



April 24, 2014

Patricia Leavenworth, P.E., Chief Engineer
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10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

ATTN: Bridge Project Management, Project File No. 606475
Delivery via email to dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us

Dear Ms. Leavenworth,

WalkBoston is pleased to provide comments on the Allston I-90, Massachusetts Turnpike Interchange Improvement Project and the April 10, 2014 public meeting. We are also pleased to have been invited to participate in the project advisory group.

We write to note the issues that we hope will be addressed by the project, some of them to be included in long-range planning and others to be included in project design – but all of them will contribute to the successful reclamation of a large and important piece of the City that has for too long been disregarded as a part of the surrounding community.

1. Project scope - The scope of the project needs to extend far enough along the Turnpike to look at bigger picture auto circulation, including access between the Longwood Medical Area, the Fenway, Back Bay and the Turnpike and relief of traffic at the Bowker Overpass and on Storrow Drive. Addressing these major vehicular demands will potentially provide significant opportunities to enhance the regionally important open space, walking, running and bicycling assets along the Charles River.
2. Pedestrian access throughout the project – Scoping of the project should include guidelines for designs to facilitate pedestrian travel through the project and into surrounding neighborhoods.
3. Air rights development – Intensive use of the air rights above the rail yards and the Turnpike can be foreseen as part of any long-range plan. Ramps and access roads, the mainline of the Turnpike and the commuter rail yards should be designed to accommodate development of the air rights.
4. Land uses in the newly available land - The needs of the community and adjacent institutions should guide development, rather than the needs of traffic to and from the Turnpike. Traffic needs should not limit the explorations of the potential uses of the land.
5. Affordable housing for residents of Allston - Housing goals should be outlined early to permit inclusion in all aspects of the study.
6. Minimize the impacts of regional traffic on neighborhood streets – The alignment and connections of turnpike on and off-ramps should be designed to minimize cut through traffic and to protect the integrity of residential areas.
7. Rail Yards - The design for reconstruction of the rail yards should minimize the number of required tracks (possibly looking at other locations to provide some of the necessary rail

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- yards) and provide footprints for the supporting columns that enable air rights development above them.
8. Commuter rail station – The design of a new West Station should be advanced to a point where its location and likely dimensions are known, to allow for planning its access to proceed as part of this project. Station access should be provided for both sides of the rail tracks between North Allston and Commonwealth Avenue.
 9. Reconnecting Packard’s Corner area and North Allston – An impenetrable wall of rail tracks and the Turnpike will separate the two parts of this neighborhood forever, unless provision for crossing is planned from the beginning, either with air rights or with bridges, or both.
 10. Transit access – Bus, commuter rail and other modes of public transportation should be considered as part of the overall design at a very early date.
 11. Turnpike main line - The lanes in the new portion of the Turnpike between Agganis Way and Cambridge St. should be separated sufficiently to allow for the construction of supporting columns for new uses on air rights above the Turnpike.
 12. Turnpike access ramps - Access ramps should be designed in spare and efficient ways that afford the maximum use of the land for non-transportation purposes. Short tunnels should not be excluded from consideration.
 13. Storrow Drive Alignment – A long-range plan for the area should include relocation of a portion of Soldiers Field Road away from the river. All access to and from the Turnpike and Cambridge Street should take this into consideration and not preclude potential options for connections.
 14. A new park along the river - Relocation of Storrow Drive away from the river allows expansion of the adjacent parkland, which is now very narrow and constrained.
 15. Connecting the area with the Charles River – Alternatives should be examined for connections between development in this area and the river for both pedestrians and bicycles.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the project.

Best regards,



Wendy Landman
Executive Director



Bob Sloane
Senior Project Manager