



City of Boston
Mayor Martin J. Walsh
Public Works & Transportation

September 23, 2020

Secretary Stephanie Pollack
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160
Boston, MA 02116
Stephanie.Pollack@dot.state.ma.us

Dear Secretary Pollack,

We want to reiterate the City's strong desire that the All-At-Grade option be selected as the preferred design alternative for the Allston Multimodal Project and our opposition to the selection of the Highway Viaduct option. We believe that the All-At-Grade option has the highest potential to leave a lasting positive legacy for Boston and the region, and thus it merits the most design focus over the year ahead.

While the early indications are that each Throat option is roughly equivalent in cost to build, only the All-At-Grade option relieves the toll payers on the Mass Pike and the taxpayers across the State from the very expensive burden of maintaining, repairing and eventually replacing a lengthy viaduct -- a cost we are all bearing today.

While each option proposes the same number of rail lines and travel lanes today, the All-At-Grade option best preserves flexibility to redesign this corridor as the travel needs of our residents -- and the strategies we use to achieve a carbon free Commonwealth -- evolve. From repurposing travel lanes for bus priority to traffic calming on Soldiers Field Road, a number of compelling ideas have been raised about the future of this corridor. A legacy provided by the All-At-Grade would be the choice for future generations to more easily adapt this corridor to their needs.

While each option seeks to address the noise from the thousands of cars and trucks that can be heard across sections of Allston and Cambridge, only the All-At-Grade option eliminates the sound of cars and trucks gearing up to climb an elevated viaduct and takes away the raised platform from which this noise is projected.

Finally, while each option holds the promise of a pedestrian bridge, only the All-At-Grade option takes down the visual barrier that has stood between our residents and the river for

generations, daylighting a section of our city as MassDOT has already done to great acclaim in Forest Hills and along the Greenway -- albeit and necessarily without creating equivalent open space in this case.

The All-At-Grade option is not without its challenges. In particular, while no travel lanes would be in the river, it requires that the space for pedestrians, joggers and cyclists be on a boardwalk in the Charles River, and that the shoreline restoration of the Charles likely takes place where there is river and riprap today. These impacts should not be taken lightly. We believe, however, that the community, financial, and long term environmental and transportation benefits of the All-At-Grade option merit this option being selected as the preferred alternative.

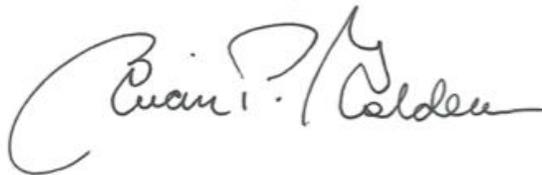
To your great credit, you have taken the time to get this transformative project right and are driving this process to a necessary decision point. The MassDOT team and your independent review team have devoted significant effort to this; and you have welcomed, embraced and enhanced ideas from the public -- best illustrated by the All At Grade option itself.

Knowing that all options of the Throat will be carried forward but that one option -- the preferred alternative -- will get the most design attention, we ask that you select the option for that additional attention that is in the best long term interests of the City and, we believe, the region; we ask that you select the All-At-Grade.

Sincerely,



Chris Osgood
Chief of Streets



Brian Golden
Director
Boston Planning & Development Agency