



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

June 13, 2006

Secretary Stephen R. Pritchard
EOEA, Attn: MEPA Office
Deirdre Buckley, EOEA No. 13777
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston MA 02114

Re: Comments on Environmental Notification Form
EOEA No. 13312, Storrow Drive Tunnel Reconstruction Project

Dear Secretary Pritchard:

The City of Cambridge submits the attached comments on the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) submitted by Epsilon Associates, Inc. on behalf of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for the proposed Storrow Drive Tunnel Reconstruction Project. The reconstruction of the Storrow Drive tunnel is an impending necessity. With appropriate study and planning this project provides an opportunity for DCR to improve universal accessibility and bicycle and pedestrian access to the Esplanade. Acknowledging these realities, it is the City's desire that this work be completed in short duration and with minimal interruption to Cambridge neighborhoods.

If there are any questions regarding these comments, please contact Susanne Rasmussen, Director of Environmental and Transportation Planning, at 617-349-4607. We appreciate this opportunity to comment.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

**City of Cambridge
Comments on Environmental Notification Form**

**Storrow Drive Tunnel Reconstruction Project
EOEA NO. 13777**

GENERAL COMMENTS

The aging tunnels on Storrow Drive at Berkeley Street are in serious need of repair or replacement. The City of Cambridge supports this work and applauds the Department of Conservation and Recreation for initiating an inclusive and comprehensive planning process to discuss design and construction options. The City requests that DCR continues this multi-agency planning process during the development of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and the construction management and mitigation process. The following are general comments:

- The EIR should focus on design options that will result in minimization of construction duration and impacts to communities adjacent to the project area. An aggressive construction schedule will require that work be conducted during both the day and evening work periods, while at the same time ensuring that abutters are sufficiently protected from noise and other construction impacts.
- The EIR should also examine how to minimize the scope of the construction through options such as leaving one direction open to traffic, having the most disruptive work done off peak, etc.
- The rebuilt tunnel should accommodate the same vehicle volumes as the existing tunnels. Increasing capacity should not be a goal of this project. Instead attention should be paid to surface enhancements to improve accessibility and encourage walking and bicycling along this important open space corridor. A benefit of this project is that the existing non-ADA compliant Clarendon Street and Fiedler footbridges will be replaced by universally accessible crossings that will permit two-way bicycle travel.
- Extensive traffic analyses should be done to fully understand the origins and destinations of trips on Storrow Drive, in order to develop communication and TDM strategies that will move as many of those trips as possible to other modes – walk, bicycle, bus, transit, and commuter rail - and move the remaining trips to off-peak hours.
- In preparation of the construction mitigation plan, it will be important to consider a full range of ways to encourage transit use including but not limited to fare incentives, increased capacity/service on existing services, new services, transfer policies, creative use of the Charlie card technology, etc.

- The EIR should analyze proposed pedestrian and bicycle improvements included in the Charles River Basin Master Plan and prioritize implementation of key elements, such as improvements to the Dr. Paul Dudley White path in Cambridge, as mitigation for the tunnel reconstruction project.
- It is critical that a significant percentage of trips be converted to other modes as area roadways, including Memorial Drive, have little capacity to absorb additional traffic, especially during peak hours.
- The EIR should examine ways to improve the quality of the storm water that flows from the project roadway into the Charles River.