



CITY OF BOSTON • MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MARTIN J. WALSH

October 30, 2020

Administrator Jeffrey McEwen
Federal Highway Administration
55 Broadway, 19th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02124
Jeff.McEwen@dot.gov

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

Dear Administrator McEwen & Secretary Pollack

Thank you for your leadership of one of the most consequential public works projects of this generation for this region. The Allston Multimodal Project will increase the safety and ensure the reliability of the Mass Pike; it will create an opportunity for growth for the vibrant Allston neighborhood; it will anchor that growth with significantly improved public transit; and, it will expand access to enhanced parkland in our city.

The full transportation, neighborhood and environmental benefits of this project will be realized over the next fifty years and beyond, with subsequent investment building on the foundation that this project sets. Our constituents strongly feel that the right foundation to set for this project is one that brings the highway to grade through the Throat section. This design preference is best embodied by the Modified At Grade alternative and runs counter to the approach advanced by the Highway Viaduct and No Build alternatives.

Certainly consensus is an ideal rarely reached in our field; there is, however, significant convergence on the Modified At Grade as the preferred design approach, which has now been endorsed by many constituents, advocates and State and Local elected officials in Boston, in Cambridge and throughout the region.

By removing the viaduct, we have a chance to reduce a barrier between our residents and the river, unlock economic benefits associated with removing an elevated highway infrastructure, lessen the noise from cars and trucks through this corridor, lower long term maintenance and capital costs, accelerate investment in other needed transportation infrastructure, and expand the options we will have for this area in the future. Lower long term costs, fewer barriers, and greater and greener choices -- this is the right thing to do and a valuable legacy to leave.

As with any design, there are still challenges with the Modified At Grade to work through. Its potential impact on the river must be carefully considered, and issues of resiliency need continued analysis. Knowing, however, there is more design work and evaluation in front of us for this project, we strongly encourage the selection of the Modified At Grade as the preferred alternative. We believe that this selection is supported by analysis that has already been done by your teams, particularly when appropriately giving greater weight to public input, economic development, visual impact and noise, long term costs, and mobility and access for transit, pedestrians and cyclists.

I do appreciate the complexity of this decision, and the City stands as a willing partner in this selection process. Indeed, given the range of local permits necessary for this project as well as the clear impact this project has on our city and our constituents, we ask that the City be identified as a cooperating agency immediately so that it can participate in this concurrence point.

I look forward to our continued conversations on this project and am grateful for your leadership of it. As the Mayor of the city within which the entirety of this project is occurring, I encourage your selection of the Modified At Grade as the preferred alternative, because of the support it has today and the opportunities it can unlock for tomorrow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Walsh', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Martin J. Walsh
Mayor of Boston