

## Sound, fury over Pike wall plans

By **Kevin Rothstein**

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**D**umbfounded Allston residents say the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority is going the wrong way with plans to build a wall between the highway and their neighborhood because it will almost certainly be torn down to make way for a bigger barrier in the near future.

“Are these people used to spending money like drunken sailors? Just put up a good wall and be done with it,” said an exasperated Paul Berkeley, president of the Allston Civic Association.

The authority has already accepted a bid to build a \$200,000, 8-foot high wooden fence along a 2,000-foot stretch of Lincoln Street in Allston, which runs parallel to the westbound Turnpike. The authority is building a breakdown lane there, and the fence is being built to keep plowed snow from being pushed off the road and onto Lincoln Street.

But residents clamoring for noise relief say it doesn't make sense to build the snow fence when a bigger sound-proofing fence eventually will be erected in its place. They say the Pike could just pay \$1 million for the sound fence instead of \$1.2 million for two fences.

But a Turnpike official says the agency can't install a wall in Allston ahead of other communities whose noise-abatement needs they have deemed a higher priority.

“We need to build that screening fence now but we don't want to have to leapfrog neighborhoods over one another in the sound barrier program,” Pike spokesman Doug Hanchett said. “They're going to have to wait.”

The screening fence will cut down on some of the noise, but far from what a 20-foot-tall, sound-blocking wall would do. The Pike is working its way down a list of 17 sites along the roadway that are slated for sound relief. So far seven have been completed. Up next are four different sites in Newton, Riverview Road in Brighton and then Lincoln Street in Allston.

The sound barriers will be built “as funds become available,” Hanchett said.

“Anything that cuts the sound down is fine by me,” said Eric Road resident Dave Lalime, who lives in a house 50 feet from the Pike and sometimes is awakened by screeching tires and the grinding metal of car crashes.

Another Eric Road resident said, “In the evening during rush hour, I sit on my deck back here and can barely hear myself.”



Allston residents want a permanent sound stopping wall between them and the Pike. (Staff photo by Ted Fitzgerald)

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