LivableStreets
Rethinking urban transportation

MASS BIKE
BETTER BICYCLING FOR MASSACHUSETTS

walkBoston

Institute for Human-Centered Design
[Adaptive Environments]

BIKE TO THE SEA
RIDING FOR BIKE SAFETY AND SAFE PLACES TO RIDE

September 17, 2009

Lou Rabito
Bicycle-Pedestrian Accommodation Engineer
Massachusetts Highway Department
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116-3973

RE: Broadway/Alford Street (Route 99) Improvements in Boston and Everett
(MHD Project File No. 602382, EOEA #14443)

Dear Mr. Rabito:

We are writing to you in response to the public meeting that was held on September 10, 2009, regarding the Route 99 Project in Boston and Everett. On behalf of LivableStreets Alliance, MassBike, WalkBoston, Institute for Human-Centered Design, and Bike to the Sea, we thank you for taking our comments and concerns into account as the design of this project moves forward.

At the September 10 public meeting, we were presented with 7 different alternatives for the cross-section of Broadway along the Bow Street segment. We were asked to choose an alternative that we thought best achieves the goals of safely and comfortably accommodating the wide range of users of this roadway.

At the meeting, we spoke in favor of Option 5 since it provides the best accommodations for pedestrians and cyclists while also maintaining what we think are sufficient lane widths for trucks. However, we do recognize that the 10.5' travel lanes are below the recommended minimum for an urban arterial that is expressed in the Massachusetts Highway Project Development and Design Guide.

After the meeting, you and I spoke further about the cross-section options, and discussed in detail Option 1 as being the preferred option from MassHighway's perspective. Wendy Landman and Bob Sloane of WalkBoston also had a follow-up conversation with you on this topic. Particularly given the high volume of trucks, we agreed that lanes of at least 11' in width are desirable, from an operational perspective, and from the perspective of being approved at the Federal level. We also agreed that 5' bike lanes in each direction were essential given the volume of traffic and importance of this corridor as a bicycle connection. We also emphasized the importance of minimizing any sidewalk narrowing that takes place. In addition, we agreed

that because of the limitations of the total cross-section, that all modes will have to "give a little" in order to reach a design that accommodates them all as best as possible.

With that in mind, **we would like to express our coalition's support of Alternative 1, with one modification**. In order to lessen the impact of sidewalk narrowing, we would like the cross-section to include 4 11' travel lanes and a 9' sidewalk. While 1' does not sound like a lot, pedestrians will benefit greatly from it. There is already a large residential population along this particular segment of Broadway, and additional residential buildings have been and are being built in the area. It is essential that the sidewalks are as accommodating as possible to this residential population. This additional 1' may also allow you leave existing street trees untouched and provide space to install new street trees. With 4 11' lanes, trucks and other large vehicles will be able to operate safely and easily. In fact, the 4 11' lanes may actually increase overall safety by decreasing the maximum speed of vehicles between intersections (while not affecting overall capacity), which is particularly important on a roadway such as this that is being designed with a 30 mph speed limit.

With this modified option, we feel that all modes equally share the burden of less than ideal, but reasonable, accommodations. The 7' parking lane is 1' narrower than the ideal, affecting bicyclists. The sidewalk is 1' narrower than currently, affecting the residential area and the pedestrian environment. The travel lanes are 1' narrower than ideal for trucks. Please note that we have also reached out to the Massachusetts Motor Transportation Association, who was represented at the public meeting, to ask for their support for 4 11' lanes.

A comparison of Option 1 as presented to our modified version follows:

	Option 1 (as presented)	**Option 1 (modified)**
Sidewalk	6'	6'
SB Bike lane	5'	5'
Travel lane	11'	11'
Travel lane	**11.5'**	**11'**
Travel lane	**11.5'**	**11'**
Travel lane	11'	11'
NB Bike lane	5'	5'
Parking lane	7'	7'
Sidewalk	**8'**	**9'**
TOTAL	76'	76'

In addition to our cross-section recommendation, we would like to **express our support for the addition of a pedestrian crossing signal at Broadway and Thorndike Street**. This was strongly desired by the community in attendance at the public meeting, and as many others do, we feel that this location warrants a crossing signal due to the need for pedestrians (mainly local residents) to access bus stops and retail services on both sides of Broadway at this location. We hope you will conduct counts of pedestrians crossing at this and other locations to assist in the design of crosswalks, signals and the calibration of essential crossing times for pedestrians

We would also like you to consider the **addition of curb extensions (also known as bulb-outs)** at intersections, crosswalks and bus stops on the east side of Broadway in the parking lane where there are currently no planned parking spaces. These curb extensions would increase pedestrian safety and should be designed to accommodate the addition of bus shelters. Transit riders would then have a place to wait during inclement weather and a place to sit while they wait.

Thank you for engaging us in this project as the design moves ahead. Please keep us informed as to what cross-section you choose in the end. If you have any further questions about our comments, please feel free to contact me. My cell number is 617-852-6125 and my e-mail address is charlie@livablestreets.info

Sincerely,

Charlie Denison

Charlie Denison, Board of Directors, LivableStreets Alliance

On behalf of:
David Watson, Executive Director, MassBike
Chris Porter, Chair, MassBike Metro Boston Chapter
Wendy Landman, Executive Director, WalkBoston
Christopher Hart, Director of Urban and Transportation Projects,
Institute for Human-Centered Design
Janet Green, President, Bike to the Sea

CC:
Luisa Paiewonsky, Commissioner, MassHighway
Frank A. Tramontozzi, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassHighway
Tom DiPaolo, Asst. Chief Engineer, MassHighway
Muazzer Reardon, Rte. 99 Project Manager, MassHighway
Patricia A. Leavenworth, District 4 Highway Director, MassHighway
Ned Codd, Director of Program Development, Executive Office of Transportation
Ian Bowles, Secretary, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Vineet Gupta, Director of Planning & Policy, Boston Transportation Department
Nicole Freedman, Director, Boston Bikes
Marzie Galazka, Director of Community Development, City of Everett
Julius Ofurie, City Engineer, City of Everett
Erik Scheier, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
Anne Lynch, Executive Director, Massachusetts Motor Transportation Association
State Representative Stephen Smith
State Senator Anthony Gallucio

Addendum: Research on 10' travel lanes on arterial streets

LivableStreets Alliance has compiled research regarding 10' lanes on urban arterials. Conventional wisdom states that travel lanes narrower than 11' can cause safety and capacity issues, particularly for vehicles such as buses and trucks. However, the experience of cities in Massachusetts and around the nation has shown that many of the fears associated with 10' lanes do not play out, as 10' lanes have been successfully used across the country, particularly when trying to add bike lanes without changing curb-to-curb dimensions. LivableStreets is currently working on creating a technical document that presents the case for 10' lanes in a more polished package; however in the meantime, we have included a number of pertinent documents with this letter:

Ten Foot Lanes for Boston: Serving Cyclists and Motorists
By Christopher Longenbaker, Northeastern University

The Influence of Lane Widths on Safety and Capacity: A Summary of the Latest Findings
Theodore Petritsch, P.E. PTOE, Director of Transportation Services, Sprinkle Consulting

Some Research on Lane Widths
By Marius Navazo, Research Fellow for LivableStreets Alliance

Partial list of Arterial Lane Widths in the Boston area
Compiled by LivableStreets Alliance

(These documents are provided as Adobe PDF files included with the e-mail this letter is attached to.)