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CRWA Applauds MassDOT Decision on I-90 Project Design

BOSTON, MA [January 10, 2019] — Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation Stephanie Pollack announced today the design for the I-90 Allston Interchange Improvement Project, a \$1 billion multimodal plan that involves realigning the MassPike around the former toll plaza and railroad yards.

Three options had been under consideration; two options would have put the reconfigured Mass Pike at grade level, the third would have rebuilt the elevated viaduct.

The Hybrid design selected by the Secretary will elevate Soldiers Field Road above a ground level Pike.

CRWA Executive Director Emily Norton stated, “In his last debate before the election, Governor Charlie Baker committed to making climate change a priority in his second term. In December, the governor’s Commission on the Future of Transportation released a report recommending we ‘make transportation infrastructure resilient to a changing climate.’ With this decision for the I-90 project, Governor Baker is making good on his promise.”

The area of the roadway sandwiched between the Charles River and the Pike is prone to flooding, flush with impermeable surfaces, and has a degraded and eroded riverbank.

Norton added, “The hybrid design will allow the state to add parkland, improve public access to the river with improved bike and pedestrian paths, reduce traffic noise and offer spectacular vistas of the river from Soldiers Field Road and the PDW Path. Three broad areas of climate mitigation will be possible with the Hybrid alternative, specifically:

- Stormwater management: a successful system will improve water quality in the river by reducing erosion, sedimentation and pollution, while increasing flood storage capacity.
- Climate change resiliency: The parkland buffer space between the river and the roadways will be expanded and surfaces for pedestrians and cyclists should be made from permeable materials.
- River and riverbank restoration: Restoring the riverbank with natural plantings will help stabilize the bank, improve water quality and provide needed fish and wildlife habitat.

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Charles River Watershed Association uses science, advocacy, urban design and education to promote resilient communities and a healthy river ecosystem. CRWA was formed in 1965 in response to public concern about the declining condition of the Charles River. Since its earliest days of advocacy, CRWA has figured prominently in major clean-up and watershed protection efforts that have dramatically improved the health of the Charles.