

August 6, 2014

Mike O'Dowd
Project Manager, MassDOT
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

Re: Allston - The I-90 Massachusetts Turnpike Interchange Project, Evaluation Criteria

Dear Mike:

Thank you and the project team for providing the opportunity to provide comments on the evaluation criteria for the I-90 Turnpike Interchange Project. Rather than focus on the detailed design and environmental criteria that will be used, WalkBoston feels that it is important to set out big-picture performance standards for the project. Thus far the broader community-building implications of what this project can achieve – beyond its roadway connections to the Turnpike – have not been fully laid out.

The following performance standards should help define the project more completely. We suggest that they be considered as part of the minimum requirements for a successful reconstruction of the interchange.

1. Soldiers Field Road/Storrow Drive – The project should result in the expansion of open space along the Charles River. Based on the alternatives we have been shown to date this is likely to be accomplished through the relocation of some or all of Soldiers Field Road/Storrow Drive under the Turnpike viaduct. Existing rail lines would likely need to be altered or relocated as part of the reconstruction. Thus, all final rail alignments and viaduct supporting members should be designed to make room for this riverside highway relocation.
2. Cambridge Street Bypass – Separate local and regional traffic operations should be evaluated. Multiple lanes of traffic (6 to 8 minimum) will likely be necessary for Cambridge Street to accommodate traffic movements. The number of lanes should be defined as soon as possible so that the neighborhood can comment on whether MassDOT should explore a two-street option that provides for a residential district on both sides of a narrowed Cambridge Street, plus a New Cambridge Street to provide connections to the Turnpike ramps, Stadium Way/East Drive and the River Street Bridge. (See attached diagrams of several conceptual possibilities.)
3. Connecting roads north of Cambridge Street All alternatives should include the construction of both Stadium Way and East Drive as integral links in the access pattern of the study area. Without the construction of these two roadways, Cambridge Street and North Allston will be swamped with traffic.

MAKING MASSACHUSETTS MORE WALKABLE

Old City Hall | 45 School Street | Boston MA 02108 | T: 617.367.9255 | F: 617.367.9285 | info@walkboston.org | www.walkboston.org

4. Turnpike ramps Alternatives for the Turnpike's new alignment should be based on a minimum of retained fill (embankments) between the viaduct and ground level, as suggested in Alternatives 3-D and 3-G. This will allow for over-Turnpike connections to access ramps and to West Station.
5. West Station access All alternatives should include convenient and attractive access to both Cambridge Street and Commonwealth Avenue for pedestrians, bicycles, and buses (perhaps with separate bus access from the north and the south) to the West Station headhouse.

While we think that none of the alternatives presented to date meet these standards, we look forward to MassDOT's development of alternatives that demonstrate how these standards can be realized.

Sincerely,

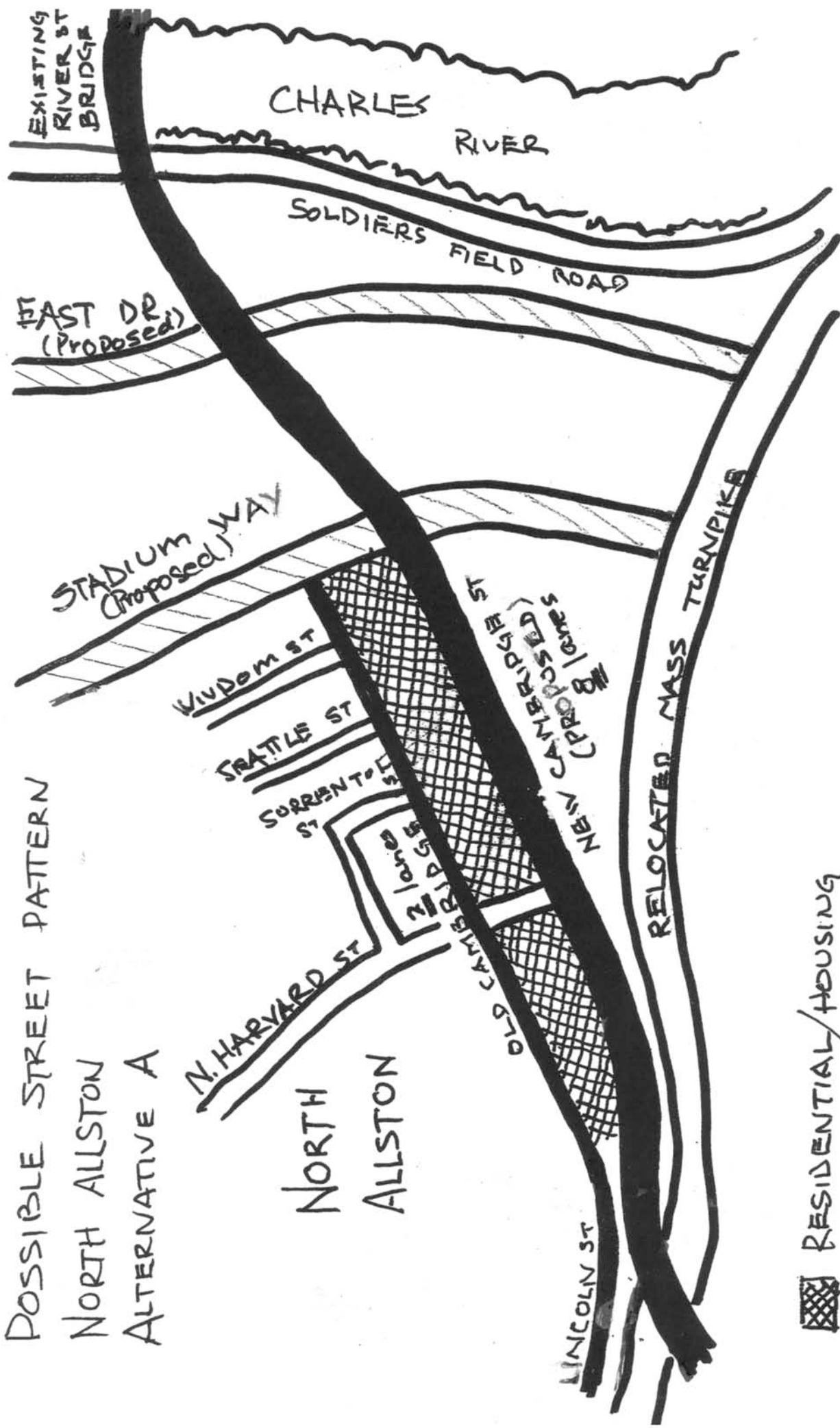


Wendy Landman
Executive Director



Bob Sloane
Senior Project Manager

POSSIBLE STREET PATTERN
NORTH ALLSTON
ALTERNATIVE A



CHARLES RIVER

SOLDIERS FIELD ROAD

EAST DR (Proposed)

STADIUM WAY (Proposed)

WISDOM ST

SPRATTLE ST

SORRENTO ST

N. HARVARD ST

NORTH ALLSTON

NEW CAMBRIDGE ST (8 lanes) (Proposed)

OLD CAMBRIDGE ST

RELOCATED MASS TURNPIKE

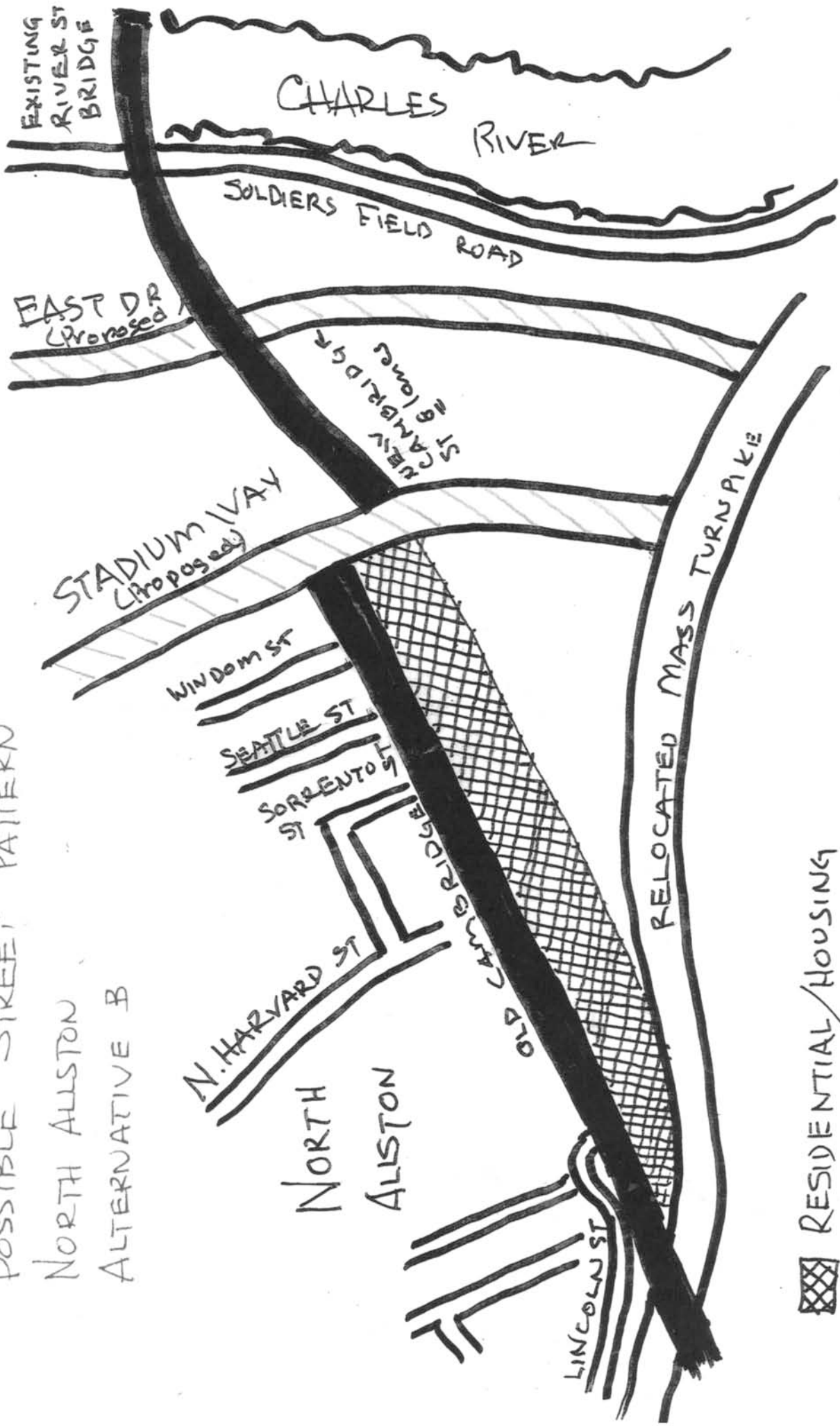
LINCOLN ST

RESIDENTIAL/HOUSING



POSSIBLE STREET PATTERN

NORTH ALLSTON
ALTERNATIVE B



RESIDENTIAL/HOUSING