



Boston Cyclists Union

P.O. Box 191710
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May 16, 2019

RE: Please Widen the Community Path Extension and ensure Staybridge connection

Dear Governor Baker,

On behalf of the Boston Cyclists Union, I am writing to request that you widen the planned Community Path Extension (CPX) so that it meets modern safety standards and serves the strong demand of the fast-growing Metro Boston region. We ask that the path be designed and built 14 feet wide wherever possible, and at least 12 feet at pinch points.

Existing plans state an intent to build a 10-foot-wide path. However, the latest recommendations from MassDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) call for a width of 11' to 14' for these kinds of high-volume, multi-use paths. As we saw in March when two cyclists collided on the Minuteman (a 12-foot-wide path), killing one of them, the consequences of a too-narrow path can be tragic and fatal.

Ensuring the CPX has a safe capacity cannot be stressed enough given the path's regional importance and projected usage. The CPX will form a key link in the region's bike network, offering connections to other high-traffic trails nearby (the Minuteman and Paul Dudley White) as well as new and future bike infrastructure (the Grand Junction Path, and the rapidly expanding network of low-stress bike lanes in metro Boston). And with bike ridership booming in the area — it rose by more than 30% from 2016 to 2017 in Boston, Cambridge and Somerville, with the latter two cities now ranking in the top 10 nationally for bike commute mode share — the path should be made wide enough now so it has the potential to accommodate all the latent demand sure to materialize in the near future.

Additionally please ensure that a future connection can be made between the Community Path Extension and the planned bike-ped ramp at the Staybridge Hotel (263 Monsignor O'Brien Hwy Cambridge). The Community Path Extension and the Staybridge ramp are just ~150' apart. A direct connection can best be made via a culvert through the GLX viaduct wall that will be built in between the Community Path Extension and the Staybridge ramp.

The state has shown a willingness before to revise old plans to meet new safety standards and mode share realities. The Boston Cyclists Union was thrilled to see MassDOT update plans that were seemingly set in stone but not reflective of current priorities, design best practices, and demand for the Craigie Bridge — the site of another recent bike fatality — and Longfellow Bridge to include protected bike lanes. We hope you will make the same decision here, and get this path right from the outset.

Thank you,

Becca Wolfson
Executive Director, Boston Cyclists Union