

## The Trustees Collaborative for Parks and Open Space

September 24, 2020

Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160  
Boston, MA 02116

Secretary Kathleen A. Theoharides  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Secretary Pollack and Secretary Theoharides,

We, the Trustees Collaborative for Parks and Open Space – an ad hoc group of open space and parks advocates, leaders and donors – support a plan for the Mass Pike Allston Interchange project that will meet the Massachusetts and Boston Climate Action Goals, leave open the opportunity of restoring acres of parklands and river resources within the Charles River Basin and, critically, begin to address the climate crisis.

We are deeply concerned that rebuilding and expanding I-90 as it is currently envisioned, with insufficient improvements to transit, bike, and pedestrian networks is simply extending the life of a highway that has long blighted our riverfront, delivered congestion and poor air quality, and will extend the status quo CO2 burden for another century.

Massachusetts has made zero progress in reducing its CO2 burden in transportation despite the fact that...

- **The Massachusetts Global Warming Solutions Act** requires that the state reduce CO2 emissions by 100% over 1990 levels by 2050.
- **Transportation** is now the single largest contributor to the state's CO2 emissions.
- And yet, the current Mass Pike Allston Interchange plan, projected to be the state's largest transportation project, is **adding cars** and ignoring critical climate laws passed.

We are running out of time and the Allston project should be focused on **moving people and not cars**.

- Instead of expanding car lanes, it should **reduce** them.
- Instead of maintaining the 'status quo' transit, it should **dramatically expand** it.
- Instead of inconsequential concessions of a few bike lanes, it should plan for a **comprehensive multi-modal network**.

Interestingly, and because they are critical, all of our high-level recommendations, detailed below, can be found in:

- the **Governor's own Future of Transportation Report**,
- the **Mayor's Go Boston 2030 goals and targets**, and
- **Secretary Pollak's 2019 Massachusetts Bicycle Transportation Plan**.

Therefore, as we analyze the three proposed plans and scenarios, we have four criteria for success:

1. **All roadways at grade**

2. **Grand Junction 2 rail tracks between West Station and the river must be built during this project.** If it is not built now, it is unlikely to ever be built.
3. **A new exit/entrance connecting the Pike to the Longwood Medical Area must be built during this project.** By providing Grand Junction and Longwood Medical Area travelers better transportation alternatives, Storrow Drive and Soldiers Field Road can be narrowed and calmed along their entire length, from Charles Circle to the Watertown line. Within the next 10 years, both roads should be converted into surface boulevards, 2 lanes in each direction, with pedestrian crossings every 1/4 mile and 30 mph maximum speeds. This will return vast acreage currently trapped and inaccessible under high speed roads and ramps to its intended riverfront park use.
4. **The state cannot hope to meet its CO2 requirements without #2.** This is a top priority that MassDOT continues to omit from their scope and purpose.

We should be **building I-90 at grade**, not on a viaduct, as the neighborhood desires to enhance an underutilized section of the Charles River and eliminate the barrier to the beloved waterfront.

While we believe that the proposed suggestions may add to the cost of this project, these investments will, in fact, result in cost savings in the building of adjacent future projects.

If the Commonwealth wants to prosper in our current and future economy, each and every one of its infrastructure investments must answer the **multi modal needs** of this century while addressing **climate emissions** and **environmental justice NOW**.

*If this region wants to thrive, the Allston Interchange can be the first of many transformational infrastructure improvements that create both jobs and access to jobs, in ways that result in a livable, sustainable, and just place that we want to call home.*

Sincerely,

Individual Members of The Trustees Collaborative for Parks and Open Space

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