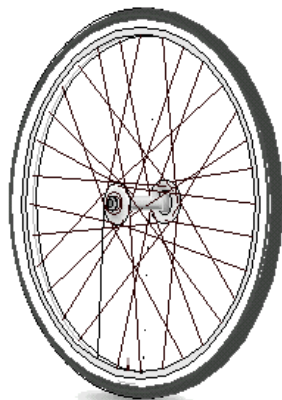


December 21, 2016

Patricia Leavenworth, P.E.
Chief Engineer, MassDOT,
10 Park Plaza,
Boston, MA 02116
ATTN: Bridge Project Management,
Project File No. 606475.



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Dear Ms. Leavenworth:

I attended the Public Information Meeting on December 8, and I have the following comments:

I am pleased that creation of parkland between Soldiers Field Road and the Charles River is now proposed, increasing safety of the shared-use path and opening up a long stretch of riverbank for recreational use.

I am pleased also with the proposal for a bicycle-pedestrian overpass over Soldiers Field Road, and with the location of the proposed replacement of the Franklin Street Footbridge where it will provide an easy transition to and from streets. The present footbridge provides an inconvenient connection to Harvard Avenue for bicyclists, requiring crossing two sides of an intersection.

However, the latest plan for the project, shown at the meeting, shows the very same problem with the proposed Soldiers Field Road overpass. It ends at one corner of a busy, multi-lane intersection. Routes to the proposed West Station and Boston University lead from the opposite corner.

Also, two-way, one-side of the street separated bikeways which cross multiple signalized intersections carrying heavy motor traffic are proposed throughout the Beacon Yards area. To get from Soldiers Field Road to Linden Street, for example, requires crossing five such intersections. Delays make this an impractical and inconvenient route for bicyclists, and increase temptation to ignore the signals.

Research has shown bicyclists' crossing intersections from right to left on the near side to produce a very high rate of bicycle-motor-vehicle collisions. The consulting firm's moderator, replying to my comments at the December 8 meeting, said that the intersections would be "protected intersections." "Protected", however, means a movement for which all conflicting movements are prohibited by traffic signals: for example, a turn on a green arrow. In a so-called "protected intersection" for bicyclists, the bikeway is merely pulled away from the intersection by a few feet, so that the driver of the first vehicle turning right can look out the right-side window to yield. Following vehicles queue and delays ensue for motorists. Pedestrian crossings also are unprotected. Unless bicycle/pedestrian intervals are exclusive, increasing delays, the use of the word "protected" here is misleading. And illegal right turns on red can be expected.

I have repeatedly supported the concept of a People's Pike, a safe, grade-separated shared-use path parallel to the Turnpike, taking advantage of the grade separations already required by the Turnpike ramps. I suggest other grade separations as well, a street hierarchy so that not every street is a multi-lane arterial, and conventional bike lanes on the smaller streets. Placemaking, and traffic management where through motor traffic is as heavy as it will be here require this.

Very truly yours,

John S. Allen

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John S. Allen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Member, Waltham Bicycle Committee, and Charles River Wheelmen Board of Directors: my own opinions.