



**KENZIE BOK**  
**BOSTON CITY COUNCILOR - DISTRICT 8**

Governor Charles D. Baker  
Massachusetts State House  
Office of the Governor, Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

October 23, 2020

Dear Governor Baker,

I am writing in support of the Charlesgate Revitalization Project, and to respectfully ask that the Charlesgate project be fully funded in the transportation budget. This project will increase Bostonians' access to greenspace, walking paths, and bike paths, at a time when we are learning the intense value of urban nature and the capacity to walk or bike through the city. As we approach 2022 and the national 200th anniversary celebration of Frederick Law Olmsted's birth, this project is also exciting because it will reconnect Charlesgate to the rest of the Emerald Necklace park system -- linking the Fens to the Charles River Esplanade -- as Olmsted originally intended. The Emerald Necklace is one of the gems of our city and state, and we should seize on this opportunity to revitalize a key part of it. The project will also provide great environmental benefits to the City of Boston by increasing green infrastructure, easing access to public greenspace, enhancing habitat connectivity, and improving water quality.

The Charlesgate Alliance was founded 3 years ago with the sole goal of the revitalization of the Charlesgate Park, an 11-acre site in downtown Boston. Since then, with a combination of private support and Community Preservation Act funds from the City, the group has involved a wide array of community members to articulate an exciting vision and detailed design for the project. The overall goals of the project are to develop resilient and green infrastructure for Charlesgate Park, add a network of pedestrian and bicycle access paths that allow connections to the Fens and the Esplanade, unlock parkland currently stranded between highway lanes, create new amenities for park users such as an accessible playground and an off-leash dog recreation area, and establish a Charlesgate Park Maintenance Endowment.

One of the key pieces of revitalizing Charlesgate that should be included in the Department of Transportation's Plan is "daylighting" the portion of the Muddy River that runs underneath Storrow Drive and into the Charles River. The Muddy River is the most polluted tributary of the Charles River, and daylighting this portion of it would increase water quality for the Muddy River, and therefore, the Charles

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River as well. This would also have huge benefits for Bostonians, as it would allow significantly easier access to the Charles River via walking and biking. Already, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation has provided thoughtful work on the Storrow Drive and Massachusetts Turnpike Bridge Replacement Projects. Completing these projects in a way that allows the Charlesgate Alliance to fulfill their vision of revitalizing this important section of the Emerald Necklace is vital to restoring both the natural environment and historic design.

Another important piece of the Charlesgate Alliance's proposal that should be included in the Department of Transportation's Plan is the elimination of the "pinch point" at the Esplanade. This will allow for the Emerald Necklace and Esplanade to meet, making room for safe and spacious walking and biking paths.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project. I hope that you will consider the diligent work that the Charlesgate Alliance has done in collaboration with community members, and fully fund this proposal in the transportation budget, including "daylighting" the remaining covered portion of the Muddy River and eliminating the "pinch point" on the Esplanade. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to my office.

Sincerely,

Kenzie Bok, District 8

CC: Secretary Pollack, Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Commissioner Jim Montgomery, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation