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December 12, 2019

Michael Trepanier, Project Manager
Mass Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160
Boston, MA 02116

Re: Route 138 reconstruction project (PROJECT FILE NO. 608484): Segment 3: Milton St. to Royall St.

Dear Mr Trepanier:

The Friends of the Blue Hills is pleased that MassDOT is working to improve traffic safety and congestion, and pedestrian and bike access around the Blue Hills. We appreciate that MassDOT acknowledges the value of the park to Massachusetts residents, and understands the benefits of assuring easy access to the park's recreational and natural resources.

We also appreciate that the proposal includes sidewalks on both sides of the highway, including a 10-foot shared-use path on the east side of the highway. This shared-use path will encourage pedestrians and bikers to exercise, enjoy nature, and visit the Blue Hills. It would also help achieve a Complete Street design for this section of Route 138 that would equitably accommodate both through traffic and pedestrian/bicycle use by park visitors.

However, no provisions have been made for pedestrians to cross the roadway. This leaves Route 138 as a barrier separating two sections of the Blue Hills Reservation, not as a Complete Street. Hikers in the Little Blue Hill section on the Skyline Trail, visitors parking in the Park-and-Ride lot, and nearby residents, all on the west side of the road will be unable to safely cross to the new multi-use path, the ski area, the Trailside Museum, Blue Hill trails and summit, and the other end of the Skyline Trail on the east side.

Currently, the only designated location to cross Route 138 is at the traffic light at the intersection of Route 138 and Royall Street, which is over a mile from most of the destinations and does not have a crosswalk or pedestrian signals for this crossing.

The Route 138 Priority Corridor Study of February 2018 used as the foundation for this project calls for two pedestrian signals on this section of Route 138. On page 63, the study's proposed improvements include the installation of a high visibility midblock crosswalk with pedestrian signals in the vicinity of DCR's parking lot and Mass Audubon's Blue Hills Trailside Museum. The next recommendation is the installation of a high visibility midblock crosswalk with pedestrian signals in the vicinity of the MassDOT Park-and-Ride lot and the Skyline Trail.

We urge MassDOT to incorporate both pedestrian crossings in the project so that pedestrian safety is achieved, the project meets Complete Street standards, and the roadway does not divide the Blue Hills Reservation in two.

Thank you again for working to improve the safety and enjoyment of drivers, pedestrians and bikers around the Blue Hills.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Judy Lehrer Jacobs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judy Lehrer Jacobs
Executive Director

CC: Stephanie Pollack, Secretary & Chief Executive Officer, Jonathan Gulliver, Highway Administrator