

Dear Honorable Governor Baker:

Thank you for your continued strong support for multi-use trails and for your efforts to establish a comprehensive regional path network.

The mission of the Friends of the Community Path is to connect several regional multi-path networks and public transit via a Community Path extension (CPX), which is being built as part of the Green Line Extensions (GLX). We represent our thousands of supporters regionally.

We are writing to urge you and your staff to direct MassDOT and MBTA staff and design consultants to widen the planned CPX to conform with federal and state standards for a safe multi-use path, as required for paths with federal and state funding. What will likely be the busiest trail in the Commonwealth should not be under-designed, especially because it will be impossible to widen it in the future when the need will be apparent.

We are extremely concerned about the 10' path width in the present design of the CPX - including the ~3000' elevated stretch from East Somerville station to the existing path at Cambridge Crossing, which has no rest areas or exit points. A 10' CPX width is not wide enough to accommodate the anticipated high volume of pedestrian and cyclist use and allow for safe passing.

As such, the CPX is not being designed according to State and federal engineering standards, to allow safe passing based on Peak Use -- although MassDOT Highway and FHWA require that multi-use paths designed or constructed with state or federal funds follow the federal [design standards of AASHTO](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/2004/04/01/20040401.pdf).

- p6, 11.4.1: <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/08/nq/ch-11.pdf>

For these reasons, we feel that it is incumbent upon MassDOT to require a minimum paved width of 11'-14" (rather than 10' as per current plans) with at least 2' shoulders (where physically possible) for the CPX. Most all other multi-use paths recently built or under design in Massachusetts, even with significantly lower use than the CPX, are 11' – 15' paved (plus 2 - 3' shoulders on each side).

All multi-use design standards acknowledge that multi-use path needs a minimum width of 11' for a cyclist or wheelchair to safely pass two pedestrians or cyclists, or to allow safe passing in one direction when another path user approaches heading the opposite direction.

CPX Regional Multi-use Path Connectivity

The CPX will be the most significant off-road, multi-use path facility in the Commonwealth of the past 3 decades. Regionally, CPX will link together several bicycle-pedestrian paths:

- To the West: The CPX will connect to the Minuteman Bikeway
- To the East: The CPX will connect to the Charles River paths and the Freedom Trail
- To the South: The CPX will link to the Grand Junction Path
- To the North: The CPX will connect to proposed Mystic Connector path leading to the Mystic River and Northern Strand Trails.

High CPX Projected Peak Use

In 2013, a MAPC report estimated the AM and PM bicycle and pedestrian Peak Use of paths connecting to the CPX. From 2010-2012, those paths had peak hourly usage ranging from 200 to over 300 cyclists and pedestrians per hour.

The existing Community Path sees 320 – 340 users per peak hour. 85% of these users are pedestrians.

- p11, MAPC, [Community Path Extension: Data Metrics & Talking Points](http://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2013-06-07_Final-Metric-Report.pdf), http://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2013-06-07_Final-Metric-Report.pdf)

The synergy of the high projected Peak Usage volumes of these converging paths suggest that the CPX will have a Peak Use of at least 300 Bikes+Peds/Hour. We believe that the Peak Use of the CPX is likely to surpass even 400 Bikes+Peds/Hour, given that:

- Additional direct connectivity to Cambridge Crossing and Kendall Square (via the Grand Junction Path) -- two major employment centers with strict single occupancy vehicle reduction needs. The synergy with the Grand Junction path was not anticipated at the time of the 2013 MAPC Study.
- The desirability of the CPX route, synergy with connecting paths, and simultaneous lack of an alternate safe, off-road bike/ped route through these dense areas.

CPX: Needs to Conform to State and Federal Path Width Standards for 11' to 14'

MassDOT Highway and FHWA require that bike paths designed or constructed with state or federal funds follow AASHTO design standards of AASHTO (p6, <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/08/nq/ch-11.pdf>)

Yet the current GLX/CPX design entails a path width of only 10' even though both AASHTO federal and Massachusetts state standards specify a path width of 11-14' for peak for hourly peak user volumes in the 300 to 400+ ranges:

- The federal AASHTO bike guide specifies that path widths should be based on Peak User volume and types of use. The projected Peak User volume >300 Bikes+Peds/Hour on the CPX justifies a minimum recommendation of 11'-14'
- p131, section 5-3: *American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, 4th Edition, 2012 <http://imentaraddod.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/AASHTO-GBF-4-2012-bicycle.pdf>

AASHTO indicates a 14' minimum width for 2-way paths with "Heavy bicycle and pedestrian travel.

- p141, Table 5-7: 2012 AASHTO Chapter 5: "Shared-Use Paths" <http://imentaraddod.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/AASHTO-GBF-4-2012-bicycle.pdf>

- MassDOT itself recommends 14' width for 2-way bike lane with Peak Use of 400+ Bicyclists-only/Hour

- p31, MassDOT, Separated Bike Lane Planning & Design Guide https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/25/SeparatedBikeLaneChapter3_GeneralDesign_0.pdf

- It is worth noting that the following Massachusetts paths, with much lower use than the CPX will have, enjoy a much wider paved width:

- North Bank Bridge (12')
- Bruce Freeman (12' + shoulders), Whittier Bridge (15'),
- Cape Cod Rail Trail extension (12' + shoulders),
- Bruce Freeman Route 2 bridge (14')
- Waltham-Wayside (14').

WPlease view our slide presentation for further

details: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lyhE4ewUqD8RPnOm_T8kFHVB7Q9j5yuM/view?usp=sharing

We urge MassDOT to allocate additional funding for the CPX, as it routinely does for other State trail projects. We understand the imperative to complete the GLX project on time and within budget. However, failure to provide a CPX which, at minimum, measures 11' in width will result in an increase in conflict and collisions, which may prove dangerous and even life threatening for users of the CPX, especially vulnerable users. A clear indication of this is the Minuteman Bikeway, one of the most-used rail trails in the U.S., with ~250 users per peak hour. The Minuteman Bikeway is too narrow even at 12', and recently experienced a death due to a head-on collision.

Thank you for your consideration of this request to ensure that the CPX meets federal and State safety requirements for multi-use paths based on Peak Use.

Sincerely,

Lynn Weissman and Alan Moore
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The mission of the Friends of the Community Path is to connect regional path networks and public transit via the Community Path extension (CPX), which will be built along the Green Line extension (GLX). "To Lechmere... and Beyond!!"