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Nicholas Moreno
Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Executive office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)
100 Cambridge Street
Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: EEA# 16695

Mr. Moreno,

First, please accept my appreciation for the exceptional YouTube video produced by MassDOT for the above-referenced project. Without it — and the resulting discussion it's generated in our local community (Mashnee Village, Bourne) — I might not have realized how truly impressive this project is. The design is thoughtful, ambitious, and visionary. When complete, the new bridges will stand among the most magnificent, multi-generational public works projects in the Commonwealth. I look forward to seeing them become reality..

I would, however, like to call your attention to one design element that presents significant safety and operational concerns — but also a straightforward opportunity for improvement.

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (Section 4.3.4.4) notes:

> *The shared use facility would transition to a 12-foot-wide SUP at the mixing zone and would provide desired connections to the Canal Service Road at the northern end of the Project Limits….*

The current design terminates the multimodal path with **an at-grade crossing of the Canal Service Road (Sandwich Road)** controlled only by a flashing beacon.

This poses a variety of functional and safety problems. While the report does an excellent job of addressing regulatory compliance for walking and cycling access, it appears to include no quantitative study of existing or projected multimodal traffic—in contrast to the extensive and detailed vehicular traffic analysis provided elsewhere in the DEIR. Given

the project's strong commitment to multi-use accessibility, this omission is both surprising and significant.

As my public comment, I wish to raise the team's awareness of the existing volume—and the expected growth—of multimodal use, and the resulting need for a design adjustment to safely and efficiently support it.

- **Event-scale impact.** More than a dozen large organized rides cross the existing Bourne Bridge each year, creating continuous crossings over many hours and increasing the potential for vehicle–cyclist conflicts. The Pan-Mass Challenge, the largest and best-known of these, alone involves thousands of riders walking across the Bourne Bridge area throughout the day causing conflict at the nexus with the at-grade crossing. This and other events such as Best Buddies and other charity rides create an all-day steady stream of cyclists moving at varied speeds – demanding careful design consideration now.

- **Future everyday use is likely underestimated.** Currently, only the most confident riders cross the bridge by bike or on foot. Once a practical route exists, usage will rise sharply among both residents and visitors, again increasing vehicular risk & interaction.

- **Primary destination requires at-grade crossing every time. T**he vast majority of path users—hundreds to thousands each day in summer—will connect to the southern Cape Cod Canal Bikeway, requiring nearly all to cross Sandwich Road during peak traffic hours. Few will head east toward Sandwich, and those choosing to go west will stillness to cross the Canal Service Road. The result is a predictable, high-volume crossing at exactly the busiest time of year.

- **Youth access risks.** The planned ice rink connection from the bridge approach will encourage younger, less experienced riders to cross a complex, fast-moving roadway.

- **Evening-time risk.** All of these risks are amplified during dusk and evening hours.

- **Downhill approach hazards.** Finally, Riders descending toward the at-grade crossing in groups will face abrupt slowdowns, increasing crash potential.

Literally 10's of thousands of cyclists cross this bridge annually today! Combined with an reasonably-expected surge in usage, the proposed flashing-light beacon appears under-analyzed, and does not provide adequate protection or functional provision.

A simple, cost-effective solution is available.
Rather than constructing the path's long descent to road grade, the design could leverage the descending elevation and the planned retaining wall to create a light, ramped, grade-separated multimodal overpass, eliminating the issue entirely.

The benefits are clear:

- **Eliminates vehicle-human conflict.** Period. The overpass eliminates travel-time impact for, and cyclist/pedestrian impact with drivers.
- **Accommodates event surges.** Pan-Mass, Best Buddies and more will proceed without closing the Canal Service Road (or requiring law enforcement control, which adds costs to rides, reducing charitable outcome).
- **Simplifies canal bike path connection.** Nearly all usage exits either at the canal destination, or on the northern side of the Canal Service road, where joining it westbound will be much safer.
- **Further encourages usage.** Encourages increased year-round use by locals and visitors due to elimination of vehicular fear.
- **Improves site interaction.** Utilizing existing right-of-way means land alignment and leveraging the already-descending elevation simplifies overpass design.

I discussed this concept yesterday with James Barnack, Project Manager at HNTB, who indicated that the idea of leveraging the berm and elevation is both technically feasible and reasonable given the existing and anticipated increased usage. Even if it adds modest cost, the benefit-to-cost ratio for a project of this magnitude is overwhelmingly favorable.

This modest adjustment would enhance safety, operational flow, and the project's long-term legacy – a bridge design that truly reflects the Commonwealth's commitment to all users: residents, visitors, and the thousands who ride each year for charity and community.

Thank you for considering this input. I hope this suggestion can be integrated into the final design. lasting monument.

Very truly yours,

Jay Batson

cc: James Barnack

Attachments: Image indicating at-grade crossing at-issue and proposed overpass location

At-grade crossing (red), proposed ramp location (blue).