



Boston Cyclists Union

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Secretary Matthew Beaton
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
Attention: MEPA Office
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

May 13, 2019

RE: Mystic River Crossing, Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge

Dear Secretary Beaton,

Between 2016 and 2017, bike ridership rose by more than 30% in Boston, Cambridge and Somerville. Meanwhile, nearly 80% of Massachusetts' urban residents say they want to bike to work, according to a MassDOT survey — though many won't do so unless they have access to safe bike routes. With ridership soaring, and with so much latent demand waiting to be tapped, I urge you to move forward as expeditiously as possible with the Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge.

This bridge would fill a glaring gap in the region's bike network, providing riders with a convenient, comfortable route all the way from Somerville to Lynn via the Northern Strand Trail. While there are painted bike lanes on the Alford St. bridge, a dedicated space for cyclists would be much safer and more effective at encouraging people to opt out of their cars; protected bike lanes have been shown to reduce risk of injury to cyclists by 90% while increasing ridership by 75% on roads with new infrastructure.

Through its connection to the Orange Line, this bridge would also enable and encourage far more people to travel by bike, foot and transit. The bridge will allow for "last mile" trips to be made by bicycle and on foot from the Assembly Square MBTA station into Everett, and vice versa. This should be a key consideration given that the area is already choked by congestion and is rapidly becoming more dense with development and the impending opening of the Encore Casino. Sullivan Square and the surrounding areas are already at capacity for cars. Building this bridge as soon as possible would mitigate that traffic concern while helping to move more people more efficiently.

Given the importance of this project and its enormous potential impact, I also urge that the state reconsider plans to winnow the bridge to 12 feet from the original width of 14 feet. This bridge is projected to see strong usage, and with all the development in the area it must be built with room to accommodate future growth. Maintaining the original width would also align with other key completed or in-development regional routes — the Fanny Appleton Bridge, Whittier Bridge, Bruce Freeman Rt. 2 Bridge, Waltham-Wayside Bridge, and Riverside/Charlestown Bridge — all of which

are at least 14 feet wide. If you build it, we know the people biking and walking will come. A narrow path will invite unnecessary conflict and discomfort — let's get this right from the start!

Developers have committed to funding a significant portion of this project, presenting Massachusetts with an excellent opportunity to secure private investment in a much-needed public project. I urge you to seize this opportunity to close a critical gap in the region's bike network, avert a traffic nightmare, and promote a safer, saner and more sustainable transportation network equipped to meet the demands — and desires — of Metro Boston now and into the future.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Becca Wolfson', with a period at the end.

Becca Wolfson
Executive Director, Boston Cyclists Union