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July 13, 2007

Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.
Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street
Boston, MA 02114-2104

Re: Storrow Drive

Dear Commissioner Sullivan:

A Better City (ABC) advances infrastructure investments and projects that are vital to sustaining and growing the Boston area's economy and ensuring that Boston remains one of the most dynamic and unique cities in the world. Our Board of Directors is comprised of almost 100 business and institutional leaders throughout the Greater Boston area. ABC has been represented on the Storrow Drive Transportation Advisory Committee by our Planning Director Thomas Nally since the committee was established in late 2006.

Our comments on the proposed changes to the Storrow Drive Tunnel between Clarendon Street and Arlington Street are based on the data and analysis presented to the committee by DCR representatives, their consultants, and representatives of CTPS. This team has done a very professional job of presenting the analysis of all alternatives being considered in a manner that facilitates the comparison among them.

Based on the analysis presented, we believe the best overall alternative for the tunnel project is "Option A" which would rehabilitate the existing tunnel, perhaps with some enhancements to extend its expected useful life. Option A maintains the best overall traffic operations and connections, has a short critical construction period to minimize the duration of construction impacts, and minimizes the loss of mature trees on the Esplanade. Maintaining the traffic network and minimizing construction impacts are critical to support the existing pattern of uses in the nearby residential neighborhoods and commercial areas, and that is why we believe that the replacement in kind strategy is the best in this instance.

We feel that maintaining good access along Storrow Drive and the streets that connect to and from it is important to support the economy of the city and the region, not only in the Back Bay but also for the uses served by Storrow Drive in the Fenway and Longwood areas, in Downtown Boston, and beyond. This access is important for both the construction period and for the long run future of the region.

The beneficial attributes of Option A, based on the analysis conducted to date, are numerous. Option A:

- Maintains all existing connections in their current locations. Maintaining the integrity and completeness of the current roadway network is very important to maintaining the viability of the neighborhoods.
- Maintains the current capacity of Storrow Drive. None of the other options provide any improvement in capacity.
- Requires no additional traffic signals, reducing impact of delay and queuing as a result.
- Avoids a long list of street segments that would experience increased traffic volumes that would occur with all other options. These increases would be found on both residential and commercial streets in the adjacent area as well as in Cambridge.
- Provides nearly the shortest duration of “critical stage” traffic impacts during construction: 13 months, versus 12 months for the surface parkway option and up to 33 months for Option D-3. Most other construction impacts are similar across the board for all alternatives; therefore, aiming for a shorter duration is a good approach to minimizing the effect of construction on the surroundings.
- Has the lowest construction cost for any option that provides a grade separation of ramps and Storrow Drive. The surface boulevard has a lower cost, but does not provide grade separation, which is desirable to reduce queuing and delays.
- Requires the removal of the smallest number of mature trees on the Esplanade and Back Street.

We concur, however, with comments voiced by many participants that further analysis should continue. This analysis should focus on how to improve the performance of Option A, in particular, evaluating the cost effectiveness of improving the useful life of the tunnel rehabilitation, and possible cost and construction duration improvements. We do not expect that the further analysis of Option A or other options will change our opinion, but we enter the next phase of work with an open mind.

While you continue the planning and implementation of this project, it will be important to consider how it fits in the sequence and scheduling of other critical projects currently being discussed in the Charles River Basin. In order to ensure effective coordination, the control of impacts, and the smoothest possible flow of traffic, each of the projects needs to be seen in the context of the big picture.

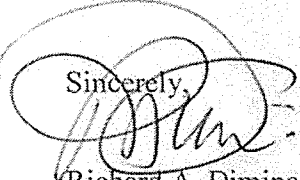
In any case, we believe it is imperative that design for all facilities along the Esplanade attain the highest standards of quality. Park improvements, pedestrian bridges, barriers and rails, portals, and signage need to be designed taking this unique and visible setting into consideration. If there is a premium cost to be paid

for this project, that investment should go into use of durable and attractive materials, detailing, and installation rather than into engineering solutions that require more movement of earth or pouring of concrete. In this location, it is what the public will see and touch that will leave the most lasting impression and not the achievements in engineering or construction.

We intend to comment in greater detail as the environmental review process continues; however, we believe it is important that our support for this option and the reasons for that support should be on the record as the discussion progresses.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important project. In closing, I want to repeat our appreciation for the effort by Karl Haglund and his colleagues, Elliott Laffer, and Patrice Todisco that has resulted in a very effective process of analysis and communications. Without their contribution, this collaboration with the interested stakeholders would not have been possible.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Dimino
President and CEO

cc: Secretary Ian Bowles
Secretary Bernard Cohen
Commissioner Thomas Tinlin

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