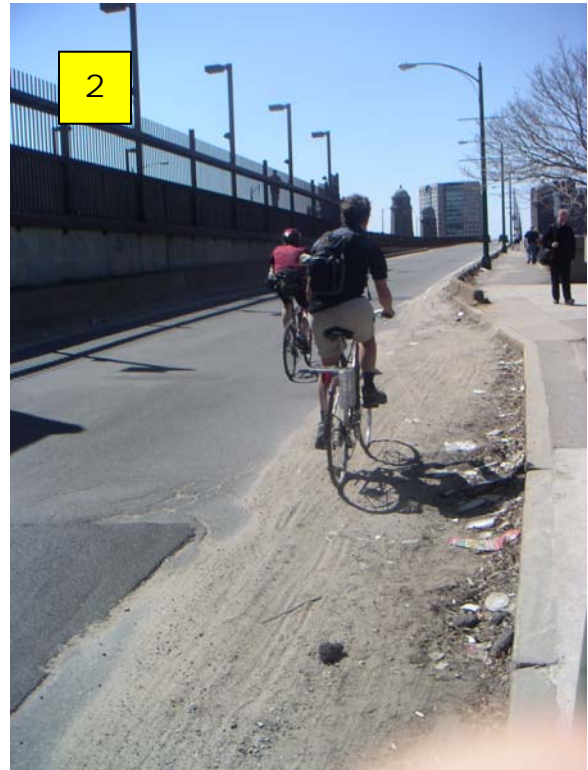


Enclosure

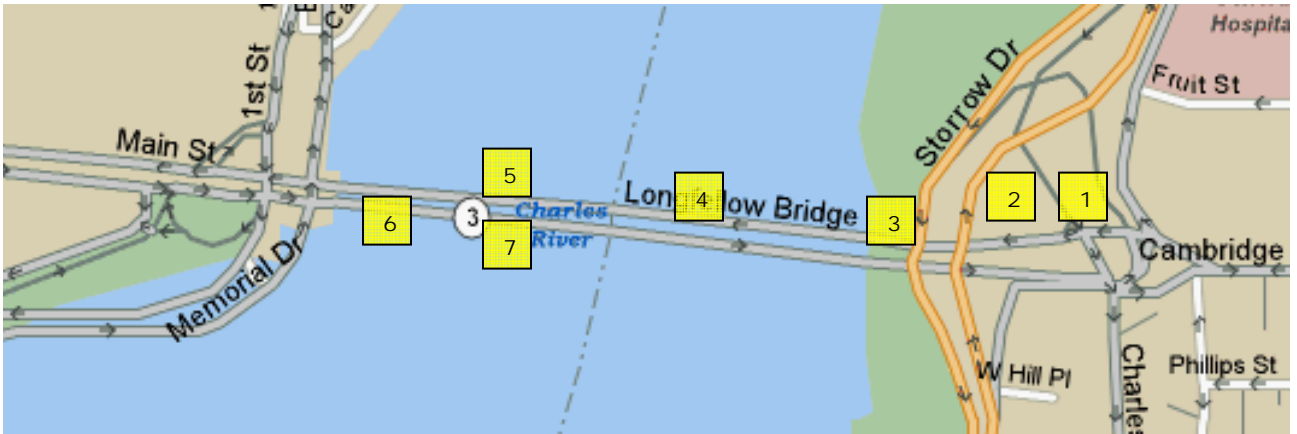
cc: E. Joseph O'Keefe, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs



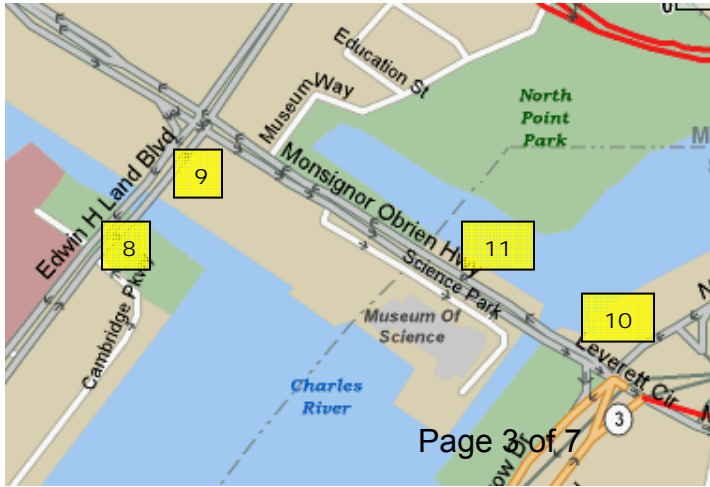
LONGFELLOW BRIDGE: WESTBOUND



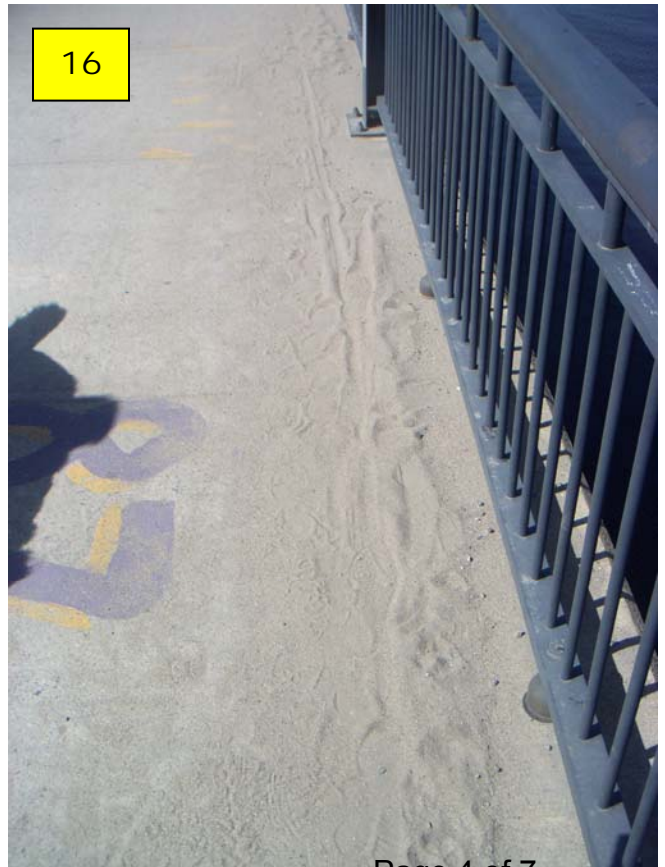
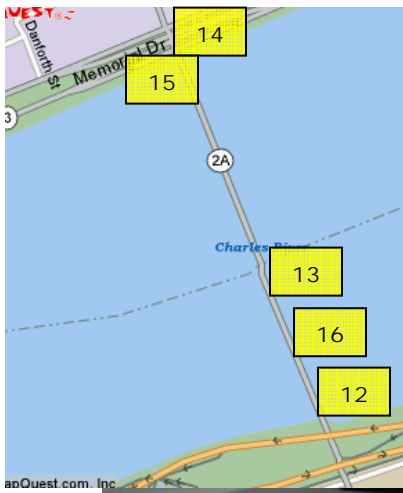
LONGFELLOW BRIDGE: EASTBOUND



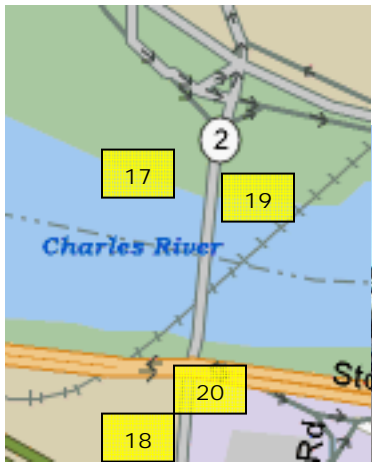
SCIENCE MUSEUM BRIDGE



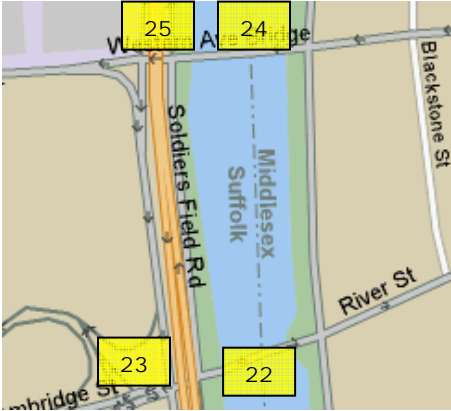
MASS AVE "HARVARD" BRIDGE



BOSTON UNIVERSITY BRIDGE



RIVER STREET BRIDGE



WESTERN AVE BRIDGE



JFK STREET BRIDGE

