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MASSDOT LAUNCHES BICYCLE-SAFETY PILOT

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This pilot is the result of a strong partnership with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the City of Cambridge, the City of Boston, and various advocacy groups, including Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), LivableStreets Alliance, TransitMatters, MassBike, Cambridge Bike Safety, and WalkBoston, according to MassDOT.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation launched a bicycle safety pilot on the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge over the Charles River (the Harvard Bridge) last week.

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The pilot will reduce the number of vehicular travel lanes to one lane in each direction and increase the available width of the bicycle lane to provide additional buffer space to separate cyclists from vehicles and trucks.

"MassDOT is thrilled to implement this bicycle safety pilot to better serve all users of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge," Transportation Secretary and CEO Jamey Tesler said in a press release. "This pilot is a great example of various agencies, municipalities and advocacy groups working together to create safer and more sustainable transportation options for all modes."

Additionally, DCR Acting Commissioner, Stephanie Cooper, said in a press release: "Implementing this bicycle safety pilot will help explore a mobility solution on the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge that can help support a sustainable transportation system. DCR is pleased to collaborate with so many partners to advance this safety pilot and looks forward to understanding the important data that the Commonwealth will be able to collect in the coming months."

This separated bike lane were installed Monday using cones, arrow boards, and advance signage.

"As we work to promote low-carbon travel options, our City needs to move urgently to protect the safety of our commuters and residents," Mayor Michelle Wu said in a press release.

"Boston is grateful to our local and state partners for helping this safety pilot come to fruition, connecting our communities and laying the groundwork for safer, more sustainable transportation infrastructure throughout the region."

Regarding the pilot, Rep. Jay Livingstone told this publication, "I'm pleased that MassDOT is conducting this pilot program to best determine how to improve bike safety on the Harvard bridge on a long-term basis. I advocated with the Boston Cyclists Union and appreciated how quickly MassDOT reacted to make this change."

The bicycle safety pilot will run through the winter months, according to MassDOT, while engineers and advocates evaluate safety and crash data, traffic volumes, bicycle volumes, and travel time of the MBTA's Harvard Square-Nubian Square bus, (running bus route number 1).

"On behalf of the Boston Cyclists Union and all of the advocacy groups who requested MassDOT address safety issues on the Mass. Ave. Bridge, we are grateful for the state's prompt leadership in addressing the issues identified, as well as city leadership on both sides of the bridge who embraced the proposal," Becca Wolfson, executive director of Boston Cyclists Union, said in a press release. "This important regional route already carries thousands of daily bicycle riders who have protection on city streets on both sides of the bridge and have endured the gap in the bike network over the bridge itself."

Moreover, Wolfson added, "This commitment from MassDOT is truly a win-win, and we look forward to working with the state and other stakeholders to achieve the more permanent changes in the spring."

During severe weather, the pilot may be temporarily suspended during snow and ice operations with the intent to restore the pilot as soon as possible.

For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are also encouraged to: dial 511 and select a route to hear real-time conditions; visit www.mass511.com, a website which provides real-time traffic and incident advisory information and allows users to subscribe to text and email alerts for traffic conditions;

follow MassDOT on Twitter @MassDOT to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions;

