



The construction and final result of the Allston Multimodal Project will have tangible and lasting impacts on every community between Boston and Worcester. It will change how people travel on the Commuter Rail and I-90 and local streets and pathways, the quality of life and health for nearby residents, and the ecology and accessibility of the Charles River. To bring about the positive changes appropriate for a billion-dollar project, it is urgent that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) advance the project in the following ways:

1. This project requires better transit before, during, and after construction. Hundreds of thousands of people move through the project area every day. With or without this project, transit improvements are desperately needed and should be central to the construction mitigation and final outcome of the project. Both tracks of the Worcester Line must remain open during construction to provide meaningful bidirectional alternatives for commuters. West Station with four tracks must be built early in the process and be a Regional Transit Hub, including a two-track connection via the Grand Junction to Kendall Square and beyond, serving dozens of communities to the north and west of Boston with excellent bus and rail service.

2. Repair or replacement of the highway viaduct is neither practical nor just. The existing viaduct is the legacy of inequitable highway policies that tore communities apart decades ago - the impacts of which are still being felt by the residents of Allston today. The multiple "S" curves and steep grades of the viaduct cause danger to drivers, and MassDOT has failed to demonstrate that reconstructing the viaduct in place can be implemented without reducing the Worcester Branch to single track operation for substantial periods of time, disrupting both driving and rail options of MetroWest commuters. Advocates, and MassDOT's own consultants, have offered multiple hybrid and surface options that are reasonable, achievable, and offer significant benefits to Allston residents and MetroWest commuters, as well as more effective noise abatement opportunities to benefit Allston and Cambridge residents.

3. The Charles River in Allston is a tremendous asset that should be restored, enhanced, and made accessible. It is critical to expand access to the Charles River, improve water quality with green infrastructure and reduced runoff, encourage active transportation with separated walking and biking paths, sustain tree canopy and native landscape, and create a public realm that is safe and welcoming. In service of these requirements, we support exploring riverbank improvement and

restoration along the river that may include limited fill. The river must also be protected during construction to safeguard the incredible public and private investment in the river over the last three decades. Mitigation measures must be thoroughly and transparently considered when selecting an alternative to ensure the least overall harm and most overall benefit to this important regional resource.

We recognize that this project is extraordinarily complex, but we firmly assert that it is possible to build a project that better serves the needs of Metrowest commuters and residents in Allston and Cambridge today and in the future while meeting our climate targets. In summary, we reject the turnpike viaduct option because of its unacceptable community impacts and we believe that either the at-grade or hybrid option could be refined to yield a preferred alternative that works for all modes of transportation, and that yields long-term benefits for the adjacent community, for commuters, for the river and parks, and for the environment writ large. We urge MassDOT, EEA, and FHWA to re-frame the alternatives and the public engagement process to yield a preferred alternative that meets these criteria and has public support.

Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation

Allston Brighton Health Collaborative

Allston Village Main Streets

Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association

Charles River Conservancy

Conservation Law Foundation

Emerald Necklace Conservancy

Green Cambridge

Kendall Square Association

LivableStreets Alliance

Magazine Beach Partners

Massachusetts Conservation Voters

MassBike

Transit Matters

WalkBoston

Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce

Allston Multimodal Project Task Force Members

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- Harry Mattison, Allston resident
- Jessica Robertson, Allston resident