



Massachusetts
Bicycle Coalition

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December 17, 2013

David Mohler
Executive Director / Deputy Secretary for Policy
Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
10 Park Plaza, Room 4150
Boston, MA 02116
Attention: Paul Nelson

Dear David,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition, the statewide bicycle advocacy organization and a member of Live Well Springfield. I am writing to request that at least one member of the I-91 Viaduct Replacement Project working group represent the interests of bicyclists and pedestrians in Springfield. An ideal candidate would be an experienced bicycle and pedestrian professional (such as the MassDOT District 2 Bike/Ped Coordinator), and who is preferably also a Springfield resident.

We are especially interested in two aspects of the project:

1. **Path Connections** – Currently, there are insufficient connections to the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bike Path. This primarily due to the presence of the railroad tracks and I-91 viaduct creating a barrier to potential users of the path. We are interested not only in improving the existing connections, but also adding a new connection from the southern terminus, potentially to Forest Park.
2. **Public Space** – A second concern lies with the area underneath the viaduct, which is primarily dedicated to parking. We would like to explore the options for better activating that public space, both to improve the access to the riverfront but also to create a new destination in itself. We should specifically explore options that do not include eliminating parking.

As a longtime resident of Springfield, I have seen pedestrians attempting to traverse the streets underneath the overpass, a dangerous proposition. Well-designed public space (such as parks) underneath the viaduct would encourage pedestrian and bicycle safety, and motorists to slow down. See below for examples of public space below elevated highways.

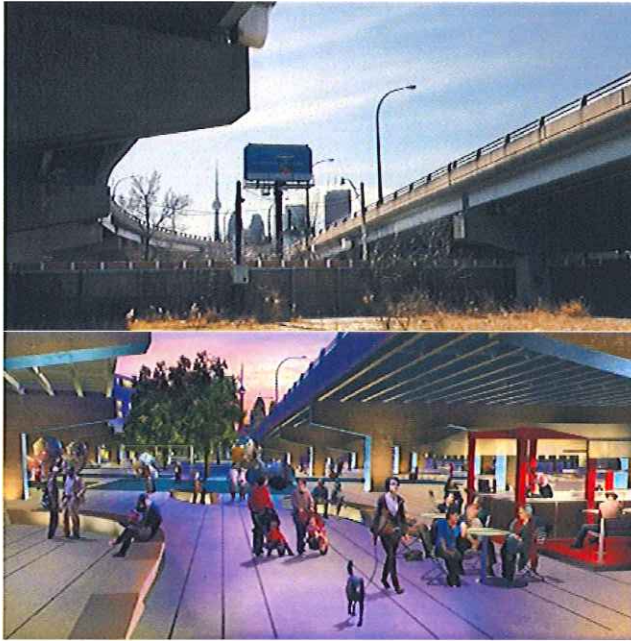
This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve access to Springfield's riverfront. Without a dedicated representative for bicyclists and pedestrians, I am afraid our needs will be overlooked. If there are any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me either by email at jimmy@massbike.org or office phone (413) 784-4822.

Sincerely,



Jimmy Pereira
Healthy Design Coordinator
Better Bicycling for Massachusetts

Attachments



Underpass Park, Toronto, Canada Before and After (Rendering)

<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/design/2011/09/under-overpass-projects-under-freeways/192/#slide1>



Buffalo Bayou Promenade, Houston, TX Before and After

<http://pruned.blogspot.com/2009/09/under-spaces-1.html>