

city conducts a traffic study after the project's completion. The state also said it will not follow through with a request to install an exclusive bus-bike lane or buffered bike lane along part of the project site.

"These designs are centered on context sensitivity - with the end result being something that can provide for all modes of transportation in a safe manner," Verseckes wrote.

For months, state officials told residents they could not install a pedestrian crossing along that section of Cambridge Street, which runs over the Massachusetts Turnpike. But in November the state transportation department [announced](#) it was considering the idea and conducting an analysis to see if a crossing would be feasible.

State officials said they plan to hold a [public meeting](#) about the project to present the final designs at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 14 at the Jackson Mann Community Center in Allston.

The 2-year, \$10-million construction project is scheduled to begin in the spring, according to a [project page](#) on the state transportation department's website.

To read more about the project and residents' concerns over the plans, click [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Below is a draft copy the text of Tuesday's letter from the state transportation department to the public:

To All Concerned:

Thank you for your letter dated December 4, 2013 regarding Final Improvements to Project 606376 – Boston – Deck Replacement of Cambridge Street Bridge over I-90. Since our previous Public Information Meeting held on November 19, MassDOT has been hard at work to improve existing design elements based on input from your community. Many of the key issues detailed in your letter have been included in the Project or are in the final stages of design. MassDOT and the City were not able to incorporate all of your suggestions, however major improvements to the design have been made or are in progress due to the collaborative work of MassDOT, the City of Boston and your community. The project modifications are detailed below:

Median fence will be included in the Project

MassDOT, at the request of the City of Boston, will be including the median fence as proposed in the existing contract documents. Illegal crossings pose a serious safety issue and the City and MassDOT both concur that the decorative iron fencing will encourage pedestrians to use the new signalized crossing to be installed at the top of the Mansfield Street stairs, as well as the signalized pedestrian crossings at the Harvard Avenue intersection.

Signalized pedestrian crossing at the Mansfield Street Stairs will be included in the Project

MassDOT committed to fully evaluating and designing a pedestrian crossing at the Mansfield Street stairs. Significant design challenges such as installing a signal foundations and



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most arms on the bridge deck, installing accessible curb ramps in the hollow sidewalk, and safely integrating pedestrians and bicyclists at the curb were major concerns. At this time, MassDOT can say with certainty that a crossing at this location is feasible and will be included in the final design. We very much look forward to sharing the design details with the public at our final Public Information Meeting.

Physical barriers between the bike lanes and auto lanes will be included in the Project

Installation of accessible curb ramps to facilitate the Mansfield Street stairs pedestrian crossing proved difficult above the hollow sidewalk on the south side of the bridge. The only solution was to bump the sidewalk and accessible curb ramp out into the 5-foot bike lane and 3-foot buffer zone. Doing so created a bike/pedestrian conflict as well as a bike/vehicle conflict by eliminating the dedicated bike lane at the crossing. MassDOT was able to solve this problem by replacing the dedicated bike lane in the roadway with a sidewalk level cycle track completed separated from vehicular traffic. Limits of the cycle track are as follows: on the north side – from Lincoln Street to Harvard Avenue, on the south side – from Linden Street to Lincoln Street.

Speed limits cannot be modified until a speed study has been completed (to be completed by governing authority over the roadway – City of Boston)

As shown in previous iterations of the design, the Project will eliminate a lane of travel in each direction (from three lanes in each direction down to two lanes in each direction) as well as decrease the lane width of the remaining lanes. These design elements have proved to reduce vehicular speeds. MassDOT has recommended that the City of Boston perform a speed study post construction to determine the appropriate speed limit for the new streetscape. During construction, reduced speed limits will be in signed due to travel through a construction zone.

Left turn onto Highgate Street will remain

MassDOT and the City have agreed to maintain the left turn onto Highgate Street. Existing time of day turn restrictions will remain unchanged.

Bicyclist accommodations will be included southbound through the Harvard Avenue intersection

MassDOT, BTB, and Boston Bikes have been working collaboratively to safely design the newly proposed cycle track as well as their connections to intersections and common space where bikes and pedestrians will mix. Striping through the Harvard Avenue intersection has been discussed in detail and is currently in final design.

Exclusive bus-bike lane or buffered bike lane will not be included in the Project

The northbound vehicular travel approaches the Cambridge Street/Harvard Avenue intersection with through-left lane and a through-right lane. Two receiving lanes are required on the opposite side of the intersection. MassDOT has thoroughly evaluated this issue with the BTB and Boston Bikes and their

design consultants for the future intersection improvements at this location. The City determined both vehicular lanes are required due to the significant level-of-service impacts a lane removal would have south of this intersection along the Cambridge Street corridor.

Aesthetics, cleanliness and safety will be improved due to this Project

MassDOT has been thoroughly investigating replacement of the highway crash barrier and chain link anti-missile fencing with a more aesthetically pleasing design provided highway safety was not sacrificed. At this time MassDOT can say with certainty that this is feasible. The TL-4 crash barrier at back of sidewalk has been replaced with a BR-2 crash barrier at the curb line. The benefits of this change are numerous.

1. Bikes and pedestrians are separated from vehicular travel on the bridge by a crash tested barrier.
2. BR-2 barrier is aesthetically pleasing, as it is only 18-inches tall (above the sidewalk elevation).
3. City of Boston decorative street lighting can be placed directly behind the BR-2 barrier.
4. A more decorative anti-missile fencing can be installed at the back of sidewalk.

All of the items listed above are now included in the final design.

It should be noted that the scope of improvements to the footbridge include two preservation items only – deck joint repair and substructure concrete rehabilitation to prevent spalling.

Landscaping is currently not included in the scope for this bridge maintenance project. The project limits are within the bridge right of way and the back of sidewalk. Space is extremely limited; therefore landscaping is not part of the contract scope.

MassDOT is committed to a Final Design Public Information Meeting on January 14, 2014.

MassDOT is excited to present the final Project with improvements suggested by the community. We look forward discussing these changes with you one final time.

MassDOT is committed to a robust community process for the I-90 Viaduct Interchange Improvement Project, including the Cambridge Street corridor.

As stated at our November 19, 2013 Public Information Meeting, MassDOT is committing to a full evaluation of existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities between North Allston and Allston Village as part of the I-90 Viaduct Interchange Improvement Project; design will include new, modern pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. In addition, a full evaluation and design of Cambridge Street corridor mitigation required as a result of the I-90 Viaduct Interchange Improvement Project will be included.

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gotham77 01/08/14 09:40 AM

At least they're putting in a signaled crosswalk at Mansfield. That makes the iron fence a little less obnoxious.

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code1 01/08/14 12:56 PM

I think it would make more sense to decide on the speed limits first, and then figure out what can be done re infrastructure. Not having a cross-walk at the pedestrian bridge across the Mass Pike is very inconvenient--pedestrians coming from Linden street have to walk four two blocks out of their way to get onto the bridge.

In addition, why is there is need for a fence if pedestrian crossing needs have been met? it sounds like they realize how inconvenient it is not to have a cross walk at the pedestrian bridge, so they are going to put up a fence to prevent pedestrians from doing what makes sense. It is similar to the situation at Naples street and the STAR market--pedestrians have to walk blocks out of their way to get to the STAR market, so they just cross the T tracks illegally.

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paarsec 01/08/14 10:32 AM

Huh? What's wrong with the overpass on Lincoln St. by the NStar property? Isn't that like 1/2 block from Mansfield?

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