



June 25, 2019

Mayor Martin J. Walsh  
City of Boston  
1 City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Dear Honorable Mayor Walsh,

We are writing to you to commend the City of Boston on the thorough planning process for the Old Northern Avenue Bridge and ask for your support in ensuring that this treasured, beloved Historic Landmark has longevity. As co-chairs of the BSA Placemaking Network we are not only concerned with place-making but also with place-keeping. To this end, we request you consider the following aspects as a new bridge is being designed:

1. Preserve the skyline of the bridge for the future: Save the existing trusses that line the bridge and give the neighborhood its unique and distinctive character. Salvaging at least the upper structure would be an important acknowledgement of the bridge's historic profile. We also don't think it's right that the construction bid winner will be able to sell off these trusses, likely for good money at the taxpayer's loss.
2. Limit the Old Northern Avenue Bridge to pedestrian and non-motorized traffic. Motor vehicles can be accommodated on the Seaport Boulevard Bridge, which is meant for vehicular traffic. In the interest of public health, keeping the new bridge free from the pollution of unhealthy diesel and gasoline exhausts as well as noise is key. Large vehicles, such as shuttles, busses, and trucks also block the view most of the time and discourage its use by people on foot or bicycles. We feel this public health issue is as important as all the other applicable design, budget and safety issues under consideration.
3. Uphold the historic commitments made by the city, dating all the way back to Mayor White who committed to long-term preservation of the existing historic bridge, as pointed out by the Boston Preservation Alliance. A binding commitment was made to the federal government and the Massachusetts Historical Commission as a condition for construction of the Moakley Bridge in 1977.
4. Conduct an independent assessment of the cost a preservation would entail. The current presentation of the budget lacks in transparency and clarity.

We strongly disagree with the assessment by COB engineers at AECOM that there would be "no" difference in placemaking potential between a bridge with an HOV+ lane and a pedestrian-only bridge. Here's the slide for the record:

**EVALUATION SUMMARY**

**MOBILITY GOAL**

CONCEPT	MOBILITY GOAL					
	Improves Traffic Operations	Promotes Reliable Transit	Enhances Ped/Bike Connectivity	Reduces SOV	Provides Emergency Vehicle Access	Provides Placemaking Opportunity
	●	●	●	●	●	●
Two-Way General Traffic	●	●	●	●	●	●
HOV+ Lane / No General Traffic	●	●	●	●	●	●
Pedestrian & Bicycle Only	●	●	●	●	●	●

● Concept Falls to Achieve Goal      ● Concept Achieves Aspects of Goal      ● Concept Achieves Goal

19

Source: AECOM's Presentation of 7/26/18 on page 19.

<https://www.northernavebridgebos.com/meetingmaterialsandreports>

Thank you for your consideration and support in preserving a critically important, historic view of Boston's Fort Point Channel.

Sincerely yours,



Christina Lanzl and Rob Tullis

BSA Placemaking Network Co-chairs

[christina.lanzl@urbancultureinstitute.org](mailto:christina.lanzl@urbancultureinstitute.org) | [RTullis@gid.com](mailto:RTullis@gid.com)

CC: Vineet Gupta, Director of Policy and Planning, Boston Transportation Dept.  
 Prataap Patrose, Director for Urban Design, BPDA  
 Eric White, Boston Society of Architects/AIA  
 Greg Galer, Boston Preservation Alliance  
 Northern Avenue Bridge Consulting Team