



CHARLES RIVER ALLIANCE OF BOATERS

NEWSLETTER, SUMMER 2020

RIVER UPDATE

After this past spring when activity on the river was shut down due to COVID-19, it's encouraging to see people back on the water. Rowers, sailors, paddlers, and more recently, the Boston Duck Tour boats and the Charles River sightseeing boats. As the COVID-19 restrictions ease and activity continues to build, please take care to follow the traffic rules and show courtesy to your fellow users of the water sheet.

The CRWA posted warnings about a cyano-algae bloom that seems to have arrived earlier than in past years. There have also been reports of extensive underwater plant growth in the shallows of the river, especially Sunset Bay, the area near Newton YC and Watertown YC.

As September and October approach, there is still a lot of uncertainty about how active the river might become after Labor Day. Harvard and MIT have suspended their athletic programs for the fall. At this point in time, other schools are still evaluating rowing and sailing this fall. The Head of the Charles Regatta has replaced this year's in-person event with a global remote event.

ANNUAL MEETING

CRAB will hold its annual meeting on November 16, at 6 pm. While our preference is for an in-person meeting, the COVID-19 situation may force this to become a video meeting. In either case, we'd like to encourage everyone on the river to attend the annual meeting. So hold the date!!!

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

During the downtime this spring, the officers of CRAB have been working to improve how well CRAB is fulfilling its mission. Our immediate focus is to improve communication. The [CRAB Facebook page](#) has been reactivated. CRAB now has a Twitter account ([@CharlesBoaters](#)). We've created a [list-server for individuals](#) that want to get our notices directly. Over the coming weeks, we'll be reaching out to every river organization to update your contact information to ensure that you are included in our communication loop.

In addition, the officers of CRAB have endorsed a [Strategic Plan](#) that will allow CRAB to continue to prosper. The key points in the plan include:

- Better Communication
- Outreach to Every River Organization
- Outreach to Individual River Users
- Annual Meeting for Everyone
- Increased Participation by the River Community
- New Survey of River Use
- Governance
- Membership and Supporters
- Encourage more use of CRAB Calendar
- Develop Partnerships to Improve River Ecology

[Comments and suggestions](#) about the Strategic Plan are welcome.

ALLSTON MULTIMODAL PROJECT

A public [update](#) of the [Allston Multimodal Project](#) was given on June 22 via Zoom. The project outside of the “throat” area is well defined [slide 16]. In the “throat” area, MassDOT is considering 3 options: Soldiers Field Road Hybrid [slides 17-19], an at-grade alternative [slides 20-22], and a modified highway viaduct [slides 23-26].

Construction of the Soldiers Field Road Hybrid option would stack the four lanes of Soldiers Field Road on eastbound I-90, and create space for separate pedestrian and cycling lanes on the Paul Dudley Path [slide 18]. An alternative would be to stack I-90 over the railroad tracks [slide 26]. It would also require a temporary trestle for Soldier Fields Road and Paul Dudley Path in the Charles River for 8-10 years [slide 19], which raises considerable concern for users of the river.

The at-grade alternative would place Soldiers Field Road, I-90, and the 4 railroad tracks side-by-side, with one lane of eastbound Soldiers Field Road and a combined pedestrian and cycling path extending approximately 40 feet over the river [slide 22].

A modified highway viaduct could result in an improved version of what currently exists, with separate pedestrian and cycling lanes on the Paul Dudley Path, without the need for any temporary or permanent intrusion into the river.

During the discussion period, several people advocated for a reduction in the number of traffic lanes on Soldiers Field Road and I-90, creating more lateral space within the “throat” and more space for parkland and the Paul Dudley Path.

In related news, the secretary of energy and environmental affairs, Kathleen Theoharides, has [publicly stated](#) that any intrusion into the Charles River should be a last resort. “My agencies would consider any intrusion into the river excessive, especially if there are alternatives without any intrusion. The Charles River and surrounding basin is a historic environmental asset to Boston and the surrounding communities, and any impacts should be weighted heavily in the review of the Allston Viaduct replacement project.”

While much is yet to be done to develop a consensus about which option to build, the state would like to reach a decision this autumn so that the environmental impact reports can be completed next year.

CRAB OFFICERS

Aleks Zosuls : President

Aleks Zosuls has been boating on and occasionally falling into the Charles river for 25 years. He joined CRAB out of gratitude for use of the river and the surrounding parkland. His mission has been to safely promote and maintain access to the river for all modes of boats and users and more recently swimming. Alex had been president since 2012 and is a member of the Riverside Boat Club.

Carl Zimba : Vice President

Carl has been the webmaster for CRAB for several years, creating much of the content of our website. He was also the Project Coordinator and driving force to generate the new depth chart of the Lower Basin of the Charles River, the first detailed chart in more than 100 years. His involvement with CRAB started while he was the president of the Massachusetts Bay Sailing League for a dozen years, building it from 8 high school sailing teams at Community Boating to more than 30 schools at venues from Natick to Gloucester and Duxbury.

Dave Amicangioli : Treasurer

As a member of the Newton Yacht Club, Dave has been our treasurer since 2012. After so many years of service, Dave is looking forward to stepping down this year and handing the books over to his successor.

Karen Chenausky : Secretary

Karen has been a river user since September, 1985, when she learned to row at MIT. She joined Riverside Boat Club in 1994 and served as club coach for several years around the turn of the 21st century. In the 2010s she joined the Board of Riverside as Trustee, and in 2019 she came on as CRAB’s secretary. Karen looks forward to serving the river user community through the completion of the Allston Multimodal Project and afterward.

