



CITY OF BOSTON • MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MARTIN J. WALSH

October 11, 2016

Ms. Stephanie Pollack, Secretary
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160
Boston, MA 02116

Re: Allston I-90 Interchange

Dear Secretary Pollack,

It is our pleasure to submit two documents to you that advance our collective planning for the I-90 Allston Interchange Improvement Project.

The first document is the final Placemaking Report. Developed in collaboration with stakeholders in the Allston community, this document provides guidance for the infrastructure configuration and location so that outstanding urban places and spaces can emerge as this new district develops. We deeply appreciate your support, your team's collaboration, and the State's financial investment that made this work possible.

The second document is a preliminary list of recommended analyses for the Draft Environmental Impact Report. These recommend analyses stem from the standards in the Placemaking Report. We are including the preliminary list at this time to help clearly tie the current phase of work to the next step in the process.

These two documents together reflect the City's priorities for this project: (1) the rehabilitation and realignment of a key section of the region's highway system, built in a way that (2) supports the development of a vibrant, human-scale, urban neighborhood, which is (3) anchored by the robust intermodal transit center at West Station. Together, these priorities advance our collective aspirations to spur economic growth, strengthen neighborhood and regional connectivity, and reduce emissions.

We understand and appreciate the current financial constraints for the realignment project. However, the upcoming DEIR represents an opportunity to conduct additional analyses that could shape the project's design - even if those analyses suggest designs that would exceed the likely construction budget for this project. This broader set of analyses will allow us to not preclude - and instead accelerate - improvements to the design that we may be able to fund in the future. We do not want to limit the future of this neighborhood based on the constraints of today. We ask, therefore, that MassDOT incorporate these additional analyses into the DEIR.

We thank you again for the opportunity to submit this report and recommendations. The intensive engagement to date between your team and ours has been highly constructive. With an eye toward continuing this engagement, we would like to request a meeting with the I-90 project team to discuss the next stage of the process and requested analyses. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this important project.

Sincerely,


Chris Osgood,
Chief of Streets


Gina N. Fiandaca,
Transportation Commissioner


Sara Myerson,
Director of Planning

Attachment A: Preliminary List of Recommended Analyses for Allston I-90 Project from the City of Boston

Attachment B: Final Placemaking Report

**Attachment A:
Preliminary List of Recommended Analyses for Allston I-90 Project
From the City of Boston**

The Secretary's Certificate on the ENF calls for in-depth analysis on a number of topics that relate directly to the recommendations in the City of Boston's Placemaking Report. These include future land use scenarios, opportunities for stormwater management, multi-modal connectivity, and different approaches to the "throat" area. These topics are very important to the City of Boston, and we look forward to engaging in more detailed conversation on that analysis.

In addition, we recommend that the DEIR incorporate the following areas of analysis that relate to the content of the Placemaking Report.

Transportation Modeling

Through the placemaking study and the public process, the City has made clear its deep interest in the layout, operations, safety and feel of the individual streets and connections in the Beacon Yards and surrounding areas. While all of the potential implications may not be fully determined in the DEIR, assumptions about operations may have determinant consequences. Rather than reviewing the assumptions and outcomes in the filing, the City seeks to partner with the MassDOT team to review the inputs and decisions into the vehicular capacity analysis and individual roadway design, for items such as:

- Vehicular trip distribution and assignment of traffic volumes
- Signal and intersection operations
- Need for turning lanes
- Connections through to the IMP area and larger Boston neighborhoods
- Pedestrian accommodations, including crosswalks and signals
- Cyclists accommodations, including protected lanes
- Transit priority lanes and signal improvements
- Potential of additional streets/connections to further distribute traffic
- Assumptions about acceptable levels-of-service or operation on on-MassDOT streets

Transportation analyses related to specific standards presented in the placemaking Report include the following:

- The DEIR should incorporate testing of a variety of assumptions about robust new regional transit service facilitated by the creation of West Station and north-south link for shuttles and buses (Standards 15, 46). New transit connections create new opportunities for transit service. Service should be designed to maximize potential transit mode share, including adding more robust rail service and greater regional bus service through West Station. We hope and expect to work with you to develop a list of transit service options that will be included in the modeling.
- Ensure that the final roadway design minimizes the width of the streets and creating a rich, safety streetscape and multi-modal environment. The model should facilitate analysis of different assumptions regarding the secondary street network, trip assignments, intersection design, and new transit service, as well as recommendations

of the Placemaking Study that can contribute to this goal (such as Standards 19, 26, 28, 29, 30, 43, and 46).

- Measure the impacts of new connections to Soldiers Field Road and the associated boat section (Standard 1).
- Determine any traffic impacts of a realigned Soldiers Field Road (Standard 2).
- Analyze various options for the addition of a third north-south street and their impact on traffic flow, street widths, and other key outcomes. The model should test different options for the street functions, including testing Stadium Way with both bi-directional and uni-directional general traffic. Exclusive transit vehicle rights-of-way on Stadium Way should be studied as well (Standard 18).
- Study the impact on North Harvard Street of a direct intersection between Cambridge Street South and North Harvard Street, which must be considered in the context of a third north-south street (Standard 20)
- Analyze phasing options whereby certain roads are constructed before others.
- Assess the impacts of the West Station Connector Road, especially its implications for traffic on Cambridge Street (Standard 9).
- Study the impacts of a vehicular connection between West Station and Commonwealth Avenue, with a preference for using Malvern Street before other options are explored. The analysis should address the potential increase in vehicular traffic on Commonwealth Avenue and any deleterious effects on the connecting streets (Standard 14).
- Determine the proper location of the demarcation between highway ramps and City streets. This threshold affects block lengths, pedestrian access, curb cuts, shoulders, and other features central to the City's placemaking goals. The DEIR and further conversation with the Federal Highway Administration should be used to provide clarity on this issue so that the placemaking effects may be more thoroughly evaluated and addressed (Standard 22).

Environmental Benefits

The DEIR should incorporate analysis of the environmental effects and benefits of the following:

- Increased parkland on Charles River (Standard 3).
- An at-grade pedestrian and bicycle connection over Soldiers Field Road (Standard 4).
- Open space at West Station (Standard 13).
- Visual and sound barriers along the southern edge of the project, incorporated into the West Station Connector Road (Standard 12).

- Added width on the bridges leading to West Station, specifically benefits for the quality of public realm (e.g. improved noise and wind conditions), greater incentives for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit use (Standard 16).
- Incorporation of stormwater best management practices and increased vegetation and tree cover into the “People’s Pike” (Standards 36, 38, 45).