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Inner Belt Step-One Report

**CITIZEN OPPOSITION TO THE INNER BELT : THE STORY OF WHY CAMBRIDGEPORT  
BECAME THE MOST EFFECTIVE NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE METROPOLITAN BOSTON AREA**

INTRODUCTION

Most Cambridge citizens have only a vague awareness of the threat created by the proposed Inner Belt highway of fifty years ago. Today's residents are very lucky they can look upon the Inner Belt as *history*, as something that *did not happen* and in all probability will never return. The Inner Belt was only a small part of a much larger highway master plan, endorsed by both state and Federal governments. This plan would construct a network of eight-lane expressways feeding into Boston and Cambridge, with all the traffic distributed around a central ring-road called the Inner Belt. Governments had stockpiled the money and harnessed the authority to seize private homes and businesses, with the goal of implementing this plan.

The aim was to create an urban environment for cars to replace what had been a pleasant environment for human beings. Thankfully, due to almost superhuman effort in the 1960s, the road plan was stopped. As the only public reminder in Cambridge of "what could have been," Bernie LaCasse's mural in Cambridgeport has been carefully restored this past summer. It hearkens back to a previous era when governments were fully and unashamedly prepared to do the wrong thing.

SUMMARY

This is the story of how the Inner Belt was stopped in Cambridge, and why Cambridgeport -- of all places -- played the most important citizen advocacy role in stopping it. Perfection may not have always been achieved, but group vigilance created a splendid machine that turned the tables on the Highway Lobby. By no means did *all* citizens participate, and the long battle depended on perseverance over many years by a core of working activists. This anti-highway coalition coordinated a range of skills and interests, beginning with such essentials as one's own physical presence at meetings and rallies. Higher levels of skills grass roots strategy added to a newly invented concept -- technical skills offered by professionals to citizen groups. The single unifying goal was simply stated : *stop the Inner Belt*.

\* Gordon Fellman and Barbara Brandt, The Deceived Majority (1970)

By 1965 all the power and influence appeared to be with the highway builders. Residents in the path of the road seemed to have no chance. Over the next five years, power gradually shifted to an anti-highway coalition, locally centered in Cambridgeport, but extending all the way to the State House in Boston and to Washington D.C. Hard work and persistence by local residents reaped the benefits from major blunders committed by the highway officials. Bernie's mural records a timely spirit of a true David and Goliath confrontation ... when Goliath tumbled down in one massive, bewildered heap. Highway advocates were so stunned by the enormity of their loss that they never recovered the grandiosity and arrogance of their ambitions.

The conflict of roads vs. people was indeed a battle, a conflict that occurred in the political arena in a democracy. Amazingly, Cambridge never lost a house to the Inner Belt, and there were no court appeals. This battle was played out by contestants who rarely came face-to-face. They talked past each other or through intermediaries. They debated even though they were not in the same room. Elected officials and the general public were caught in the middle.

The Highway Lobby preferred to do its work in the back room, out of public view until the bulldozers arrived. The citizen lobby used meetings with public officials, meetings, rallies, letters, petitions, newspaper reporters, college professors, and a new creation called citizen planners who used their professional skills to assist Cambridge residents directly. Citizens also took advantage of good fortune and good timing : their case was heard at the same time the nation was entering the tumult of the Vietnam era, with all of its challenges to decisions by the prevailing Establishment.

For the residents, one regrettable result of winning the Inner Belt battle was the realization that *citizens indeed had won* ... but they never could celebrate with a victory party. One old timer told me at the time that we should not be too confident, because the road plan could be revived in the future to haunt us once again. Such wisdom was understandable in the spirit of caution and vigilance. It took decades to be sure that the political system would cement victory into permanence. With the passage of those many decades, human memories dimmed, and veterans of anti-highway battles passed on. The question "When can we be sure?" was never answered. That clarion call to cut loose and celebrate never came.

It probably took four decades for most of the surviving principals to feel sure. In 2012, the Boston Society of Architects sponsored several forums forty years after the final victory. The speakers talked confidently as if the highway monster was gone for good. Let it be emphasized right up front – ***THE CITIZENS WON***. Now the task should be to investigate the reasons for that victory. How did one side win and the other side lose? Some studies have identified the key actions of government at the time, and in 1970 Gordon Fellman produced a major sociological study of the social aspects of the local residents and their opinions on community life. The next step is to write the story that historians normally tell very well : what happened on both sides and why?

Bernie's mural envisions a simple confrontation. A group of citizens larger than life confronts a single solitary bulldozer, smaller than life. The bulldozer is all alone and is stopped. It is driven by a man in a business suit. In an odd way this perspective could be shared by both residents and highway builders in 1970 when the winners and the losers were clear. Each member of the Highway Lobby must have felt like lonely operators on that bulldozer, stopped dead in its tracks. What had happened to the grand army so powerful it could roll over any opposition? How had that army scattered so quickly? What happened to all their former friends in the Governor's office and in the state highway department? The Highway Lobby seemed like a band of brothers who lost it all in just five years. The power, the macho and the confidence had been drained out of them.

### **WHEN THE POWERFUL MAKE THE BIGGEST MISTAKES**

In earlier highway times, Bernie's bulldozer would have been backed up by an army of the *Highway Lobby*. There would be highway engineers ... state and Federal bureaucrats ... banks ... politicians ... contractors ... unions and a host of camp-followers attracted by the hundreds of millions of dollars in government funds assembled to build highways. The alliance included the car and truck manufacturers ... the oil industry ... asphalt-steel-concrete industries ... gas stations ... repair shops ... tire companies ... roadside businesses ... and the travel industry. This collection of interests was what people called the Highway Lobby. It represented a coalition of its own, requiring technical skills, managerial and planning prowess, extravagant funding, and self-confidence mixed with high group morale. Most importantly the Lobby knew their power was backed up by existing laws. This immense power and influence was similar in some ways to the military industrial complex President Eisenhower a half a century ago had warned us about.

There is a valid claim that many military battles are won not by those who make the most brilliant moves. Instead the victor makes the fewest blunders. The citizens alliance made only a few, while it brought in many skilled professionals to give technical assistance. The big mistake by the government advocates was to select a defective plan. Their choice was composed of a network of radial roads and beltways. By the 1950s the highway profession knew that such plans would bring the traffic to the center of the city and concentrate it there. Severe traffic congestion was guaranteed. Boston's highway plan was the wrong design from the start, and the engineers knew it. In 1957, the first traffic study was completed, and it concluded that the entire length of the Inner Belt would be congested with traffic. Even worse, the flaw was major. One section of roadway only *six lanes wide* would have needed *twenty-four lanes* to work properly. How does one add *eighteen lanes* to a roadway in the middle of a city?

From 1965 to 1970, Cambridge citizens and their allies gained in strength, confidence and solidarity. Meanwhile, heretofore intimidating powers of the vaunted "Highway Lobby" were stripped away year-by-year. Community forces tried new strategies and made adjustments that

allowed their influence to grow rapidly, while the highway designers found themselves trapped in a quagmire of their own past errors. The pro-road faction was unable to react thoughtfully as they lost control of the process and as their highway values were rejected in the realm of public opinion.

When City of Boston planners reviewed the state plan in 1958, they said it would never work and what was needed was a mass transit program instead. Efforts were made to repair the highway flaws by adding in traffic relief roads that made only slight improvements in reduced congestion. A decade of planning struggle caused the state highway department to adopt a brand new expressway intended to pass through Brookline and West Cambridge. Because Cambridge had so fervently opposed the Inner Belt, one can imagine how they felt when the state proposed another expressway through Cambridge. The city now felt threatened by, in effect, a second Inner Belt.

The state highway department increased the pressure by attempting to accelerate the construction of Route 2 from Alewife into a connection with the Inner Belt in Somerville. Now Cambridge was threatened by **three** new expressways, not one. If Cambridge did not like the original Inner Belt, what possible reason could there be for them to accept three expressways? Highway officials had deceived themselves into believing they were still thinking rationally. It hardly mattered that the Route 2 would take another 350 homes, as well as dozens of businesses.

To thwart the Route 2 strategy, Cambridge countered in June 1969 with a roadway alternative of its own at Alewife, quite different from the state's plan. Highway Commissioner Edward Ribbs complained that the Cambridge initiative was a stalling tactic and that it would not work for traffic reasons. But he reluctantly agreed to take the time to study the Cambridge idea. The study might have taken several months, but every passing month meant a continuous loss of momentum for the highway planners. Successful completion of the overall highway plan was slipping out of their grasp. They had overestimated their abilities as changing circumstances trimmed their power. The bully could not longer function as the bully.

The Highway Department had advertised the construction contract for the extension of I-93 from Somerville to the Charles River, when a last minute push came to stop this road too. As a compromise with the highway industry, Governor Sargent and his Transportation adviser Alan Altshuler agreed to let I-93 go to completion. A new interchange at the Charles River called the Leverett Circle Bridge was also given the green light, but it was strongly opposed by powerful elements of the Beacon Hill Civil Association. An MDC staff analysis identified major traffic and safety defects in the design. Thirty years later a bridge was built through the area, now known as the Leonard Zakim Bridge.

#### **MISTAKES MADE BY THE CITIZENS' ALLIANCE**

Gordon Fellman had raised a concern about the lack of participation from a majority of the



residents ... a sense of passiveness and an unwillingness to speak out, except by a few individuals. Such attitudes by a working class, lower-middle income community should come as no surprise. Residents were generally quite conservative in their outlook, even though a little old lady across the street told me once that “We're all communists around here,” and then giggled. Cambridgeport contained a number of individuals who were outspoken and feisty. Enough to make a difference.

The citizen coalition *did* lack certain technical skills, such as *highway design and traffic*. Those skills would have allowed the citizens to do their own design work and propose alternate plans for highways. They needed to break the design monopoly away from the highway engineers. Cambridge City Hall with its new Community Development unit lacked many of those needed skills.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence that highway critics ever pursued the Inner Belt plan because of its traffic flaws. But the “second Inner Belt” through West Cambridge was an indirect result of the traffic failure recognized in 1957 and 1958, and gave the anti-highway forces added reason to resist all roads. If the coalition had been able to make a good traffic argument to disgrace the highway engineers, it would have accelerated its ability to attack the credibility of the entire highway enterprise. As in wartime, it makes sense to have the best and most appropriate weapons.

These criticisms do not diminish from the ultimate victory for the anti-highway cause. The edge comes from possibly speeding up the ultimate victory. Citizen groups armed with technical assistance could more quickly dispense with bad government plans and with less anguish than in a long drawn-out battle. Governments have learned this lesson well over the years, and thus it is common for citizen groups to have no access to independent technical support. Citizens today are helpless against government forces armed with mind-numbing arsenals of PowerPoint.

#### A MATTER OF SYMPATHY AND BIAS

The primary source of information on opinions and attitudes of Cambridge residents is The Deceived Majority, by Gordon Fellman and Barbara Brandt. Fellman was a sociologist by profession and a longtime professor at Brandeis. Early in his treatise he explained his obvious sympathy for the neighbors and showed distaste for the highway builders. Moreover, he accepted the basic claims of social advantages for highways, without question. He felt he was not in a position to recognize the traffic failures caused by different highway designs, especially any false claims of solving traffic problems when -- as in the case of the Inner Belt -- the actual result was to worsen traffic congestion.

Nor was he in a position to assess how high and mighty road builders had fallen, and how the Inner belt story is one of both citizen success and institutional failure. His skills as a sociologist would have been valuable in understanding the disgrace and damage to personal ego in such a short time of only five years. By 1970, the highway forces had lost so badly that almost no one was expressing any understanding or sympathy for the hapless engineers whose world had collapsed

around them in rejection and oblivion. It may seem a strange observation, but highway engineers deserve some recognition that they too are human beings, just as residents deserve a similar sympathy for their plight whenever a bulldozer approaches.

Short histories of highways and planning in the 1960s have been posted on the Internet by writers favorable to the highway cause. Again, a single-sided approach is common : the effects of road construction on residents are ignored and any flaws in highway design are downplayed. Typical pro-highway histories contain no appreciation of the human element, as it might have affected either side in the long battle. As the Inner Belt saga recedes into history, raw emotions may yield more easily to reflection. The historian has the duty to cover *both* sides in any battle, and not to concentrate solely on one side or the other. They should also seek *not* to ignore the human side.

As a 52-year resident with a house less than a block from where the Inner Belt would have passed, my bias is obviously in favor of my neighbors who suffered and fought a half century ago. I am a traffic engineer and worked in government as a civil engineer for many years. I bring an engineer's perspective to integrity in design and analysis, and thus the traffic flaw informs my judgment about both the technical and the human side of all achievements and failures.

### *CONTEXT IN THE SOCIETY OF ITS TIME*

The Inner Belt story played out in the fabled turmoil of the 1960s, when few people came out at the end of the decade the same way they began. The civil rights revolution changed an entire nation, and converted a southern President into an advocate for racial justice. Where the civil rights crusade dominated the first half of the 1960s, the second half ended up with anti-Vietnam riots in the streets and radical students taking over the offices of college presidents. Political victims of the war included Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, Richard Nixon and an old aristocracy of wise men identified by David Halberstam as “The Best and the Brightest.” In those days, trust was slipping away as societal institutions seemed more vulnerable to both internal and external criticism. The Inner Belt came to signify a beacon of protest in that very same era of intense nationwide unrest.

At about the same time Cambridge seemed to start coming together to resist new highways, the rest of the nation was coming apart over Vietnam. Key growth years in protests against the war were 1965 to 1970 -- the same time period as the crisis years for the Inner Belt. Both movements began with thoughtful concern in a time of relative complacency and powerlessness. Both movements peaked in civic battle over power and priorities. Both ended in the realization that government policies had been wrong – for Vietnam and for highways.

An important difference is reflected in how national leaders seemed insulated and in denial over what had gone wrong in Vietnam, and were baffled by their lack of support. In Massachusetts, Governor Frank Sargent took office in 1969 and announced his conversion to the anti-highway

cause. He presented this shift as a *positive* change in policy. Both Sargent and the Globe admitted in 1970 that “*we were wrong.*” It took Robert McNamara another twenty-five years to admit that he was wrong about Vietnam.

Civil rights protests of the early 1960s, and urban riots in the late 1960s had carried the message home that governments were capable of doing bad things. Progressives by instinct were traditional supporters of government initiatives like the New Deal and urban renewal, but in the 1960s they became increasingly distrustful of government actions. Fierce debates within the Cambridge Civic Association and other progressive groups in the early 1960s brought about an important conversion. Since the end of World War II, good government groups such as the CCA and League of Women Voters had been strong supporters of the Inner Belt. Most newspapers, including the Boston Globe, supported the road plan too. Fierce internal debates redefined progressivism in Cambridge and strengthened opposition to urban highways and urban renewal.

The Inner Belt battle was different from Civil Rights and Vietnam because neither pro- nor anti-highway forces engaged in physical violence. The Cambridge protests were surprisingly non-violent. While antiwar riots spread to the streets in the later 1960s, anti-highway protests moved to the suites – the corridors of power and the need to talk things through. In January 1969 a major march on the State House against highways ended peacefully and calmly with Governor Sargent's sympathetic and conciliatory speech. The highway protest was grass-roots democracy at its best.

Strangely, except for newspapers, the media played only minor roles, especially television and radio. After the 1965 ending of Cambridge's veto over highways, the state Legislature had a negligible impact. Support from U. S. Senators and Congressmen was vital, as was support from Federal agencies such as Transportation and HUD. A strangely missing element was the absence of court suits from either side. How unusual it was that the battle over the Inner Belt was settled with so little violence and with so few court suits.

Governor Sargent turned negatives into positives when he sought to transfer construction funds from highways over to transit. He kept funding and construction jobs in Massachusetts, and allowed for a smooth transition to a pro-transit era. In 1975, as the nation recovered from the Watergate scandals, state policies transitioned smoothly from Governor Sargent to Mike Dukakis. Dukakis had been one of the most outspoken critics of the Inner Belt and for a dozen years as governor supported a strong transit policy. Both Governors had a favorable record on environmental protection, while highway engineers were again on a losing side. Highway builders were seen as insensitive to the environment, as they had been seen as insensitive to the needs of Cambridgeport residents.

Stopping the Inner Belt was not an isolated event. Anti-highway protests had begun in San Francisco in 1959. A dozen years earlier, society lady Friedel Klussman stunned the Mayor of San

Francisco by organizing a referendum to defeat his plans to replace the cable cars with diesel buses. New York City was the scene of epic battles in the 1960s as critic and activist Jane Jacobs pinned defeat after defeat upon master builder Robert Moses.

Highway construction in Massachusetts had been slowing down since the mid-1960s. New highway construction *in Eastern Massachusetts* dropped from about 25 miles of new construction during the year 1965 to 20 miles in 1966 ... 15 miles in 1967 ... 10 miles in 1968 ... and 5 miles in 1969. By 1970 new road construction had stopped. Changes in highway policy were affecting many more roads than just the Inner Belt. And these changes had occurred quietly and peacefully.

### **RUMBLINGS OF EARLY OPPOSITION**

In the early 1950s politicians approached the road opposition movement with mixed feelings. By the early 1960s City Councillors were leading the charge to argue *against any Inner Belt*, no matter what the route. By 1960 Tip O'Neill had become an early convert to the anti-highway cause. Not until the mid-1960s did the majority of citizen opponents realize they could extend their horizons and recognize that highways were *not* inevitable. Urban renewal and road plans could be stopped by activist residents, and the only question was how soon the road plan could be discarded. As each year played out in the 1960s, anti-highway forces gained the upper hand.

### **HOW CHANGE CAME TO GOVERNMENT TRANSPORTATION POLICIES**

Anti-highway protests in Cambridge essentially were focused on new ways to *prevent* change in their neighborhoods. In the long term, the goal was to *create* change in government policies and to *make it last* for almost five decades. The organization applied a big umbrella approach with non-partisan outreach. It was inclusive with a mix of liberal inclinations and fundamentally conservative preservationist beliefs. It did not dissolve into internal disputes and purges the way other 1960s movements collapsed. Infiltration by disruptive forces was not a problem at any time, since the pro-highway forces had become so confident it seemed infiltration was unnecessary.

Anti-highway efforts were non-provincial in interesting ways. They allowed an expanding movement to grow into an effective advocacy for housing and transit. Their message became both positive and negative. Their outreach had City Halls working directly with citizens. Fundamental policies included a touch of mid-nineteenth century libertarianism and even anarchism – with a support for freedom, individualism, community support, rights to personal property and opposition to state power.

Governor Frank Sargent and his newfound anti-highway allies sought to create an instant, bipartisan healing process. His effort was in stark contrast to the Vietnam legacy of bitterness, defeat

and a fabric of lies. Now was a time for open meetings and discussions, as citizens and their allies became lobbyists and used skilled personnel to infiltrate and convert the state bureaucracy. These changes caused Cambridge City Hall to become firmly “radicalized” against all road plans. City officials worked with citizens and college professors with even stronger determination to defeat the state highway plan. It seemed as if they had formed a *team* ready to work with anyone in Cambridge -- except the City Planner and the Planning Board.

### **OTHER LOCAL CITIZEN VICTORIES, BEFORE AND SINCE**

By the early 1960s Cambridge citizens had the positive experience of defeating urban renewal plans aimed at both Cambridgeport and Riverside. They had the negative experience of watching the demolition of Boston's **West End** and its eviction of 7,500 residents. During the 1960s, the old adage of “you can't beat City Hall” was being supplemented by examples of how citizens could take on City Hall and win, or could find ways to work with City Hall, and win.

One of the innovations in the Inner Belt battle was winning over City Hall as an ally, followed by winning over the Governor and infiltrating many state agencies with new employees who were critical of highways. They were able to make important contacts in Congress and in key Federal agencies. The citizens never won over their City Planner, nor the Planning Board, nor the state Highway Department. The media in the form primarily of newspapers lagged behind but were eventually won over. Legislators concerned with advancing road improvements in their own districts were never won over.

It is not often citizens have the chance to savor victories over powerful forces. Two recent events are worth noting : one was the successful wildcat strike by employees at **Market Basket** in 2014, led by managers who walked out and were followed by almost all (non-union) employees and company suppliers. They fought for their stores, their jobs and their leader. They combined persistence, courage and new, effective strategies of protest. They beat the big bad Board of Directors who sought to dismember and sell the company. In a eyeball-to-eyeball showdown worthy of a “High Noon” shoot-out, the good guys won over the forces of greed and evil. The Market Basket renegades won a tense economic shootout, and immediately were able to celebrate their victory.

A second example occurred when the hapless **Boston 2024 Olympics** movement collapsed after a bruising series of missteps. At first the underfunded opponents seemed completely over-matched. Well-funded Boston 2024 was made up of a vast assortment of business and former government leaders who quickly demonstrated an almost limitless capacity to shoot themselves in the foot. By contrast, citizen opponents were a slightly dull collection of nobodies operating on a shoestring with moderate competence and no inclination to make mistakes. Such virtues -- without

heroism -- were in stark contrast with the ineptitude and shortsightedness of the Olympics advocates. The Olympics effort went down in flames. The opposition was brilliantly ordinary.

**World War II** offers a prime example for how to use a national victory as a stimulus for a massive spirit of remembrance lasting for decades. Such victories need national impact, extended celebrations, press conferences and stories of heroism to keep memories alive. Market Basket's win largely disappeared from public view due to a management decision **not** to publicize its victory. Market Basket lacked a national context and the clearly villainous stature of the mighty Highway Lobby. They needed a mural to keep the memory alive. The advocates for the Olympics were models of public incompetence and sheer bumbling, and had no aura of power and invincibility.

The Inner Belt victory was the culmination of all the earlier but smaller victories won by citizens in Cambridge. The coalition to stop the Inner Belt achieved a **triple victory** ... by superior dedication, guile, and strategic skills ....by cementing their victory into the regular business of government .... and fending off any attempt in later years to resurrect the Inner Belt.

#### **WHY CAMBRIDGEPORT ?**

Why Cambridgeport and not another community? What were the special circumstances that caused the coalition to form and be effective? How did they keep internal jealousies and resentments from ruining the group?

The neighborhood of Cambridgeport is a most unlikely spot for the exercise of political influence. Traditionally, it had been a mix of Greeks, French, Irish, Italians, Blacks, students, and even an occasional faculty member. With **no clear ethnic identity**, it did not seem an ideal place to ferment political campaigns. Cambridgeport was usually underrepresented on the City Council. The neighborhood was at the tail end of services in the city. Even today, its trash is picked up on Fridays, at the end of the week. Cambridgeport in those days had little clout.

It was in its own way open and vulnerable, with no social or economic barriers. As today, it had numerous three-deckers and workers' housing, but also held its fair share of elegant homes with curved-glass front windows. It still has its older industrial buildings, and in the 1960s the neighborhood could conform in part to the negative image condemned by city planners in those days claiming that Cambridge was "**a declining industrial city.**"

The threat of the road construction had triggered a small exodus, as some people moved out while others moved in. Significant damage was done when home loans dried up. Residents could not get money to fix up their homes, so deterioration and blight began to seep through the urban fabric. When I talked with a manager of the old Shawmut bank on Mass Avenue, he fretted over the uncertainty of the highway threat and that his own bank was cutting back on home loans. "It's killing them," he said of the residents. This was definitely not Brattle Street.

In the late 60s, I talked with a young mother who was trying to deal with the problem of junk cars left on the streets. At that time, the City had no regular street cleaning program, and abandoned cars became a serious problem. Neighbors suggested the idea of setting any junk car on fire, and then calling the Board of Health. Health officials would then declare the smoldering ruins a health hazard, and city officials would bring in a tow truck. Such was life in Cambridgeport during the time of its greatest trial.

Through the mid-1960s, Cambridgeport had been receiving minimal support from outside groups and city agencies. State and Federal agencies were at their doorstep, waiting to begin road construction. The local good-government association was called the **Cambridge Civic Association**, and its primary constituents were seen as Brattle Street and other areas of West Cambridge. Boston under the leadership of Mayors Hynes and Collins were enthusiasts for the Inner Belt. Somerville had offered minimal resistance, and had a long-time reputation for corruption.

How does a Cambridge neighborhood keep its head up in the face of such isolation and overwhelming outside power? What made them think that they and nobody else could stop the road? Save Our City could get 70 activists to meetings but not much more. It could get enough of a turnout to fill small meetings rooms with regularity and large rallies occasionally. The vast majority of Cambridgeport residents were passive, obedient, pessimistic, burned out. Still, something in Cambridgeport moved a small fraction of the residents to continued activity.

One young activist sought a major rally with 10,000 people in a demonstration. The turnout was 800, less than hoped for, but still enough to work with in a long-term campaign. Persistent residents sought face-to-face meetings with Senator Ted Kennedy, Legislative leaders on Beacon Hill, various Governors and university Presidents. Maybe there was naive trust that drove them to seek help from some forms of government they believed in, starting with Tip O'Neill, and to oppose other forms of government they thought had gone haywire, like the state highway department. Cynics and rational people might have given up immediately. The citizens and the experts from Urban Planning Aid all shared a liberal optimism that there were still some people in government who were helpful and could be talked with. It came down to simple hope and belief.

Meanwhile, **Area 4** was more difficult to mobilize. City Hall and HUD officials worked to designate the **Model Cities** area in such a way as to include both the Brookline-Elm alignment and the Railroad Route. Their hope was to use Model cities as a device to stop the highway. For some reason it did not work out as planned. Other than St. Mary's Catholic Church, community leadership was more fractious in Area 4. Former City Manager Rich Rossi told me his family had lived on Elm Street : his father decided to move out, rather than stay and fight. East Cambridge was even less active, and the problem was evident even to Al Vellucci, one of the most outspoken City Councillors against the Inner Belt. Late in his career, Al was asked by a local reporter why East Cambridge was so weak in opposing the Inner Belt. Al replied "You can't tell these people anything."



Citizen advocacy took a very broad form in Cambridgeport. It included citizen leaders and those willing to attend meetings and rallies. It included non-government advocacy groups such as Urban Planning Aid, the Archdiocese of Boston, professors at MIT and Harvard, and individual (“rebel”) professionals in the fields of urban planning, housing and engineering. It included the City Council (but not the Planning Board) and elected officials who sought to protect affected neighborhoods. In a sense, each one of these components was vital to the whole. Citizen rallies were not sufficient to get the attention of state officials, but those rallies combined with five hundred signatures of professors in a newspaper advertisement and technical analysis by Urban Planning Aid. The totality of all the little things made the whole enterprise better than the sum of its parts.

### *LOCAL LEADERS OF SAVE OUR CITY*

Both local leaders of Save Our City were from Cambridgeport. They were a strange but effective combination. **Bill Ackerley** was born in 1900 at the turn of the century and in the 1930s was a labor union organizer. He was a retired small businessman, and rather portly, with a fair-sized paunch. He had smoker's cough and suffered from emphysema. He wore very thick bottle eyeglasses, with lenses a quarter of an inch thick. It was hard to see his eyes because of the distortions of those thick lenses. He moved around with a shuffle. From conventional definitions of a leader, this “old gaffer” would never have come from Hollywood casting. But he understood the lower class people in the neighborhood. His little house on Lopez Street was right in the path of the Inner Belt. He was an organizer who knew how to run a meeting.

A newspaper report in the early 1960s told of Bill going over to Allston and witnessing people being evicted from their homes by Turnpike Authority officials. It was not a pleasant sight. Combined with the experience seeing Boston's West End leveled, it was enough to make him an opponent of any such evictions in Cambridgeport.

Bill told me once as a union leader he gave \$10 to a Record American reporter to write pro-union columns. He knew that the world worked by rules of Pay-to-Play and similar ways not taught in usual civics textbooks. He was something of a practical expert on how things worked in the city.

His opposite partner, **Anstis Benfield**, was a young idealistic woman with a penchant for wearing granny dresses and trying out new modes of transportation such as a pedal car for grown-ups. Her father was President of the Cambridge Electric company, and she was well connected to influential people in the city. Her leadership position made sense because she was a student at Boston University working on a bachelor's thesis about the Inner Belt.

As the Inner Belt battle heated up, some residents tried to get a meeting with MIT Board Chairman James Killian, and were refused. Anstis and two other mothers decided to take direct action. Along with ten young kids and a jar of peanut butter, they marched down to Killian's office

on the second floor of the main MIT building and requested to see Dr. Killian. Again, without an appointment, they were refused. So the group – all thirteen of them -- assembled immediately outside the entrance door and sat down on the floor to make peanut butter sandwiches and have lunch. Anyone entering the offices of MIT highest brass could not help wondering “what were these women and all these kids *doing*?” Thus the peanut butter legend became part of Inner Belt folklore.

After a while, MIT staff came out and said two days hence they could have a meeting with Dr. Killian. The three women had their meeting -- without kids and peanut butter sandwiches.

At one point, Anstis announced a march on City Hall, and with a small group of supporters made a trek to Central Square. City Hall was closed, so she nailed a set of demands on the door (wooden, I believe, in those days) in the style of Martin Luther. She had her own way of doing things.

In terms of power relationships, the two leaders were not disturbed by such things. There were no jealousies or evident conflicts. They each went about their own tasks. They were prepared to have the Archdiocese set up Save Our City, to work with these newfangled experts like Urban Planning Aid, to arrange lobbying meetings with public officials, and to arrange bus trips to Washington D.C. It just made sense.

Every group needs good lieutenants. Save Our City had one in **Henrietta Jackson**. She lived on Hamilton Street, her little brown house right in the path of the Inner Belt. She was one of the regular meeting attendees who went to the Inner Belt Committee set up by Mayor Hayes. During late 1967 and into 1968 the Committee showed how much the City meant business and believed that the Inner Belt was not justified. The Mayor's committee was composed of over a dozen academics from Harvard and MIT, a most unusual arrangement in a very political city. Usually one or two members of the public attended to observe. Henrietta Jackson was there at almost every meeting and reported back to Save Our Cities what she observed. In her own very measured and quiet way she was the resolute bird-dog. She gained the great respect of her fellow activists, never as a flamethrower or emotional orator. She was steady, she was there.

When **Gordon Fellman** called a small Cambridge meeting in 1985 to reflect on the Inner Belt experience, Henrietta was there. Fellman asked why people had become involved and made their commitment. Henrietta replied with a story of her coming to Cambridgeport. She told of meeting a lady on Hamilton Street who was planning to sell a house. She had one meeting, they talked and she came back again. Soon it was evident that a deal could be struck and she bought the house. She had lived there, in Cambridgeport, until the Inner Belt threatened. That was her story, that was her reason for putting in her time.

In some ways, the story seemed too diffuse and incomplete. But a few details may provide context. Many areas of Cambridge in those days had a certain ethnic identification. Irish in North

Cambridge. Italian and Portuguese in East Cambridge. Blacks in Riverside. Bluebloods on Brattle Street. Cambridgeport had no such designation. There were invisible lines that were drawn across the city, preventing Blacks from being welcome in certain areas. In Cambridgeport Henrietta felt she was indeed welcome. She contributed her part to being part of an integrated community, planning to live out the rest of her widowhood in a tranquil setting. An ominous highway intrusion from outside threatened more than just her dream. It would wipe out her reality. That was her story.

### **THE SIGNED AUTOGRAPH ON HAMILTON STREET**

Among its members, Save Our City had its imaginative free spirit. Harvard graduate **Steve Goldin** was a young libertarian turned radical activist who had wild ideas for rallies with ten thousand people. He also sought to paper every house in the Inner Belt Corridor with huge blue-and-white signs saying "Cambridge is a City, Not a Highway." He was someone who saw urban renewal and Ed Logue as the second coming of Dracula. When I first arrived on Hamilton Street in 1965 I noted house-after-house with those signs, as owners put them up. Years later I thought "Here it was, my own Hamilton Street, with a signed autograph from Cambridgeport."

Anstis' complaint was that the signs were great, but they were expensive .... and so many of them! It nearly bankrupted Save Our Cities. There is a slogan common to the Highway Lobby : "If you want to make an omelet, you've got to break some eggs." Cambridgeport was the egg to be broken by the Inner Belt.

But the opponents needed to make an omelet too. If they were going to Beat the Belt, they had to risk breaking the bank to do it. Fiscal timidity has its limits, and there is a saying that any activist organization that if it is not in the red it is not trying hard enough.

There were at least two other anti-Belt signs printed up and distributed around the community. I loved the story of the little dog at a protest rally, with sign attached : "Bite the Belt." The signs were an important message, no matter what the cost.

### **THE RELIGIOUS CONNECTION**

Resident organizers in Cambridgeport had been fortunate in seeking out and finding allies. In 1965 the **Boston Catholic Archdiocese** was looking for residents to protest. Richard Cardinal Cushing looked over a map of the Inner Belt route and recognized the possible damage to be done to five parishes. He decided to unleash his parish priests as local advocates and organizers against the road plans. Organizational structure came from the group the Archdiocese formed : **Save Our City**, with its focus on Cambridge. It was later to be expanded to become **The United Effort to Save Our Cities**, with the addition of Somerville and Boston.

Fred Salvucci tells the story of Cardinal Cushing attending a convocation where many priests would be present. An Inner Belt advocate approached the Cardinal and complained to him about the activist priests who were speaking out against the highway. The Cardinal turned to one of the priests and asked him what he had been doing. The priest replied with a recitation of his activities. Cardinal Cushing replied, "It sounds like you are doing a good job. Keep it up."

The Catholic Church was the leader in opposing the Inner Belt, with two priests at Blessed Sacrament and St. Mary's leading the charge. In the spirit of Pope John XXIII, an ecumenical spirit thrived, and Save Our City reached out to all religions. Cambridgeport has many churches, five on Magazine Street alone. Several others are tucked away on side streets. In one instance a major rally required several buses to bring people to the gathering site. The City Council voted to pay for the buses, one of which was reserved for the clergy. Some of the pastors traveled on a bus to lobby Congressmen in Washington.

The church was an important civic institution in Cambridgeport, and had notable organizing and communicating power, as well as moral leadership. Religion as a force in Cambridge communities was much stronger in the 1960s than it is today, just as the Black church during the Civil Rights struggle in the South was stronger too. With the exception of right-wing evangelicals, the importance of religion in everyday life is too often treated with derision, especially by liberals. The lesson of organizing against the Inner Belt is never to underestimate the influence of religion.

### **POLITICAL ALLIANCES AND EARLY VICTORIES**

Rescue for Cambridgeport came early on in the form of elected officials, notably **Rep. John Toomey**, who owed his influence to the Iron Duke of the House, legendary Speaker John Thompson. From his Ways and Means post, Toomey gave Cambridge a local veto over highways, thus stalling the road for several crucial years in the early 1960s. Senator **Frank McCann** worked to retard the fortunes of the Inner Belt against the invasions of "suburbanites." At the National level, both **Ted Kennedy and Tip O'Neill** took an interest in the plight of their targeted constituents. O'Neill was particularly instrumental in arranging a bus trip to Washington D.C. to meet with and lobby other Congressmen. Politicians could work with the churches : both had organizing capabilities, but only politicians had the raw power to stop a road.

### **FORERUNNERS OF THE INNER BELT BATTLE**

Cambridge has had a long history of divisions between Townies and Gownies. The lower classes and working people were the Townies, and their politicians became labeled as endorsed by the Independents. The Gown side was represented by the upper classes and intellectuals,

usually associated with the universities. Save Our Cities breached that divide with leaders from both sides of the divide. If ever there was a time to unite Cambridge across the divisions of class, money and education, it was the battle against the Inner Belt. And Save Our City achieved that breakthrough. Independent **Mayor Dan Hayes** also succeeded in unifying the factions.

Just a few years earlier, a key conflict arose between the CCA and the Independents. CCA had been in favor of the Inner Belt and of urban renewal. The independents, usually residents on the east side of the City, were critics of both highways and urban renewal. A vote came up in City Council on a motion to approve the taking and demolition of 80 homes for urban renewal at Donnelly Field, as requested by the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority in May 1962. The CCA-supported Councillors seemed to have the votes to pass the motion, but one of them voted no, with the independents. By a vote of 4 to 4, the motion failed.

The deciding vote was cast by **Pearl Wise**, the first woman ever to be elected to the Council. Although endorsed by the CCA, she leveled a blast against the actions proposed : *“the resolution submitted by the Authority and now before the city council states that East Cambridge is a decadent area because of the 'environmental influences and social culture and economic conditions of the project area.' This attitude of mind is a piece of social arrogance about, and class ignorance of, people who live in the Donnelly Field area and who form such an important and respected segment of our community. Little wonder, then, that the Redevelopment Authority has stirred up so much civil strife. This is a tragedy for Cambridge. It is a threat to the sound realization of the good in urban renewal, based on the consent of the governed.”* \*

Pearl Wise was a Russian immigrant who went to public schools in Cambridge and married a Harvard professor. Her name is best known today by the Pearl Wise Library at Rindge and Latin High School. Her political future evaporated immediately for transgressing the basic principles of the CCA, and she did not even seek re-election the following year. Historians can never be sure, but her principled action may have influenced the Council later to oppose various urban renewal plans around the City.

Moreover the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority had been working closely with the state Highway Department to coordinate land takings -- highways on one side of the street and urban renewal on the other. These incidents triggered the intense debates within CCA membership, with the winning argument being the need to revisit the whole concept of urban renewal in residential areas. The urban renewal losses in Cambridgeport and Riverside, by budget cuts or policy decision, showed local victory possible. Could the inner Belt be next?

### **1965 : THE TURNAROUND YEAR**

1965 was the last year the state highway department could claim to be setting the agenda for the Inner Belt. Immediately thereafter they started to lose control. The agency finished the year

\* Cambridge Chronicle-Sun, May 31, 1962 p. 1

riding high, because it had broken Cambridge's local veto, and taken away a major point of leverage from the city. Boston, Brookline and Somerville had given their formal sign-offs on the road alignment. The road ahead for the highway department seemed clear. Two-thirds of the full Inner Belt was approved for construction, and the go-ahead included I-93 and I-95 Southwest. The only holdout was Cambridge with its section of the Inner Belt and the Route 2 Extension. Meanwhile the Mass Turnpike Extension into Boston had just been completed, and its chairman, William Callahan relaxed his opposition to the Inner Belt.

Cambridge could not have been more isolated. Two Boston Mayors -- John Hynes for the decade of the 1950s and John Collins (1960-1968) -- had been fervently pro-development and pro-highway. In Somerville, the situation was murkier, with Mayor Brennan willing to gamble to gain an Inner Belt Industrial Park, while two dense residential areas in his city were targeted by the construction of I-93. Highway builders had been gaining experience at their craft, but at the same time gained increased arrogance and ruthlessness in dealing with affected communities. Simply in terms of exercising too much power, they were headed towards a fall.

With all the new support that they had accumulated, state highway officials took the next practical step. They focused their primary attention on negotiating or forcing a solution to the Inner Belt in Cambridge. Engineers knew that their initial design would have done great damage to Boston University and the crossing of the Charles River. This design was changed and was replaced by a tunnel under the river. The designers also knew that a roadway elevated on embankment twenty-five feet in the air was not a pleasant neighbor.

Tip O'Neill had complained about the creation of a "Chinese Wall," with less than optimal land use. Architects and Engineers changed the design so that the road now would be below grade, in a cut [a tunnel without a roof over it], and adopted new ideas for "joint development" to allow high-rise housing to be built within the air-rights above the road. In the parlance of modern developers, they were "mitigating the impacts" and seeking to appease the protesters.

All of these changes were included in a new Inner Belt report released in 1967. In addition, highway officials selected a local Cambridge architectural firm, *The Architects Collaborative*, to seek architectural and urban design solutions, including air rights housing. The firm, founded by Bauhaus pioneer Walter Gropius, had an impressive reputation among architects. However, the firm was taking on the difficult task of prettying up a brutal and overwhelming highway structure through an area threatened by loss of traditional housing and community. TAC was working for a client, the highway department, who had no real interest in architecture and was well known for being very autocratic. I spoke with the architect from TAC, Alex Cvijanovic, who showed a gallery of photos of existing Cambridgeport and Area 4. "You are showing the worst photos of Cambridgeport," I complained, "not the best." "Of course," he replied.

The architects produced no breakthroughs that won over the hearts and minds of the neighborhood. Residents still favored the option of no road at all.

Highway department officials, aware of the difficulties they faced, were attempting to be more reasonable and responsive in their proposals. Highway planners had reason to feel that this last impediment -- Cambridge and especially Cambridgeport -- would be won over, compromised out, or demoralized into ultimate approval of the Inner Belt through Cambridge. They hoped Cambridge would see the hopelessness of their situation. Yet no one caved in. They acted as if they still had the veto.

Upon reflection, it is possible to see a strategy of planned escalation as the state sought full capitulation. To use a railroad analogy, the state was preparing to travel on *three separate tracks*, but a derailment on any one of them could be crucial.

**Track One** was the political plan to pressure and cajole Cambridge into agreement on the Inner Belt, using design changes to take the sting out of highway construction. This approach of using the carrot rather than the stick appeared to predominate in 1966 and 1967.

**Track Two** was a concurrent effort to cut off and discard the alternatives. Concentration on these ideas advanced in 1966-1968.

**Track Three** was to apply a full-court press throughout Cambridge, by advancing other highway plans elsewhere in Cambridge. This strategy represented a major escalation over Tracks One and Two above. As in Vietnam, escalation strategies are risky because -- while they may ratchet up pressure and damage -- they could also provoke severe aggravation and an escalation in resistance from Cambridge. This strategy predominated in 1969.

#### **TRACK ONE : PROBLEMS WITH SIMPLEX WIRE AND CABLE**

On December 29, 1965, the **Simplex Wire and Cable Company** released a report on “the Proposed Inner Belt Route East of Brookline Street.”\* The company president described how “*a late proposal for the Inner Belt route places it between Brookline and Sidney Streets,*” passing “*directly through the main manufacturing facilities*” of the Simplex company. This new concept was in contrast with the original 1962 Master plan showing the Inner Belt passing through residential neighborhoods on the other side of Brookline Street, closer to Central Square. The highway department had sought to reduce residential impacts by shifting the road alignment onto the business side of Brookline Street. This alignment saved many houses, but would remove many older industrial buildings, including Simplex and numerous other established businesses.

The Simplex report was clearly an early shot across the bow to both the highway department and resident advocates : Do not move the road from its established path. Simplex claimed the

\* Simplex Wire and Cable, “*the Proposed Inner Belt Route East of Brookline Street,*” December 1965



change would “*eliminate a 30-million-dollar-a-year Cambridge business*” and “*would destroy the most modern and critically important manufacturing facilities of Simplex.*” The new road plan “*would render useless the remaining 17 acres*” of the Simplex site and would “*eliminate 839 jobs*” at Simplex and 32 other companies with 661 additional jobs. It was only within the previous week or two that Simplex had learned about the new plan, after years of assurances from the highway department that the Inner Belt would “*not seriously affect our Cambridge plant.*” The President concluded : “*We, at Simplex, cannot and will not let this threat to our company and its employees go unchallenged.*” Not surprisingly, nothing more was heard of this alternate route for the Inner Belt.

### *Spring 1966 : MIT'S TASK TO RELOCATE 400 FAMILIES*

At about the same time as the Simplex protest, news began to circulate in Cambridge that an influential City Councillor Ed Crane was prepared to support a railroad route for the Inner Belt. This road design would have an eight-lane road depressed below the railroad tracks. MIT traditionally had opposed such a route and would be expected to do so again. A Chicago consultant hired by the City Council had recommended the alignment to the City ... after it was instructed to identify the best alternative without considering the impacts on MIT.

A public hearing was quickly scheduled for February 20. Ten days before MIT Chairman James Killian released a long statement in opposition, dogmatically stressing the importance of MIT's buildings and research. At the hearing itself, an attorney read a statement on behalf of MIT. Edward Hanify of the downtown Boston firm Ropes and Gray was well established in his practice, and thus possessed notable credibility. Four years later he would become Ted Kennedy's lawyer at Chappaquiddick.

While MIT had been measured but determined in its statement of opposition, school officials did not have time to give a final review to Hanify's statement. An MIT Dean told me later than he had driven to the meeting in the same car with Hanify, and the lawyer was busily scribbling in editing changes at the last minute.

The Hanify Statement, so-called, became famous over the next few years. Hanify highlighted the possibility of vibrations from cars and trucks on the elevated structure as a potential cause for damage to nearby MIT laboratory equipment. He cited the danger that those vibrations would disturb and distort delicate measuring instruments used in the course of important military research. For a laboratory doing work on the Poseidon missile, Hanify warned : “*Demolish this facility or force its relocation, and you risk a grave setback to the space and missile program of the United States.*” For another building, he noted : “*In the contest for scientific supremacy, no free nation can afford a year's loss in government-sponsored nuclear research.*”

At the Magnet Laboratory, “*the Inner Belt would unnecessarily uproot these pipelines upon*

*which the whole scientific enterprise depends with an inevitable setback to the critical research program of the United States.*" Hanify emphasized how our military agenda could be set back during the ongoing Cold War with the Russians, who a few years earlier had promised to *"bury"* the United States. He stressed how the work at MIT *"would promote human happiness, and relieve the suffering, and meet the needs of thousands upon thousands of our people."* He noted the meaning of the laboratories *"to humanity – their meaning to homes and people in Cambridge and the nation – their essential roles in protecting our homes and out people ..."* In another context, he could have been referring to the Brookline-Elm alignment.

The histrionics of this approach could be considered over-the-top in terms of providing a defense for MIT against the road plan. Officially, MIT emphasized that Hanify's comments were a statement *"for"* MIT and not *"by"* MIT. The particular language did not represent official MIT policy, they said. Such subtleties were lost upon residents and urban planning advocates, who inveighed against MIT's selfishness and insensitivity. Hanify's fractious phrasings had left the Institute in a very awkward public relations position -- appearing to be insensitive to the local citizens who might lose their homes. MIT, under the able leadership of Dr. James Killian, rarely made mistakes, but this was one.

In the emotions of the day, few observers recognized that Hanify had made a vigorous *anti-highway* speech. If a road could disturb delicate military instruments and set back progress in scientific research, imagine the damage from running new highways through established neighborhoods! If MIT's research could protect the people of Cambridge and their homes from a possible nuclear attack, who would protect these people and their homes from a likely bulldozer attack? Like the Simplex report, a major private institution had delivered another anti-highway statement.

The immediate neighborhood response was to see MIT's policy as one of extreme self-interest and a lack of caring for what happens in the neighborhood. For MIT the whole controversy was unnerving, because there seemed to be no easy way out. If MIT had come out against all Inner Belt routes, they would be heroes in the neighborhood, but would find themselves on the enemies list of the highway department. If MIT opposed the railroad route, they would not offend supporters of Brookline-Elm, because the highway department has been opposed to the railroad route for years. But MIT instantly found itself in hot water with the neighborhood.

Shortly thereafter, Governor John Volpe -- a strong Inner Belt supporter -- sat down to meet with MIT officials. An MIT staffer told me the key proposal that Volpe delivered : *"I get your message, and the railroad alignment is dead. But if you are so smart, you had better help"* with the relocation of residents along the Brookline-Elm alignment. MIT was surely pleased to see the rail alignment disappear. But it was in no position to refuse the Governor's request for assistance.

The Governor recognized that over 1200 families would need to be relocated. After further discussion, the parties agreed that MIT would take responsibility for *relocating 400 of those families*. Little mention was made of the fact that MIT had no experience in such relocations. By the end of the year a young architect had been hired to work out of the MIT Planning Office, with the task of assembling a plan to relocate the 400 families.

MIT proceeded to make another controversial move. Neighbors informed me that the Institute had sent out letters to property owners in Cambridgeport, seeking to purchase their homes. Buying houses outside the highway corridor would not increase the housing supply, but it would give MIT a housing portfolio they could use to relocate families. Locally, the low-income housing market was very tight, with vacancy rates in the low single digits. The letters highlighted MIT's involvement in Inner Belt relocation and implied they were in cahoots with the highway builders, which, of course, they were.

Dr. Killian was not in a very admirable position. He had been writing in recent years about the need for both the humanities and humanitarianism in education, and evidence suggests that he would have supported a more sympathetic approach to the neighborhood's plight. A common response for anyone in such a position is to appoint an advisory committee and have them identify alternate policies that would serve the best interests of MIT. When the Committee's advice was announced, the opinions were almost evenly split between faculty and staff, either opposing or supporting the road plan. Engineer or urban planner, the trend was similar -- an even split. Killian could not get the consensus he was seeking.

**TRACK THREE -- MARCH 1966 TO FEBRUARY 1967 --**  
**A YEAR OF MAJOR ERRORS BY THE HIGHWAY ADVOCATES**

Design initiatives in late 1965 and early 1966 had produced sharp, negative responses from Simplex and MIT. Save Our Cities continued to oppose Brookline-Elm and indeed all road options. If highway officials were truly looking for less damaging alternatives, they must have been sorely disappointed at this point. For those officials who stood resolutely behind the completed plans for Brookline-Elm, the two turn-downs by Simplex and MIT were welcome. The highway department had always welcomed the acts of others that dispensed with alternatives the department did not like. The turn-downs strengthened Brookline-Elm.

Some critics might even have seen the two alternatives as “cast iron flags” -- objectionable concepts that immediately collapse when they are raised up the flagpole of public opinion. Nobody salutes. Highway officials could tell the neighbors, “*look, we tried, but Simplex and MIT shot down the idea.*”

Despite hiring a prestigious architectural firm, highway officials were still not at a point of achieving an accord with Cambridge. Could there be other, tougher ways of getting Cambridge to bend and go along with the plan?

**Track Three** now comes into play. It is a lengthy story that begins with the fundamental *traffic failure* of the Inner Belt Plan as discovered in 1957. It ends with the highway department adopting into their future master plan a *six-lane expressway through West Cambridge*. The new road was designed to provide traffic relief to an otherwise overloaded Inner Belt, but did not fully complete the job. Meanwhile the route of the new road would pass through much more affluent and normally protected areas of Cambridge, just beyond Brattle Street and within the posh 02138 Zip Code. It would be a six-lane limited access expressway replacing existing four-lane parkways that have driveways into abutting homes. It would be elevated for most of its length. Home takings in the Fresh Pond area could become very significant. If Cambridgeport residents, MIT and Simplex were upset with the Inner Belt, the uproar from West Cambridge would be at least ten times louder.

The whole idea of this second Inner Belt could have been a bargaining chip. If Cambridge goes along with the Inner Belt, then the highway department would be willing to abandon any idea of an expressway through West Cambridge. This idea was founded on the idea that Cambridge would capitulate and make a trade -- if Cambridge agrees to accept the first Inner Belt, the highway department will drop the second one. The anti-highway policy of Cambridge had been so ingrained at this point, between the Council and the protesters, that no such agreement would be possible.

Highway Department strategists took another tack in 1968 as they pressed to move the **Route 2 extension** into construction, even before the inner Belt was resolved. The thinking may have been that if Cambridge were surrounded by highway projects in Somerville (Route 93 and the Route 2 Extension) as well as Boston and Brookline (the Inner Belt), there would be no way out for Cambridge.

This strategy had some conceptual utility and precedent. The easiest way to build highways in any city is to start in the outskirts, build through the suburbs, and then target the inner city. Rarely are highways ever built from the inside out. This strategy was already in place in the Boston area, but had not been used before to target a specific city, such as Cambridge.

The complexity of this multi-track approach involves more detail than this Step-One report can include. William McGrath's more detailed account of earlier events is contained in Appendix B, explaining how the 1957 traffic study exposed fundamental design flaws and showed a design to resolve the recurring traffic congestion problems.

More research needs to be focused on the role of William McGrath in the birth of the West Cambridge Expressway. McGrath presented his plan as the product of transportation planners at the

BRA, and sent his report directly to Mayor Collins, bypassing his boss Ed Logue. He submitted the ideas twice, and it appears his report was suppressed.

McGrath was a traffic engineer and a member of the BRA planning group that tried to work with the 1957 evidence of traffic failure. He produced a response in the form of a relief highway to handle the excess traffic the Inner Belt could not handle. His report was leaked to outside parties.

He was a recognized traffic engineer, elected President of the New England Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers in 1961-62 and as International President in 1972. He served as Boston traffic commissioner in the turbulent years between 1967 and 1970. He died in 1999.

His role is most intriguing because he is the only traffic engineer mentioned with accolades by Jane Jacobs in her *Death and Life of Great American Cities*.<sup>\*</sup> He received two pages of coverage for his innovative methods of timing of traffic lights in New Haven in the 1950s, to thwart the movement of cars and recognize mass transit priorities. Some critics might see his involvement in proposing a new expressway through Brookline and Cambridge as an act of sabotage. In the 1950s and 1960s many architects, planners and traffic engineers who sought alternatives to massive highway construction were compelled to operate underground and be indirect in their criticism.

Looking back fifty years, it is difficult to consider the expressway proposal through Brookline and West Cambridge as likely to create a Cambridge response that is anything less than absolute fury. From now on, the City would have no reason to continue design negotiations and compromises. The political and planning structure of Cambridge would now unify and march to a different drummer.

The only practical position for the City was to stop all highways. This new proposal for a second Inner Belt supported the case for residents opposed to the first Inner Belt. From the point of view of anti-highway strategists, having two or three Inner Belts was better than just one. The citizen base for opposition would be widened to include the whole city. Any chance of compromise over the Inner Belt design in Cambridgeport just went up in smoke.

### **JAN 1967 FORMATION OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SECTION**

The rapid shifts in highway activity suggest that Cambridge may have been aware of the Third Track movements as early as late 1966. MIT Planning Director Bob Simha had urged the city to hire a community planner and advocate named Justin Gray to assist in articulating a stronger message against the inner Belt. His actions were a clear indication that MIT had decided to side with the neighborhood and would oppose all Inner Belt alignments. Justin was the kind of person

<sup>\*</sup> Jane Jacobs, *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Anchor Books, 1960 pp. 365-367

who would work well with Urban Planning Aid and Save Our Cities, and could prepare Cambridge for the daunting task of defeating the Highway Lobby.

A special meeting was called with City Manager DeGuglielmo and Mayor Dan Hayes, attended by MIT and Harvard officials. MIT Planning Director Bob Simha recommended that the new planning spark plug should be Justin Gray, a city planner with a community outlook and known for being critical of highways. Simha reached out to him in New York City to see if he would be interested. At the time he was working on housing issues, but agreed to take on the task. He was given the task of restructuring the way planning would be done in the city of Cambridge.

The need to bring in a planner from outside was dictated by the role of the Cambridge City Planner at that time. Alan McClennen was a respectable and otherwise capable planner who happened to be intellectually dedicated to the highway cause. He was Harvard '38 and MIT MCP '47, and wore neat tweed jackets and a bow tie. He was bright and accessible, honest, outspoken and consistent ... but he was simply not the planner that the City of Cambridge wished to have at this time. His predecessor as City Planner, Mark Fortune, had been forced out a few years before, when he turned against the Inner Belt. With McClennen as planner, the state highway department could not have found a more enthusiastic and reliable ally.

McClennen's primary support within the city bureaucracy came from the Planning Board, which has been supporting express highways in Cambridge since 1946. He also could find agreement within the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority and the urban renewal plans that needed approval from the Planning Board. His values were demonstrated in 1971, after he left Cambridge, when he spoke at a forum on transportation. He said that the loss of all the housing in Cambridge to the Inner Belt was "**not a big deal**" because "**they did not have off-street parking.**" He represented the transplanting of the suburban ethic to the inner city, where everyone had a car and should park it off-street. Indeed, he could be seen as a highly desirable and compatible planner for a suburban community. But he was not the person for the job in Cambridge in 1967, when the primary job was to oppose the inner Belt.

The method Cambridge selected was not to fire McClennen. He may have had significant job protection and he had no intentions of leaving voluntarily. Instead, City Hall created an entirely new office, a Community Development Unit within the City Manager's office. It would be headed by Justin Gray as the Assistant City Manager for Community Development, a position which still exists today. This office would become the new Planning Office for the City of Cambridge, bypassing Alan McClennen entirely, as well as the Planning Board.

In the Fall of 1967 Mayor Hayes formed his advisory committee on the Inner Belt. Justin Gray attended, as did Henrietta Jackson, but not Alan McClennen. There was a new chain of command more closely controlled by the City Council and the City Manager, working together.



In January 1967, the sequence of major changes was rapid. A new City Manager was appointed, Joe DeGuglielmo and Dan Hayes became the new Mayor. He was a North Cambridge resident and businessman who ran a fuel oil company on North Mass Avenue. Almost instantly, the Community Development Unit was created with Justin Gray in charge.

Justin began assembling staff, starting with Ellen Feingold, and over the coming months added Jim Stockard (longtime official at the Cambridge Housing Authority), John Cope and Gordon Brigham (formerly at the MIT Planning Office). He extended the Save Our Cities coalition to include the City Council and the Mayor, the City Manager, Tip O'Neill, MIT, resident members of Save Our Cities, the Boston Archdiocese, many local businessmen threatened with relocation by highways, and dozens of professors at Harvard and MIT. Private groups like Urban Planning Aid, with a new executive director, Jim Morey and a young Fred Salvucci, were there to help.

At no time before or since has the government and the citizens of the city been so unified in peacetime. No single proposal ever unified City Hall and the residential communities as did the Inner Belt highway plans of the 1960s.

#### **FEBRUARY 1967 STATE DPW ADOPTION OF MCGRATH CONCEPT**

In February 1967, shortly after the major changes in Cambridge, the state highway department issued an updated statewide highway plan, extending to the year 1975. It included the West Cambridge expressway and was the first public indication that the state was now supporting additional highway construction in Cambridge. Including the Route 2 Extension, the City that had held out so long against the Inner Belt was confronting not one but three new expressways.

There is no evidence that state officials held public hearings or entertained any public input prior to their decision on the additions to its master plan. The fact that Justin Gray was hired before the state's plan was released suggests that the City might have been forewarned. Evidence and timing suggests that the change in the state's master highway plan was the trigger to a fully formed program of maximum resistance by the City and its internal allies. The growth of the anti-highway movement gradually included the new Mayor of Boston Kevin White, elected in 1967. Support for the Inner Belt in Boston had become sufficiently entrenched politically that it took a year for highway opponents to convert White to the anti-highway cause.

#### **FEDERAL ACTIVITIES IN HUD and DOT 1968**

In the 1960s, Great Society social legislation was passed in massive surges and existing bureaucracies scrambled to catch up. The rash of big city riots continued from 1964 to 1968, and made reform of urban policies a top priority. An interest in cities translated quickly into support for



housing and opposition to highways. A major reorganization in 1966 created a new Federal Department of Transportation, and a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The new Secretary of Transportation, Alan Boyd, was opposed to urban expressways. His Federal Highway Administrator, Lowell Bridwell, was a journalist who had been studying the effects of highway on society and was also opposed to urban expressways.

Increasingly highways were seen as the enemies of housing, but housing could also be the enemy of highways -- if housing plans were applied to thwart highways. One of the unofficial purposes of the Model Cities program was to assist communities threatened by highways. Cambridge's Model Cities located in Area Four included the Elm Street area of the Inner Belt. MIT's housing plan for Cambridge was to become the primary use of housing to interfere with the Inner Belt.

#### **MIT's LOST RESEARCH CONTRACT**

In 1968, the Chairman of the MIT Civil Engineering Department, Charles Miller wrote to President Killian with news that the state highway department was canceling out of a \$2.5 million highway research contract. The contract was worth \$800,000 each year or the equivalent to ten or twenty times that amount today. Prof. Miller suggested this cancellation might have been caused by younger MIT professors, many from architecture and urban planning, who were speaking out against the Inner Belt. A more likely cause was the increased evidence of MIT working closely with City Hall and residents.

One consequence of the cutting of the research contract was the loss by the state of a key point of leverage with MIT officials. MIT may also have realized that if the Inner Belt were killed, the Institute would no longer be obligated to perform the 400-unit relocation commitment. MIT was now free to oppose the road to its heart's content, and reap the benefits of better relations with the City and its neighbors. It is also reasonable to suspect that MIT had finally reached a point where James Killian had personally always wanted to be.

#### **LOWELL BRIDWELL and the TASK A STUDY**

Federal Highway Administrator Lowell Bridwell decided to accept an invitation to visit Cambridge and tour the Inner Belt route. He talked with many of the involved parties on both sides of the inner Belt issue and decided that there should be two studies to settle the Inner Belt issue : Task A would decide the purpose and need for the Inner Belt, while Task B would determine the best route if Task A were positive. Federal, State and local officials were all involved in a complex process, and the Mayor's Committee on the Inner Belt worked primarily to provide Cambridge's input to the process.

The fate of these two studies is unclear from the various sources. It does appear that Task B was never done because the participants could not agree on the scope of issues. Another interpretation said Task A concluded the Inner Belt should not be built, so therefore Task B was superfluous. More research needs to be done to look into Task A history and any final product of the study -- and resolve these important ambiguities.

### **THE JANUARY 1969 BREAKTHROUGH**

Traditional perspectives on Inner Belt history have viewed the February 1970 highway moratorium as the key event in stopping the Inner Belt. Indeed to freeze any further work on the highway master plan was a vital achievement. Historical evidence available today suggests that the consequences of the January 1969 protest march on the state house represented the true breakthrough and a change in the state government thought about highways.

Save Our Cities organized a series of rallies in January 1969 beginning in several areas of Cambridge and Boston, followed by a bus caravan to Boston Common for a final protest event. Over 1,000 people gathered on the Common with signs, while the weather cooperated. The Mayor flew overhead in a helicopter. It was the true culmination of years of organizing against the Inner Belt.

The finale occurred when newly elevated Governor Frank Sargent came out of the State House and spoke to the assembled crowd. His speech was not a providential accident. It had been carefully planned as part of the entire day's events. The Governor's speech had been jointly prepared inside the Governor's office, with the assistance of Justin Gray, who helped write the text. Exactly who else attended with Justin is not clear, but it probably included representatives of the Archdiocese. One thing is certain : when the Governor spoke outside, on his immediate left stood Father Richard Butler, of the Blessed Sacrament Church in Cambridgeport, representing the Archdiocese and the communities affected by the Inner Belt.

The Governor spoke of the importance of the highway issue and its effects on communities and the need to revise the way governments handled highway planning, construction issues, and community impacts. He indicated a change in thinking was coming, without specifying what actions might result.

For the residents of Cambridgeport, the speech was a hopeful event. Their efforts had not been fruitless. By contrast, the speech was a stunner for the state highway agency and the Highway Lobby. The state's commitment to the highway plan had suddenly become shaky, especially compared to John Volpe's enthusiastic support. The enemy in the form of the Archdiocese was represented directly on the podium, at the Governor's side. Why hadn't the highway commissioner been invited to be present in the Governor's office when the speech was prepared? In all probability,

none of highway proponents were aware that Justin Gray was in the room, helping to write the statement with the Governor and his staff. Had they known of the circumstances of preparing the Governor's speech, they would surely have realized that Frank Sargent had indeed gone over to the other side.

In 1967 and 1968 Sargent had increasingly relied on Professor Alan Altshuler for transportation advice. Altshuler was a political science professor at MIT, and had become involved in interdisciplinary efforts to develop new forms of transportation technology, including automated roadways. (Full Disclosure : I worked on the engineering side of those studies, and did a joint doctor thesis in Mechanical Engineering and Political Science. Alan was a member of my thesis committee).

Prof. Altshuler would most likely have had input into the speech, because he had become a leading strategist in the way that Massachusetts highway policy would be changed. He was a careful and thoughtful analyst of political situations and the various factions associated with any issue. He and Sargent were probably well aware of the need for great care in transitioning to a new highway policy -- that the change needed to be gradual and no more revolutionary than was absolutely necessary. All the bases needed to be touched, and whatever the Governor said on that day in January had to be properly nuanced to hint at a probable change in policy, without openly disclosing what those changes would be.

The fact that Justin Gray helped write the speech meant that Cambridge had to be part of that nuanced strategy. There could be no vilifying of the Highway Lobby, nor indication of what specific action could or would be taken. The simple message would be, we hear you and we should be looking closely into taking a new look at what our policies should be. That was as far as the transportation revolution could go on that day in January. The indirect message was that the structure of the allies had been changed, and that the Governor had joined the forces who were opposed to the Inner Belt.

### **THE 1970 MORATORIUM**

A year after speaking to the throng on the Boston Common, the Governor and his advisers decided that it was time for the next step. It would be a moment for decision and action : it was time to announce a full moratorium on the highway work, both its planning and its implementation. All construction work would cease (except for I-93) and there would no further clearance of buildings and relocating of people. The time for rethinking alone had ended. Now began a period of stopping and changing.

Sargent in his speech was direct and apologetic. About past policies he said "We were wrong." Yes, the ship had entered the harbor, but the state was beginning to turn the ship around. By this time the Highway Lobby knew they were in desperate shape. The highway master plan was on the rocks and was close to being discarded. If the Governor continued on this path, the entire master plan would be rejected and virtually all highway construction would stop permanently.

The Highway Lobby still had resources at its command. Most important was the Governor's Advisory Committee on Transportation, composed of commissioners of various state departments with interests in transportation and economic development. The two most powerful personalities on the committee were highway Commissioner Edward Ribbs and Massport Executive Director Edward J. King, later to become Governor in 1979. After I went to work for the MDC (now DCR) in the Spring of 1970 I attended two of the meetings as MDC representative. Normally MDC Commissioner John Sears was the designated member, but at meetings he had been intensely browbeaten by Ribbs and King, working in tandem, trying to get Sears to approve construction of the controversial Leverett Circle Bridge project. Sears was reluctant, but did not have the technical knowledge to respond to these pressures.

The MDC decided after internal review that the Leverett Circle bridge design was flawed, and that a restudy and new evaluation of the plan was required. Ribbs and King were floored by this decision, and at the next advisory committee King made a caustic comment that advertising the contract had been deferred "because the MDC just does not want to build it." I raised my hand and told chairman King I would like to correct his statement. The MDC was reviewing the design on the basis of design flaws we had discovered. Then I sat down. At the end of the meeting, the Commissioner of the Department of Commerce, Carroll Sheehan, who I had never met, came over to shake my hand. At the time, I was baffled because I could not understand what had motivated him.

Slowly I came to realize that the other members of the Advisory Committee had lived in absolute terror of Ribbs and King. To have a young engineer stand up to one of the pair had been a revelation. The incident was a measure of the degree of bullying in the government system at that time. The Governor and his staff faced extreme difficulties in overcoming those resistive inclinations as they sought to establish more humane transportation policies in the Commonwealth.

The conflict was not over. Years later in 1979, Ed King took over as the new Governor, and his first order of business was to flush out the surviving members of the Sargent/Dukakis/Salvucci regime who had caused the transportation revolution. That February, as I worked as an engineer in the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, I was notified that I was to have no further contact with the Department of Public Works. Within a matter of weeks, the second shoe dropped and the Governor moved to have me fired. A few weeks later the Federal EPA stepped in and opposed my removal, in order to assure proper water quality on a major highway construction project. A lengthy period of standoff resulted, and in the end Governor King had to admit defeat. I had a protector.

Several years later I ran into King's legislative liaison, who attended all of the Governor's cabinet meetings. He told me that King and his cabinet "spent hours" talking about finding ways to have me fired. King frequently mentioned the Leverett Circle bridge as the root of his concern. These incidents involving Ed King were a measure of the wounded power and revenge instincts of the era when the Highway Lobby no longer reigned supreme and how they struggled until their last

hours as power slipped away from them. Francis Sargent, Alan Altshuler and many others who sought to reform the state's transportation policies undoubtedly received a similar reception, with bullying and attempts to sabotage the new policy. Indeed, the top officials probably received much more caustic treatment than I did. My personal experience was only a tiny window into that dark world that Sargent and others tried to enlighten.

### **1972 END OF BTPR AND THE FUNERAL FOR THE INNER BELT**

The period between 1969 and 1972 represented a time when the “system” applied the necessary changes. No longer was the action occurring at community meeting and rallies. With the Governor on the side of the residents, there was reason to believe that their new trusted ally would carry humane policies to their logical end, and see that highways would no longer threaten Cambridgeport.

The Boston Transportation Planning Review was the final review for the Inner Belt. A lengthy participatory process began, covering a two-year period of analysis, alternatives and planning for transit. In retrospect the numerous reports that were filed – Northwest corridor, Southwest corridor, Third Harbor Tunnel – were a prelude to a new approach, and a funeral for the expressways previously proposed. This is the end, they said, and this is the new start. It would have been a useful assessment to look at the design of the roads and their impacts on the surrounding community, as a way of recording the nature of what had gone wrong with previous decisionmaking. However, the BTPR documentation was not intended to inflame, or to rub salt into past wounds. These reports represented a transitional function and served that function well. They were not as exciting as previous highway reports, which were appalling in their grandiosity and insensitivity to context. But they got the job done. They served a courteous funereal departure and a new beginning.

The Inner Belt, for all its notoriety, never received the attention of a separate report. It was simply dropped, forgotten by BTPR. If the Inner Belt was on life support in its last days, it was immediately declared dead-on-arrival by BTPR.

With the funeral complete, the Sargent administration was prepared to move ahead, into a new era of Interstate transfer, where Federal highway funds could be transferred over and used for transit projects. Immediate planning began for extension of the Red Line to Alewife and for the relocation of the Orange Line to Forest Hills. In Boston, a new transit era began, and highways were ordered to remain in place, largely unchanged.

### **1972 ERIE STREET HOUSING LBJ APARTMENTS**

By 1968 MIT had been working on various possible sites for new low income housing in

Cambridge. A year later MIT responded positively to a local community effort called the Cambridge Housing Convention, organized under the Federally-funded Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee. A very cordial meeting was held with residents, with Msrs. Killian, Milne and Simha displaying considerable charm. MIT agreed to expedite a housing program, based on their earlier work. The meeting and its positive tone would have been unthinkable four years earlier.

One site MIT had been looking at since 1968 was Erie Street, the current site of the Lyndon Johnson Apartments. The median of the new highway would have gone right through the main building. In simple physical terms, any new housing build on the Erie Street site would have physically blocked the Inner Belt. If highway opponents could get approvals to build housing on the site, they would have achieved a level of truly high-caliber obstructionism. Instead of angry mobs or court orders blocking the road, the practical answer – the permanent answer -- was to build housing and use bricks and mortar to block the road. MIT was the sponsor, with funding from HUD.

Such conflicts had been anticipated in Federal law. Each year, construction of any government project was required to demonstrate that there would be no interference with any other Federal project previously approved. City planner Alan McClennen knew this rule well, and he reminded Cambridge officials in January 1969, in a long letter to the *Cambridge Chronicle*, that any of their plans for housing to block the highway would not be approved, because they interfered with the **previously approved** Inner Belt highway. If the City insisted on blocking the highway, they would block their own housing proposals.

McClennen was technically correct. But he had not contemplated the true implications of the Task A study. Lowell Bridwell has intentionally structured the Task A study as an investigation of all feasible alternatives. Despite earlier objections from MIT, Bridwell wanted to have an **assessment made of a route along Memorial Drive**. In subsequent months, there were various reports of Memorial drive being in or out, and the ultimate conclusion is unclear. The important understanding is that Bridwell's ground rules for the study meant lifting of any previous study recommendations, **including approvals for the Brookline-Elm alignment**. **No longer was there any approved route for the Inner Belt**. The Erie Street site was freed up for housing, and MIT sponsorship had made it possible. Federal approvals were needed from HUD and were received. Funding was provided, and in the early 1970s the Erie Street elderly housing was completed.

Alan McClennen must have been aware that the law he saw as protecting the Inner Belt had been switched around, so now it protected housing. It was the Inner Belt that now was blocked – legally as well as physically. The HUD approval to fund MIT's Erie Street housing became the final nail in the Inner Belt coffin. Celebrations should have begun then. In some ways it was safer not to brag and not to claim final victory. Celebrations would have to wait until some later time.

A second MIT project, the Millers River Apartments, received Federal HUD funds also, and it physically blocked off any railroad alignment. MIT's housing program had the effect of protecting both corridors against any return of the Inner Belt. Note that former City Manager Rich Rossi had links to both routes. Many years ago he lived on Elm Street, and his father during his retirement lived in the Millers River Apartments.

### **PRIMARY CONCLUSIONS**

Because of the Cambridge veto, the City Establishment could feel fairly comfortable in opposing the Inner Belt between 1961 to 1965. When they lost the veto, City leaders faced the need for a new strategy. Otherwise, as the sole opponent of roads in the Boston area, they were completely vulnerable. Nevertheless, the spirit of the veto still prevailed, because Cambridge was committed to stopping the road.

In 1965 the state highway department appeared to be the master of the situation and that all the roads would be build in the immediate future. A series of extraordinary highway blunders, beginning in 1957, occurred in quick succession especially from the end of 1965 through early 1967, having the effect of increasing resistance in Cambridge, not decreasing it. Initial efforts to mitigate road impacts became an admission of how the design of the Inner Belt represented the creation of a very bad neighbor. When the state highway department tried to change the road design to lessen the impacts, they ran into opposition from Simplex Wire and Cable and MIT. Residents were able to see how vociferous opposition to urban renewal and highways could be successful.

The year 1966 brought about the first years of decline in command at the highway department, a decline as the strategic leader of pro-highway forces. Slowly, awareness of the traffic flaw in the Inner Belt design began to seep through governmental and professional circles. By early 1967 the roof fell in when the highway department approved a new six-lane expressway through West Cambridge. That was *the decision that killed the Inner Belt*. It did not need to be made, its timing undermined the pro-highway cause, and it would have totally inflamed West Cambridge if City officials had chosen to publicize it.

Instead, the City toughened up its entire planning and response system, brought in Justin Gray, sidelined Alan McClennen, and created as rock-hard opposition to the Inner Belt as could be constructed at that time. When Governor Sargent announced his moratorium in 1970, he was simply following a natural trend line going back three years earlier.

Tactical blunders by highway officials piled up year by year in the late 1960s, while the Inner Belt opposition consolidated its gains. Highway engineers were a disconsolate lot, much like a defeated army sent scattering across the countryside. It would take many years for the highway engineers to redefine their task to smaller, more prosaic projects. The superhighway era was dead.



An alternative interpretation of the Inner Belt is to see the February 1967 state approval of the West Cambridge Expressway as the result of *fundamental flaws in the entire concept of the Inner Belt, dating back to 1948*. By 1962, the Master Plan had become even more interconnected and unworkable. 1957 was the year when traffic engineers called the Inner Belt a traffic failure, swamped by traffic congestion. 1958 was the time when Boston planners said the Inner Belt plan would never work, and that a *transit plan was required*.

When Governor Sargent proclaimed his new priorities in 1970 by stopping highways and moving towards mass transit, he was ironically repeating the same conclusion reached by Boston planners in 1958, a dozen years before. By this reckoning, twelve years were lost in getting the decision right, twelve years of trying to market a highway product with fundamental operational flaws and destructive side effects. Had it not been for the persistence of Cambridgeport residents concerned about housing, that defective highway system would most likely have been built.

Today analysts might judge the inner Belt to be a “defective product.” Citizens might have complained to the Consumer Products Safety office or brought a class-action suit in court. If the Inner Belt were a automobile, a host of outraged consumers would have been called the road a “lemon.” Campaigns would be launched for a product recall, with fines against the guilty companies responsible.

Like Vietnam, the Inner Belt was an example of the potential for egregious mistakes by government. *Bad judgment, marching past any evidence of error, and simple hubris* were the basis for both failures. The Boston area was fortunate that the highway error was caught while still mainly in the planning stages. Regrettably, Southwest corridor communities were still devastated by road clearance. Psychic damage caused by the threatened damage to one's home was felt across many communities throughout the Boston area. The Inner Belt was killed, as Alan Altshuler admitted, because too many homes were to be destroyed and family relocation into new housing was simply impossible.

Unfortunately, the state never was compelled to admit that the entire crisis was caused by *engineering design failures in the fundamental concept of the roadway system*. Had they recognized those failures, they would likely have been less likely to inflict the threat of those highway structures on innocent neighborhoods.

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Note : Appendix C contains a sequential history of City officials and businessmen opposing the Route 2 Extension in North Cambridge. This battle was even more frenzied that the conflict over the Inner Belt.

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## APPENDIX A ... CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS LEADING TO THE DEFEAT OF THE INNER BELT IN CAMBRIDGE AND BOSTON

- c.1800 ... Canal companies are chartered by the state and given powers to take land by eminent domain. Starts a “canal bubble” that extended into the 1820s.
- 1830s ... Railroad companies are chartered by the state & given powers of taking land by eminent domain. Railroads continue to amass power until 1912.
- 1860 - 1912 ... Era of massive political/government influence by railroads
- 1888 .... Invention of controls for streetcars by Frank Sprague. The streetcar fad spreads like wildfire across the nation, rapidly linking communities and their transportation systems.
- 1889 ... The boom in streetcar service and construction accelerates and soon streets become congested.
- 1890s ... A state Commission makes the first recommendations for a system of elevated and underground railways for trolley cars in Boston. Early plans for elevated steam trains are abandoned. Opposition to the subway system is extensive, with court challenges and even a referendum which receives bare majority approval : 15,369 to 14,298. A private corporation (the Boston Elevated Railway Company) will build the elevated structures and run the trains. The Boston Transit Commission builds the tunnels. Financier J.P. Morgan quickly buys up West End Street Railway and the Boston Elevated. He already owns the New Haven Railroad and controls the B&M Railroad .
- 1897 ... Underground Trolley service between Arlington Street and Park/Boylston Streets begins.
- 1909 ... Proposal for a four-track electrified rail tunnel between North and South Stations calls for a system connecting all rail services from all directions. The plan includes a circumferential freight track called the “Inner Belt” using in part the Grand Junction tracks in Cambridge.
- 1920s .... Beginnings of the parkway movement in New York City.
- 1923 .... Legislation is filed for a report on the possibility of removing Boston's elevated transit lines and building tunnels instead. Boston Elevated responds predictably and said it will be too expensive. The Boston Planning Board releases a report on elevated structures, proposing to convert the Atlantic elevated line to the first elevated highway through Boston.
- 1926 ... MDC report on Parks and Parkways identifies the growth of auto use as overwhelming and that the parkways could not handle the traffic.
- 1930 ... Boston *Thoroughfare Plan* is issued, with a plan for a six-lane highway system centered about an elevated highway through downtown Boston, connecting to the Northern Artery (Route 28) and the Southern Artery (Route 3A) as a linear North-South road, not a beltway. It also proposes an elaborate parkway system for the area, including the "Boston and Albany Parkway" coming in from the west -- eventually built at a larger scale as the Turnpike extension. Report is prepared by Robert Whitten, a planning professor at Harvard.
- 1934 ... Route 2 is built from Concord to Cambridge at the Alewife Brook Parkway, as a four-lane road with driveways. It is the modern expressway of its day.

- late 1930s .... First proposals for beltway roads around Boston, with a 4-lane Inner Belt. Bill Callahan is the state highway Commissioner under Governor James Michael Curley.
- 1939 .... New York World's Fair features a General Motors Futurama with dramatic examples of future high speed roads
- 1946 .... The Cambridge Planning Board supports the idea of an express highway across Cambridge.
- 1946 ... A moonlighting Robert Moses begins Post-War Highway expansion with a proposal for a double-deck highway through the French Quarter of New Orleans
- 1947 .... Society lady Friedel Klussman preserves San Francisco Cable Cars with a campaign to overturn the Mayor's plan to replace them with diesel buses. First post-war transportation protest by grass-roots preservationists.
- 1947 .... Boston area transit plan (Coolidge Report) includes a trolley car extension from Watertown Square to Alewife. No funding is available. Transit planning becomes dormant for 20 years.
- 1948 .... "*Master Highway Plan for the Boston Metropolitan Area*" is issued by the state highway department. Mass DPW Commissioner William F. Callahan proposes a "Belt Route," a loop road through Cambridge and Boston, aimed at eliminating some 15,000 daily trips through "antiquated" local streets. All expressways are six-lanes wide. In Cambridge the route goes from Allston through Riverside and along Lee Street, one block west of City Hall.
- 1949 ... Urban Renewal Act is passed by Congress. Allows for slum clearance and funding for rebuilding central cities. Boston builds downtown Central Artery 1950-1958.
- 1951 .... "Planning for the Belt Route" report from the Cambridge Planning Board. The board supports the Inner Belt and recommends the Brookline-Elm alignment.
- 1952 .... Boston announces its plans to clear the West End
- 1954 ... Brown Decision on school integration : Supreme Court imposes moral requirements on government practices.
- 1955 ... Federal Bureau of Public Roads includes Inner Belt loop in preliminary plans for a national interstate highway network. The new route crosses Roxbury along Ruggles Street ... through Cambridge west of Brookline Street to Central Square .... along Elm Street to the Somerville line ... on to I-93 and Central Artery.
- 1956 ... President Eisenhower supports passage of the Interstate and Defense Highway bill for an interconnected system of express highways across the country. 90/10 funding is provided though a dedicated gas tax.
- 1957 ... Wall Street consulting firm Coverdale and Colpitts submits its report on the traffic feasibility of the Inner Belt. It finds that all sections of the newly-built Central Artery in downtown Boston would be overloaded, some by as much as a factor of four -- in other words 24

lanes would be needed to handle the traffic. The report proposes various additional "relief roads" to handle the traffic.

- 1957 ... "Study of the Belt Route through Cambridge," by consultant Bruce Campbell for the Planning Board. The report and the board recommends the Brookline-Elm alignment.
- 1958 ... "Supplemental Study of Locations or Belt Expressway," by Bruce Campbell to the Cambridge Planning Board. Looks at railroad alignment and recommends the Brookline-Elm alignment.
- 1958-1959 ... Major Urban Renewal effort in the West End of Boston bulldozes an urban community, displaces 7,500 people.
- 1959 ... Successful San Francisco Highway Protest against the Embarcadero elevated highway, and stops it in mid-air.
- 1960-1968 ... Jane Jacobs, citizen activist, defeats Robert Moses five times in New York City, contributing to the defeat of the Lower Manhattan Expressway.
- 1960 ... Massive Turnout to a public hearing in Cambridge on the Brookline-Elm route. US Representative "Tip" O'Neill calls the road "a China Wall" in a critical letter to the Federal Highway Administrator. Turnout was 2,500 people.
- 1960 ... Major scandals at the Mass highway department and the MDC. A state Crime Commission is formed to deal with the abuses. .... First civil rights sit-ins and protests against segregation
- Early 1960s ... Neighborhood opponents, including Cambridgeport residents and parish priests, organize. Opposition grows in Boston as land-takings begin in Roxbury, with panic sales occur along Brookline Street in Cambridge.
- 1961 ... Rep. John Toomey pushes through legislation giving Cambridge a veto over the Inner Belt. This veto protects Cambridge until 1965.
- 1962 ... Major defeat for Urban Renewal forces in Cambridge at Donnelly Field.
- 1962 .... State issues its master plan for Inner Belt, called the Green Book. The plan proposes an eight-lane expressway along the Brookline-Elm route. .... State issues a Highway Needs report justifying construction of the expressways. .... Every section of the Inner Belt is predicted to be overloaded by traffic. The engineers calculated and admitted total gridlock. But they insist the roads must be built anyway, even if it becomes a technical failure. The MDC under Commissioner Robert Murphy thwarts Bill Callahan's efforts to push roadways into the Charles River across from Magazine Beach.
- 1963 .... Civil Rights March on Washington .... Abuses of state and local governments highlighted.
- 1964 ... Turnpike head William Callahan dies of throat cancer. He had been an opponent of the Inner Belt as a free road that would compete with Turnpike tolls. Beginning of urban riots and concerns for the state of cities.
- 1965 ... Mass Turnpike Extension into Boston is completed after major landtakings.

- 1965 ... State DPW released its design report on the Inner Belt in Cambridge with a double-deck bridge across the Charles River at the BU Bridge. Option for a tunnel is considered. DPW hired an architectural firm, The Architects Collaborative, to improve the appearance of the Inner Belt and proposed joint development of land uses.
- 1965 Rep. Toomey loses power, Cambridge veto is rescinded. First counter-proposals by the Cambridge Committee on the Inner Belt ... 530 Harvard and MIT professors sign up opposed to Inner Belt and place a large ad in the Boston Globe .... Early escalations of war in Vietnam, with critical “teach-ins” at colleges.
- 1965 ... Save Our City group in Cambridge is formed by Boston Archdiocese. Continued organizing and protests against the Inner Belt into 1969.
- 1965/1966 ... BRA Transportation Coordinator Bill McGrath proposes a traffic relief highway to deal with Inner Belt traffic congestion; road would pass through Brookline, Allston-Brighton, West Cambridge, Somerville and Medford, largely following the corridor of MDC Parkways.
- 1966 .... “Alternate Alignments for the Inner Belt through the City of Cambridge, Mass.” prepared by consultants Barton-Aschman for City of Cambridge. Recommends the railroad route. ...
- 1966 ... Formation of Urban Planning Aid with Jim Morey as director, to assist citizens in resisting highways and seeking more housing. \$20,000 from American Friends Service Comm.
- 1966 ... Federal Reorganization to create a Department of Transportation. Secretary Alan Boyd and FHWA Administrator Lowell Bridwell are both critical of urban highways.
- early 1966 ... Protests by Simplex Wire and Cable Company and MIT against alternate Belt routes. Large public hearing on the Inner Belt by the Cambridge City Council. ... Cambridge committee meets with Gov. Volpe, who agrees to study the rail route. ... MIT issues the Hanify statement in opposition to the railroad route alternative .... MIT takes responsibility for relocating 400 of the displaced families (1500 to 2000 total), after rail route is nixed.
- 1967 .... Lochner Report on two alignments for state highway locates the Inner Belt below grade, but still supports Brookline-Elm alignment.
- 1967 ... Town of Brookline takes legal action against state plan to rebuilt the Jamaicaway.
- 1967 ... Edward Ribbs retires from the Army Corps of Engineers and is appointed new state highway Commissioner.
- 1967 ... FHWA Administrator Bridwell proposes a two step study sequence to deal with Inner Belt issues. Task A and Task B studies to consider need for the road and its design.
- 1967 January ... Justin Gray is hired by City of Cambridge to head up a Community Development Section in the City Manager's Office, thus bypassing Cambridge Planner, Alan McClennen and the Cambridge Planning Board, both of whom support the Inner Belt.

- 1967 February ... State highway department announces its new highway long range plan, including a traffic relief road similar to the BRA/McGrath proposal, through Brookline, West Cambridge and Medford.
- 1968 ... Citizen Protest to Save the Sycamores along Memorial Drive.  
First Successful anti-highway Battle in Cambridge.  
Jane Jacobs and family move to Canada, to avoid the military draft.  
She is immediately drawn into the anti-highway movement in Canada.
- 1968 .... Federal officials set up Task A and B studies of need for Inner Belt, with one year to study. state highway officials release a report to extend Route 2 from Alewife through Porter Square. State Highway Department cuts the research funding for the MIT Civil Engineering Department. The department chairman writes to MIT President James Killian, and blames the loss on criticism by radical MIT urban planning professors.
- 1969 January ... New Nixon Administration in Washington DC. John Volpe becomes Secretary of Transportation. Federal Highway Administration and state highway department make major push to move Route 2 Extension into construction. Cambridge is threatened with the loss of HUD funds for housing. Cambridge counterattacks with major pressures on Congress and the State House.
- 1969 January ... Major anti-highway protest on Boston Common, Governor Sargent speaks to the group and promises a major review of highway policy. Cambridge anti-poverty organization CEOC sponsors the Housing Convention – seeking more low-income housing. The Greater Boston Committee on the Transportation Crisis is formed.
- 1969 June ... Cambridge submits its own highway plan for West Cambridge (similar to the BRA/McGrath Plan) as an alternative to the Route 2 Extension.
- mid-1969 ... Governor Sargent directs Commissioner Ed Ribbs not to hold Route 2 public hearing. A major setback for Federal Highway officials.
- summer-1969 ... National Observer publishes a front page article on spreading anti-highway protests. The National focus is on conflict in Boston. A crescendo of local leaders calls for a moratorium on all highway construction.
- late-1969 ... Governor Sargent appoints a Task Force under the leadership of Professor Alan Altshuler from MIT, with the mandate to improve the way transportation projects are planned.
- 1970 ... Former governor John Volpe, now President Nixon's Transportation Secretary, urges a more balanced national transportation policy, including a transfer of highway funds to mass transit.
- 1970 February ... Governor Sargent announces a moratorium on new highway construction inside Route 128, with exceptions for I-93 and Leverett Circle Bridge. New plans "will be based on not where expressways should be built, but whether expressways should be built."



- 1970 April ... Earth Day celebrations mark the rise of the environmental movement, which cements the grass roots opposition to highways. Federal Court decisions also undermine the independent powers of highway agencies.
- 1970 June ... The Governor's Task Force on Transportation under Alan Altshuler concludes :  
*“The Boston region is at a crossroads in transportation policy. Dissatisfaction with the existing transportation decision process, and with its products, is rife. And there is a widespread willingness to consider fundamental changes, [which] has been shaped by two major crises: on the one hand, the fiscal crisis of public transportation; on the other, growing resistance to the deleterious by-products of private transportation.”*
- 1970 ... Beginnings of the Boston Transportation Planning Review two-year study. Construction begins on I-93 in Somerville and Charlestown. Leverett Circle Bridge study shows design failures, and soon a restudy is announced.
- 1971 ... BTPR study report on the Depression of the Artery (first public document)
- 1971 August ... Commissioner Ed Ribbs is fired and replaced by Bruce Campbell. BTPR issues its report on the idea for a Depressed Central Artery, long championed by Fred Salvucci and ultimately to be dubbed the Big Dig.
- 1971 December ... Gov. Sargent cancels the proposed I-695 Inner Belt segment from the Mass Pike to I-93, including and the segments in Cambridge and Somerville.
- 1972: End of BTPR study review. November: Gov. Sargent eliminates the entire Inner Belt system from further consideration. Southwest Expressway and I-95 north abandoned.
- 1973-1974 ... US Congress approves “Interstate Transfer” -- of highway funds, to allow cities to use such funds for transit projects.
- 1974 Ed King is replaced as Executive Director at Massport.
- 1974 August A gravel truck accident causes the upper level of the bridge approach in Charlestown to fall onto the lower level, closing both road segments. Tobin Bridge is accessible only by two local ramps in Charlestown. Completed but closed I-93 is opened to regular traffic for the first time.
- 1974 Architect Paul Rudolph is shown still working on building designs and models of the Lower Manhattan Expressway, five years after Mayor Lindsay had announced the death of the road, long planned by Robert Moses and successfully opposed by Jane Jacobs.
- 1978 Ed King upsets Governor Michael Dukakis in the primary election. He is elected Governor in November and serves from 1979 to 1983. King is persuaded not to reopen the Inner Belt issue. His supporters at the DPW had expected a highway renaissance, but it did not happen.
- 1980-1985 Construction of the Red Line Extension to Alewife
- 1977 to late 1970s Relocation of Orange Line with arterial streets in the Southwest corridor.

- 1980 Original Painting of the Inner Belt mural in Cambridge.
- 1985 and 1995 Inner Belt retrospective meetings in Cambridge.
- 2012 Two celebrations of the 40-year anniversary of the formal end of the Inner Belt system. One set of events by the Boston Society of Architects and another by the Cambridge Historical Commission.
- 2017 Repainting and re-dedication of the Bernie LaCasse Inner Belt mural in Cambridge.

**Reminder monuments on today's landscape:**

- Unfinished exit ramps on I-93 in Somerville.
- Southwest Corridor Park and Bike Route through Roxbury.
- Melnea Cass Boulevard along right-of-way through Roxbury.
- Inner Belt Road and Inner Belt Industrial Park Somerville.
- Bernie LaCasse Mural on Inner Belt conflict in Cambridgeport (1980, 2017)

**Secretaries of Transportation**

Alan Altshuler	1971-1975
Fred Salvucci	1975-1978 and 1983-1990
Barry Locke	1979-1981 (d) (i)
James Carlin	1981-1982
Richard Taylor	1991-1992
James Kerasiotes	1992-1997 (i)
Patrick Moynihan	1998-1999
Kevin Sullivan	1999-2002
James Scanlan	2002-2003
John Cogliano	2004-2006
Bernard Cohen	2007-2008
James Aloisi	2009
Jeffrey Mullan	2009-2011
Richard A. Davey	2011-2014
Frank DePaola	2014-2015
Stephanie Pollock	2015-2017

d = deceased i = incarcerated

**APPENDIX B The Remarkable BRA/McGrath PROPOSAL FOR A NEW BYPASS ROADWAY**

In the fall of 1965 and resubmitted in the spring of 1966, the Transportation Planning Department of the Boston Redevelopment Authority sent an unusual staff initiative to Mayor Collins of Boston. The reports were written and submitted by William R. McGrath, a credentialed traffic engineer serving as Transportation Coordinator for Transportation Planning Department within the BRA.

McGrath submitted his reports directly to the mayor, without going through his immediate boss, Ed Logue, in what appears to be an agreed-upon arrangement. He reported on the 1957 Coverdale and Colpitts report on Inner Belt traffic forecasts, which showed the Inner Belt and Central Artery failing from traffic overloads and congestion along all segments. These traffic results were also reported in the traffic chapter of the Inner Belt Master Plan or "Green Book" of 1962.

McGrath explained how BRA staff had sought solutions to the problem by considering new relief roads that would carry traffic around heavily congested locations on the Inner Belt, including one plan to constructed a six-lane expressway from Southampton Street through the South End to Arlington Street and thence connecting into I-93. This proposal would have severe impacts to downtown Boston, and was abandoned in favor of another route primarily outside Boston. The new relief road would connect the Southwest Expressway in Readville, to a new expressway through Brookline, Allston-Brighton, West Cambridge, Somerville and Medford, using the MDC parkway system as a guide.

There appears to have been no evidence of coordination of this plan with the affected communities. The report appears to have been suppressed initially, but the basic idea of a West Cambridge bypass road was quietly adopted in January 1967 by Mass DPW into their long range highway master plan for 1975 and beyond. The concept was also used by Justin Gray in 1969 as a counterproposal to the Inner Belt and Route 2 extension plans of the DPW.

William R. McGrath (1922-1999) graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with a Bachelor of Civil Engineering in 1950 and received his Certificate in Traffic Engineering from the Yale University Bureau of Highway Traffic in 1951. Between 1955 and 1963 he served as Director of the City of New Haven's Department of Traffic and Parking. He received favorable attention in two pages of Jane Jacobs landmark *Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

In 1963, he followed Ed Logue to Boston and became Transportation Coordinator for the Boston Redevelopment Authority under Logue. With the election of new mayor Keven White, he served as Traffic Commissioner of the Boston Department of Traffic and Parking for the City of Boston between 1968 and 1970, the crucial end years for the Inner Belt.

He was long-time active in the Institute of Traffic Engineers, being elected President of the New England Section from 1960-61. He was elected ITE Secretary-Treasurer in 1970 and served as Vice President for the following two years before being elected International ITE President in 1972. He was chairman of the Urban Transportation Committee, US Conference of Mayors and was a co-author of the 1982 edition of the *Transportation and Traffic Engineering Handbook*.

The following pages are selections from McGrath's 1966 report dealing most directly with traffic flaws in the Master Plan for the Inner Belt and the proposal for a new expressway passing through West Cambridge.

=====

Report on the  
ALTERNATE MASTER HIGHWAY PLAN  
for the  
Boston Metropolitan Area

Report on an Alternate Master Highway Plan for the Boston Metropolitan Area prepared by Boston's Transportation Co-ordinator, William R. McGrath, dated February 1966.

Note: This document has never been distributed before and should be considered confidential. It represents an example of responsible professional opposition to the State's traditional Inner Belt concept. Mr. McGath's memorandum never saw "the light of day" as it questioned the then official support of the Inner Belt concept by Mayor Collins and Edward Logue.

Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Transportation Planning Department  
William R. McGrath, Transportation Co-ordinator

February, 1966



### Introduction

On September 27, 1965, Mr. William R. McGrath, P.E., Transportation Co-ordinator of the Boston Redevelopment Authority said in a letter to Mayor Collins of Boston the following:

"We are transmitting to you the enclosed "Report on Alternate Highway Master Plan for the Boston Metropolitan Area". We believe it will be of interest to you. It suggests the long accepted Radial-Inner Belt highway pattern for the Boston area may not be the best or, if built, may require major supplementary work at a later date. It has not been possible to do enough study to prove that our alternate can positively supplant the Inner Belt, but there is no doubt that the Inner Belt itself will not be sufficient."

"While the press is still reporting strong protests against the alignment of the Inner Belt, we believe every town considers the construction of the road to be inevitable. The public agitation appears to have the effect of a rear guard action or, at the most, of a bargaining maneuver."

"Approval of the Inner Belt is a hard decision for everyone involved. It may be justified on the argument that a choice has to be made between the construction of this road now, or no new road in Boston at all for a number of years to come. Our division of the BRA is not opposed to the approval, but feels a professional obligation to make sure that the decision, whatever way it should go, is made after full consideration of the Inner Belt's deficiencies and of the alternate solutions which offer themselves including their difficulties, as far as timing and financing is concerned."

This memo and the attached maps depict in essence the Alternate Master Highway Plan that was transmitted to the Mayor. This alternate is not just a variation, but a completely different alternative to the currently planned Radial-Inner Belt system; both should be evaluated using the same methods and standards. By obtaining a clear picture of the shortcomings which the now planned system will have, the means for its eventual improvement will emerge.



2.

### I. The Master Highway Plan

A network of freeways is emerging in the Boston Metropolitan region. With the Whitten Thoroughfare Plan for Metropolitan Boston of 1930 as a starting point, the Master Highway Plan of 1948 was developed. That plan has been the program statement for all freeway projects since. Later endeavors have amended the Plan in detail, but the concept of the basic network has never varied.

Among recent studies, the most important are "Report on Traffic Studies by Coverdale and Colpitts (1957) and "Inner Belt and Expressway System, 1962", by Hayden and Maguire and Associates (1962). These studies have contributed detailed proposals of road alignments and forecasts of traffic volumes, and have introduced modifications related to the building of the Massachusetts Turnpike Extension.

The network designed in 1948 consisted of the "Belt Expressway" corresponding to what is now called "Inner Belt", five major radials, and three minor radials which were not necessarily conceived as freeways. In the latest comprehensive system of 1962 this scheme has evolved into the Inner Belt, five major radial freeways, a minor radial plus a radial toll road. Furthermore, Route #128, which in 1948 was of minor importance and remained outside the scope of the study played a key role in the system of 1962 as a major circumferential, while Highways #3 and #24 increased the number of major radial freeways outside of Route #128 to seven.

Progress in the construction of freeways has been slower in the Boston region than was anticipated. The history of delay seems to reflect serious doubts, harbored by the public and its leaders as to whether the proposed freeways are worth the price in social discomfort and funds which their construction requires, and whether they are the best solution to the regions transportation problems.

### II. Unsolved Problems

The report by Coverdale and Colpitts as well as the "Inner Belt Report" by Hayden-Maguire analyzes the capacity of the proposed system in comparison with the



3.

anticipated demand and arrives at rather dismal conclusions. According to the "Inner Belt Report" (p. III-49) no section of the Inner Belt will be able to accommodate all the cars which would wish to use it, as seen in the tabulation below:

	FROM	TO	NO. OF LANES	CAPACITY AS % OF FREE ASSIGNMENT DESIRE-1975
Central Artery	N.E. Expressway	Tunnel	6	28%
Central Artery	Tunnel	S.E. Expressway	6	30%
Inner Belt	S.E. Expressway	S.W. Expressway	8	61%
Inner Belt	S.W. Expressway	Turnpike	8	65%
Inner Belt	Turnpike	N.W. Expressway	8	87%
Inner Belt	N.W. Expressway	N. Expressway	8	74%
Inner Belt	N. Expressway	N.W. Expressway	8	53%

Going back to Coverdale and Colpitts the picture appears worse. Comparing the capacity of the Inner Belt between the Southeast and Southwest Expressways with the demand in 1975 shown on the diagram facing page 93 of the report, the capacity amounts to only 25% of the demand, instead of 61%; and for the most congested segment of the Central Artery (diagram facing p. 63) to less than 18% instead of 30%.

Coverdale and Colpitts discuss the situation at length on pages 118 to 124 of their report and recommend that an "Inner Expressway" be incorporated into the system, from "the junction of the Southeast Expressway and the (Inner Belt), across downtown Boston, passing as near as practical the west end of the Boston Public Gardens (parallel to Berkeley Street) and then across the Charles River to connections with the Northern Expressway near....Sullivan Square." They made exploratory investigations and came to the conclusion that the average daily traffic which might be diverted from the Northern Expressway and the Central Artery to the suggested Inner Expressway would amount to approximately 100,000 vehicles per day in 1975. Unfortunately, even with the relief that the Inner Expressway could afford, projected volumes on the inner segments of the radial freeways and the Central Artery would still be more than double their capacity.



4.

The same basic concept has been referred to by others (VanNess H. Bates) as the "Back Bay Expressway". The disadvantages of this proposal are that the "Inner Expressway" would:

- detract substantially from the appeal of the Hub as a business, tourist recreational, and residential location;
- not relieve the demand on the Central Artery to the point where its capacity would be adequate in 1975;
- involve extremely high land acquisition and construction costs considering its objectionable side-effects and limited usefulness; and
- be publicly unacceptable and not likely to materialize.

Another proposal, reviewed and rejected, was the "Ocean Highway". This alignment, conceived in the late forties, would serve as an easterly by-pass, connecting Squantum, Moon Island and Long Island with Deer Island and Winthrop by means of a bridge (or a tunnel) across the harbor entrance. It would have ended in East Boston, between Orient Heights and Suffolk Downs. Without even considering the costs which the construction of this highway would involve, it cannot be justified by such relief as it could provide for the Central Artery. Its average traffic potential in 1975, estimated on the basis of the figures in the "Inner Belt Report", would not reach 23,000 vehicles per day. The interchanges with other parts of the highway network are simply too far away from the Hub.

### III. Analysis of Highway Systems

In looking for an alternate master highway plan, which would permit a more balanced circulation pattern in the metropolitan region, compatibility with existing facilities and with construction schedules of projects to be started in the immediate future is a categorical necessity. This requirement implies not only that a proposed system must incorporate all freeways, tunnels, etc., which exist or are under construction, but also extensions of Interstate 95 from Route #128 northward, and of the spur emanating from the Central Artery at Southampton Street; furthermore, no new facility should enter into ruinous competition with the toll road and the tunnels.

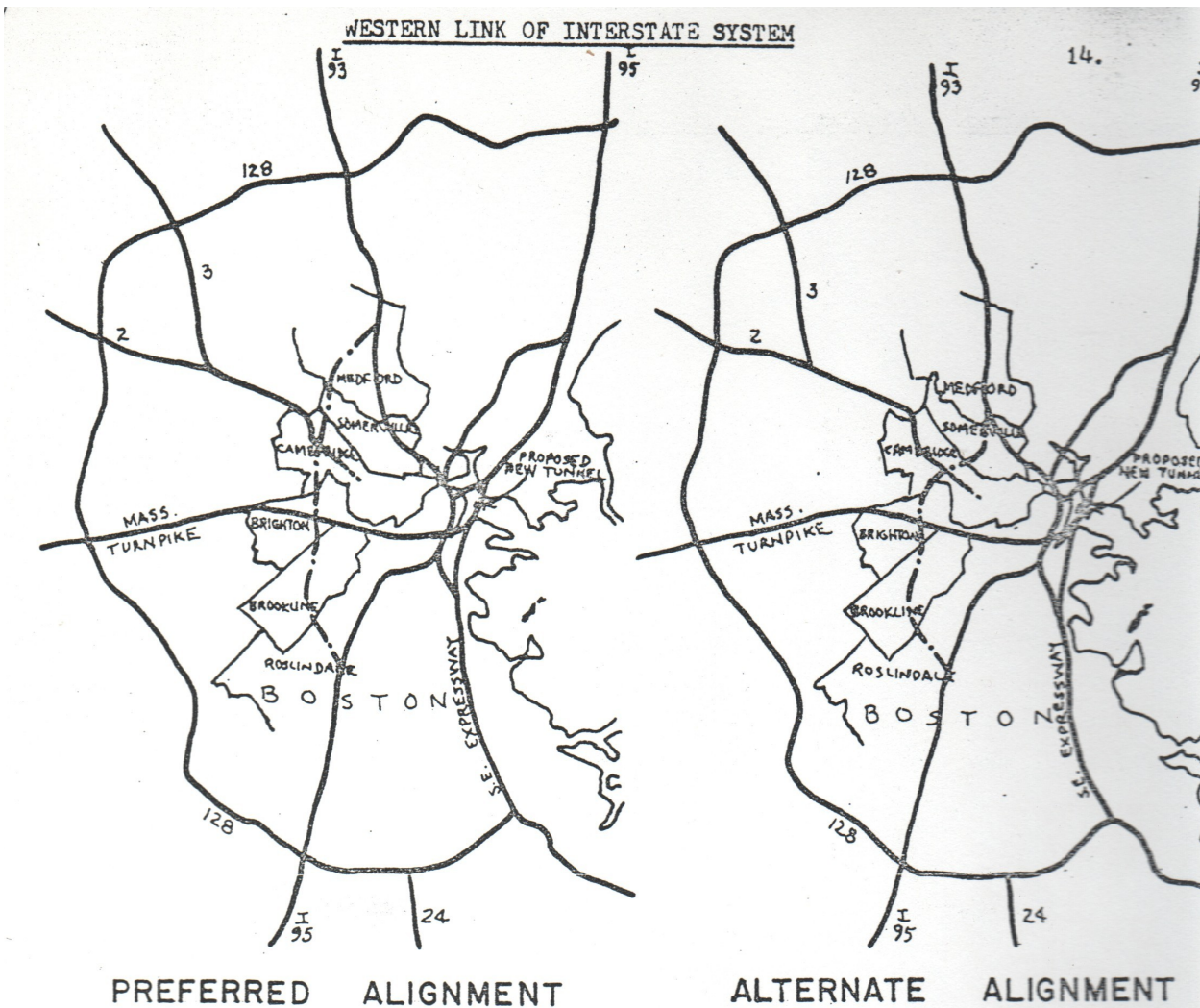


5.

In recent years research has produced some general guidelines for devising highway networks, which can be usefully applied to the Boston region. A valuable hint is given in the "Urban Transportation - Highway Engineering Handbook" edited in 1960 by K. B. Woods; Mickle and Vorhees state on p. 4-32: "A radial pattern of expressways has certain limitations in that it tends to force traffic to use the downtown loop. A gridiron pattern of expressways, on the other hand, distributes traffic more evenly throughout the system". More explicit is a discussion in Volume 3 of the 1962 Chicago Area Transportation Study. On pp. 36-37 the relative merits and disadvantages of several basic networks are reviewed. A critical remark concerning the Ring and Radial Pattern seems to be formulated with Boston's problems in mind: "..... The radial system does provide roadways aimed at the center of town where it will be desirable and even necessary to encourage transit usage. Feeding cars to the center can build up heavy parking and street capacity problems and so work to inhibit a densely developed CBD." Neither does the study endorse the grid system without qualifications, and concludes for Chicago: "Making a compromise between (the radial system and a grid network of expressways) would require ingenious design, but represents the direction that seems most likely to meet traffic needs and, from a network viewpoint, sensible design."

"Heavy street capacity problems" cannot be avoided at the center of a highway system which is as strongly centripetal as the one which is assumed to develop in the Boston region. Diagram 1, presenting its structure schematically, makes it clear that through-traffic and vehicles going to the Hub, will be forced to compete with each other for the use of the freeways. The accumulation of both types of trips accounts for the serious inadequacy predicted in the Reports. Diagram 2 shows an alternate system. Through-traffic will stay in this case on interstate highways, which by-pass the Hub to the East and to the West, while the traffic to downtown will turn onto spur-roads, which serve the Hub very much like R.R. spur-tracks are serving industrial plants. Diagram 3 illustrates a transitional stage in the development of the alternate system. It demonstrates that traffic congestion will be relieved to a considerable extent as soon as one of the by-passes has been built, and that the alternate system can be developed in stages which will be functionally satisfactory in their own right.





AVERAGE NUMBER OF VEHICLES PER DAY

ROUGH ESTIMATE FOR 1975

based on a report by Hayden and Maguire on  
 "Inner Belt and Expressway System - 1962"  
 pages III-34 and 35

<u>Expressway Segment Located In</u>	<u>Preferred Alignment</u>	<u>Alternate Alignment</u>
Medford	33,000 veh/day	---
Somerville	---	57,000 veh/day
Cambridge	62,000 veh/day	103,000 veh/day
Brighton	57,000 veh/day	94,000 veh/day
Brookline	61,000 veh/day	97,000 veh/day
W. Roxbury - Roslindale	57,000 veh/day	81,000 veh/day

## APPENDIX C 1969 AND OPEN WARFARE OVER ROUTE 2

*"Cambridge was successfully delaying any real work on the proposed extension of Rouge 2."*

*-- Alan Lupo, Rites of Way p. 72*

The Battle of the Inner Belt – almost since the 1948 highway master plan -- had begun with a series of state government decisions, followed by responses from citizens and their political representatives. The residents called meetings, passed resolutions, and attended protest rallies, but they rarely came face-to-face with the highway advocates. The state highway department did release memos intended for internal circulation, but the Federal Highway Administration seemed publicly silent, invisible, and unapproachable. Federal officials appeared to leave no paper trail, no visual record of their influence. Yet FHWA attained fundamental power by funding 90 percent of the cost of the Inner Belt.

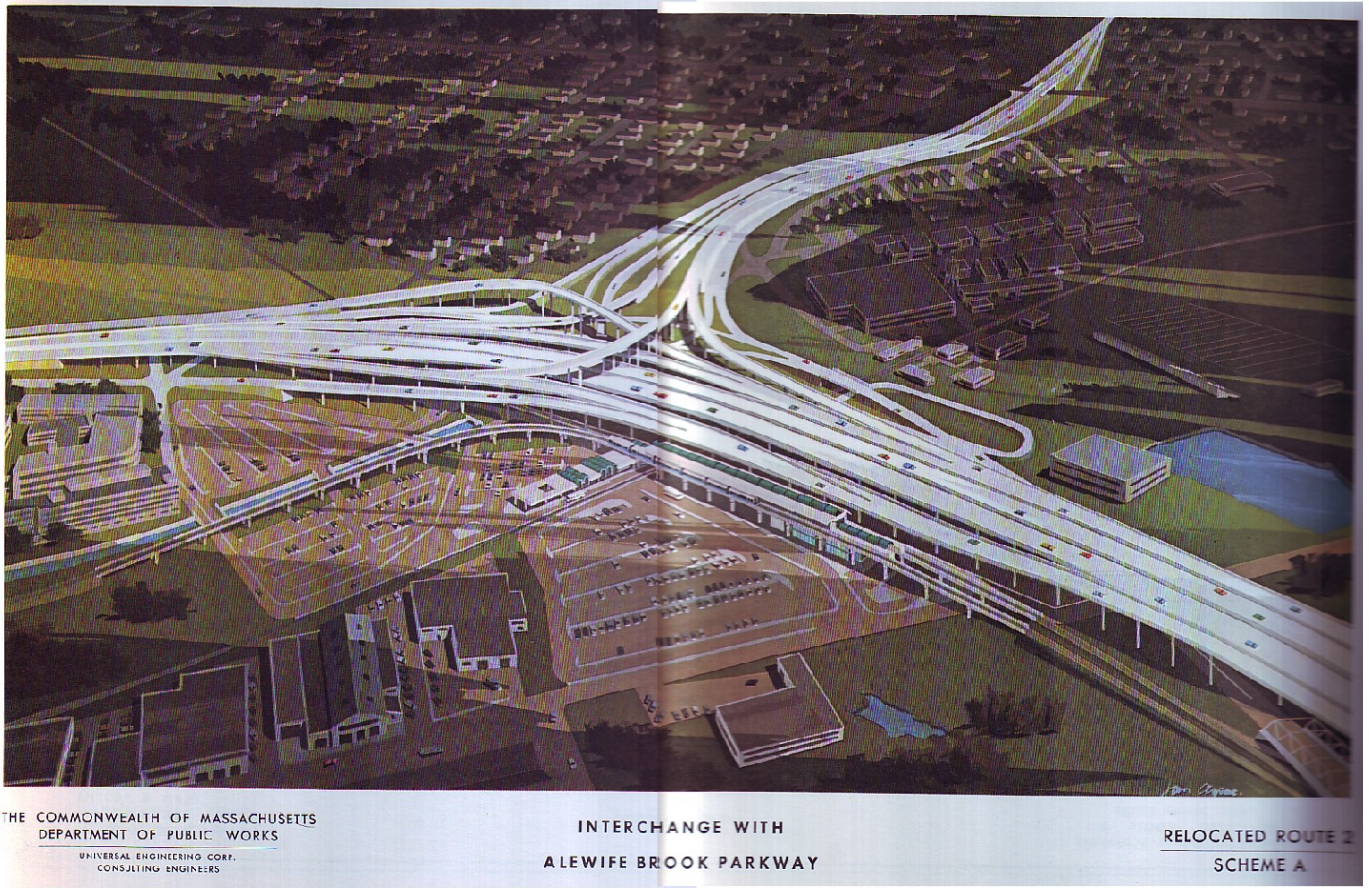
Since early 1967, Cambridge had been stepping up its challenges to the Inner Belt, and had worked cooperatively with Secretary of Transportation Alan Boyd and Federal Highway Administrator Lowell Bridwell, who were both critical of urban roadways. Within the Federal Housing and Urban Development office, they had a willing ally in Deputy HUD Secretary Robert Wood, a former MIT Political Science Professor (and father of current New Hampshire Senator Maggie Wood Hassan). Cambridge also had strong advocates in Congress in Tip O'Neill, Ted Kennedy and Ed Brooke. On January 25, 1969 they received a heartening response from Governor Francis Sargent who announced to a Boston Common protest rally that highways should no longer be designed from a traditionally narrow and insensitive perspective. A new outlook was needed. The prospects seemed favorable for the highway critics.

A different environment was being created within the incoming Nixon Administration in Washington, D.C. Boyd, Bridwell and Wood departed, to be replaced by John Volpe as Secretary of Transportation and Frank Turner as Federal Highway Administrator. Highway agencies had previously been willing to reduce impacts from road construction, and to engage in restudies of the Inner Belt. But by early 1969 with the Inner Belt tied up in restudies, highway advocates opened up a new shift in the battlefield. The focus now was on the Route 2 extension, a two-mile length of expressway from Alewife to its juncture with the Inner Belt. The evident strategy was to push for action on Route 2, with no design changes and thus help to lock in the Inner Belt.

The year 1969 began with a sudden counterattack that appeared to be led by Commissioner Edward Ribbs of the state Department of Public Works. Slowly it became evident that the Federal Highway Administration was leading this effort to use Route 2 as wedge to break Cambridge resistance to the Inner Belt. With Route 2 built, Federal road studies would find no alternative except to complete the Brookline-Elm alignment. In a rare lapse, Cambridge had momentarily left themselves vulnerable to this counterattack. They were open to undue exposure on their westerly flank.

Cambridge responded with a frenzy of protests and pressures on Federal officials, since it appeared state officials were no longer firmly in control of the process as they legally should be. A key element in the FHWA strategy was a highways-before-homes strategy : create an image of an accepted highway being threatened by HUD-funded housing, and therefor cajole HUD into withholding housing funds. Cambridge





### Proposed Route 2 and 16 Interchange at Alewife

- Route 2 and west is to the Right
- Mass Ave and north is in background at Top
- Shopping Center is out of View to the Right
- Alewife Triangle is in bottom Left and Middle

saw this new strategy as a way of holding housing funds from HUD as hostage, until Cambridge had relented to the construction on Route 2, and possibly the Inner Belt as well.

The primary objective of Federal road strategy was to open up a series of required public hearings on extending Route 2. The first hearing would identify the highway corridor and the second would consider design issues. Route 2 had few significant limits on how fast it could move forward, and any questions or minor studies could easily be controlled by highway agencies. The Inner Belt was effectively tied up in a process imposed by Federal agencies during the 1968 and 1969 period. Route 2 was “free” to move ahead, and with the change of administrations the highway agencies decided to push ahead.

Cambridge sought to oppose the very first step, what they labeled as a “quickie” hearing to be held in the summer of 1969 to jumpstart the Route 2 approval process. The result was several months of the most intense “warfare” between the two highway factions, with the focus increasingly shifting to two identified leaders – Justin Gray as Assistant City Manager for Community Development in Cambridge, and John A. Hansen, Regional Highway Administrator for FHWA. Cambridge discovered that Hansen was calling many of the shots on Route 2, and they increasingly directed their criticism towards FHWA. Governor Sargent had taken no direct moves to protect Route 2, while the previous leading figure for the highway forces – Commissioner Ed Ribbs – seemed of diminishing importance.

The Cambridge position appeared a trifle awkward, since its primary demand was to stop a public hearing, while the powerful highway agencies wished to hold one. Justin Gray's response was that the “hearing” would be a pro-forma exercise for unhearing bureaucrats to move ahead, without true respect for public opinion and with no shame for exercising a policy of highways-before-homes. While stopping the hearing was vital, Cambridge needed another stronger complaint. The highway forces unwittingly provided such an argument for them.

The Route 2 strategy was a dual initiative to have FHWA force the scheduling of the hearing, while at the same time applying pressure on Cambridge through threats to withhold Federal housing money from the city. It was the second threat to interfere with housing funds that provided Cambridge with the necessary ammunition to attack the Route 2 gambit. This unnecessary threat backfired against FHWA's goal of holding an early hearing.

FHWA made two major errors in pushing to hold up housing funds for Cambridge. First, highway agents, Cambridge officials and HUD staff had already met to assure that there would be no conflict between Route 2 and the North Cambridge housing at Walden Square. Everything had been worked out and agreed to. Any housing/highway conflict was a fiction. Yet FHWA was able to convince HUD officials that a conflict might exist.

Secondly, the local sponsoring agency for Walden Square housing was the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority, a former ally of DPW in coordinating highway and urban renewal landtakings for the Inner Belt. Walden Square was housing on the old Cambridge city incinerator site, and it would displace no residents, business jobs or any other community activities. By 1969, the highway agencies needed all the allies they could get : they had just alienated an important one : the Cambridge

Redevelopment Authority. Highway advocates not only lost a vital ally -- the opponents gained a new advocate to speak out against the Route 2 gambit.

Thirdly, the attitude of highways-before-housing was an overt irritation to Cambridge because of the heavy loss of housing and destruction of community associated with the Inner Belt. Route 2 rubbed salt into the wound because the highway would take more than 300 units of existing housing, as well as defer the construction of new housing.

Finally, by injecting HUD into the middle of the highway debates, FHWA came across as the bully who could manipulate the smaller HUD to its wishes. Anyone who wanted housing in Cambridge, but was took no position on new highways, now had good reason to object to FHWA strategy.

All of these factors contributed to the isolation of FHWA and undermined its strategy. In the midst of the imbroglio, even the state Highway department initially refused to agree to the first hearing, and ultimate went along only after pressure from FHWA.

Cambridge responded with intense condemnations and calls for pressures on Governor Sargent, Congress and Federal officials. It is doubtful if the anti-highway war ever got hotter than this, with the competing sides often in open confrontation. For the first time Federal Highway was seen as entering the fray as an overt participant and controlling agent. Over a period of several months in the middle of 1969, housing funds for Cambridge were in jeopardy, and state officials seemed to be moving ahead to hold a mid-summer hearing on Route 2. In a frenzy of political activity, politicians reprimanded HUD for yielding to Federal Highway pressure. Cambridge submitted a highway alternative and demanded a restudy of Route 2. In time, the housing funds were restored, and the CRA proceeded to construct the Walden Square housing. And by late May – most crucial to the FHWA -- the hearing date was canceled – under orders of the Governor.

When the dust settled, highway advocates had lost their last great battle. Their cause had been set back, and their credibility was reduced. This loss helped set the stage for Governor Sargent to announce a highway moratorium in February 1970.

We will never know what would have happened if highway officials had simply sought to hold the necessary hearings, without threatening HUD-funded housing in the city. They might have gotten away with their Route 2 ploy. Instead, they engaged in excessive use of power .... and lost.

The collapse of the offensive for Route 2 in 1969 made other issues easier to resolve, including the Inner Belt, SouthWest Expressway, and I-95 North. The coalition of Cambridge, Boston and Brookline had been strengthened, and they emerged the winners against this last-gasp charge by a weakening transportation power. Indeed, Cambridge had been successful, as Alan Lupo, summarized in one solitary sentence. The full story of the intense confrontation over Route 2 has not been told before, how John Hanson met his Waterloo by defeat that took several months to sink in. Other key military defeats in history also come to mind. It was curtains for the highway master plan.



### THE SEQUENCE OF THE ROUTE 2 BATTLE .... IN DETAIL

An opening to place Route 2 into strategic contention was created in October 1968, when Cambridge insisted that any study of the Inner Belt should be kept separate from any assessment of Route 2 (Cambridge Chronicle, October 10, 1968). Justin Gray argued that Route 2 involved other communities, such as Arlington and Belmont. He sought to keep the issues in each case very clear for all participants. John Hansen, Regional FHWA Administrator agreed, and he may have had different reasons for doing so. Thus Route 2 was left as a potential open battlefield, if Inner Belt discussions became bogged down. At the time, Cambridge may not have realized its exposure on this front.

January 1969 began with state Highway Commissioner Ed Ribbs announcing that John Volpe would be taking an inactive role on the Inner Belt, and instead would leave the issue to his aides. Ribbs also emphasized that he “was not speaking under any direction from the governor” (Boston Globe, Jan. 15, 1969). His initial step was to announce DPW plans for a two-mile extension of Route 2. Abe Plotkin quoted Ribbs, “We can't wait for the Inner Belt and the main Route 2 connection.” Ribbs added prophetically that when a public hearing is held on the project probably in 1970, “we will have a real blood bath.”

Ten days later the January 25 March Against the Inner Belt (and other roads like Route 2) brought thousand of protesters to Boston Common. Governor Sargent came out and spoke to them with a statement that had been jointly prepared with Justin Gray. Six days after the January protest march , DPW held an “information meeting” on the Route 2 extension, preliminary to scheduling the hearing.

About three weeks later on February 20, 1969 the Eastern Mass Regional Planning Project released its highway proposals for the Boston area. The short-range program for Route 2 (1968-1975) would rebuild Route 2 from Acton to Route 128. The long range program (from 1975 to 1990) would build both the Inner Belt and the Route 2 extension from Alewife into the Inner Belt. The regional plan proposed a “middle circumferential” outside of Route 128 from I-95 in Danvers to Route 3 in Norwell. There was no mention of a bypass expressway through West Cambridge that Commissioner Ribbs had approved two years earlier. Building Route 2 was at least six years away. Commissioner Ribbs was present at the press conference and appeared to support the plan.

Following a separate planning track, Cambridge had retained consulting engineer Ivan von Szilassy (a Professional Engineer living in Medway) to prepare a feasibility study of the “Western Corridor Bypass” in Cambridge, Somerville and three other municipalities. His draft report of March 25 was prepared for Justin Gray and the Community Development Section in Cambridge City Hall. It is unclear whether a final report was ever prepared. However, the draft did support two key elements and was silent on a third :

\* It supported the feasibility and desirability of an 8-mile six-lane expressway similar in many ways to the BRA/McGrath plan of 1965/1966 and with the approved plan by DPW of February 1967.

\* It supported the option as an “alternative” to the Inner Belt, not as a supplement to the Inner Belt as suggested by McGrath and presumed by DPW.

\* It said nothing about the failure of the Eastern Mass Regional plan to include any mention of such an expressway.

The draft von Szilassy report stated its purpose as being a preliminary location study related to the Task A study. He claimed that fewer than 200 dwelling units would be displaced, "less than one-tenth the number of dwelling units" taken by the Inner Belt and Route 2 extension. He noted that the state DPW "has for a number of years talked about the need for a limited access circumferential using the Revere Beach Parkway, Mystic Valley parkway, Alewife Brook and Fresh Pond Parkways .... The Boston Redevelopment Authority also has studied such a possible alignment." The Western Bypass Expressway "would avoid the need to construct both the Inner Belt in the eastern portion of Cambridge and the Route 2 extension."

The important element of the von Szilassy report was that it provided a positive argument for Justin Gray to use against the Inner Belt, rendering it unnecessary. In addition, it made the Route 2 extension unnecessary, and thus could serve as a study alternative to the state's Route 2 plans.

Some claims in the report exaggerated the capacity benefits and downplayed construction impacts. With the four lanes of parkway plus the six lane expressway, "10 lanes of highway capacity are provided by the proposed expressway location..." p. 6 The new road would comply with AASHTO design standards. Such a pro-highway report was an unusual contribution from Cambridge City Hall, because its normal strategy was to be strictly anti-highway.

The significance of this report would not appear until early June. In addition to following the parkways, the proposed road would proceed along the semi-abandoned railroad route to Watertown, with a bridge across the Charles River and into the Turnpike corridor in Allston. The new expressway would become a second level over the Turnpike until the BU Bridge, where a connection would be made to the Inner Belt in Brookline and Boston.

As the Route 2 issue grew in controversy, the March 31 joint position memorandum of Boston, Cambridge and Brookline noted a hardening position from John Hansen, Regional Federal Highway Administrator. Their letter claimed that Hanson had taken the position that Federal DOT would "not fund a comparative evaluation study of a 'No Belt' design as part of Task B." (p. 4) In other words, the integrity of the Inner Belt study was under attack.

The National Observer on April 14 carried a first-page lead article on "People Versus Concrete," discussing road conflicts across the country, but focusing on Boston. Quoting Ed Ribbs : "Any ordinary laymen who's got the sense that God gave a goose can see that Boston is going to be strangled if this highway isn't built." The article contrasted Ribbs and Gray. "They are not going to run any highway through here," said Gray. "This is another age. Highways just aren't going to built any more simply because a Department of Public Works decides it."

"The principals could not have been chosen better by Central Casting," said the Observer. Gray escalated the rhetoric : "Mr. Ribbs represents an anti-intellectual point of view, probably the worst form of it."

The three municipalities wished to have strong representation in the Inner Belt study. What would happen if Governor Sargent orders that the contract be approved, asked the Observer? “Then I won't sign the contracts,” said Ribbs. The paper quoted an aide in Mayor White's office : “If you tripped and fell down, Commissioner Ribbs would pave you.” And Secretary Volpe? “He'd pave Ribbs.” That aide sounds very much like Fred Salvucci.

On April 27, Abe Plotkin reported that the Walden Square housing plan in North Cambridge appeared to be in conflict with Route 2. HUD wanted to know where the road was going, while Cambridge was opposed to any highway. Meanwhile DPW wanted to hold an early hearing on Route 2 in a couple of months. “The City now feels it is being subjected to a sudden and unexpected squeeze play by two Federal agencies.” reported Plotkin.

Plotkin quoted Ribbs : “We're not trying to be rough. I told them emphatically that it was not blackmail – or anything like that, despite their accusations.” Ribbs continued : “But as far as I knew, HUD cannot take favorable action on any grant until they are sure there is no conflict with another Federal-aid project in the area.” Ribbs said he wanted to hold a public hearing “in late June or early July.” This would have been the first of two public hearings, the second one being on design.

The next day Justin Gray issued a three-page memo on the road-vs-housing conflict. “I am hopeful the Governor will not permit the public hearing on Route 2 as contemplated by Commissioner Ribbs.” The debate simmered as Gray drafted a long letter to Dominic Felitti at the HUD office in New York. His April 29 letter claimed that everyone in Cambridge had decided to remain tight lipped, but Abe Plotkin (who was close to highway sources) was given the story by Ed Ribbs and the reporter insisted on running the article. Gray informed the City Manager, who agreed to go public with a memo to the Council. “I spoke on the content of this memorandum to a large anti-Belt meeting that was previously scheduled that night,” wrote Gray. “Cambridge did not initiate this fight ... Ribbs did this by breaking the story to Plotkin, but now that he did we are fighting back with everything we've got. For your information, we have gone to Congressman O'Neill, Senator Kennedy and Senator Brooke.” So it was that HUD was put on notice of Cambridge's strong feelings about the Route 2 strategy.

Gray pointed out that the entire conflict was newly contrived, because the housing proposals were not in conflict with the preferred locations for either Route 2 or the Inner Belt. Prior negotiations had worked everything out and HUD had approved. Gray described how “Commissioner Ribbs has been trying to have the Inner Belt study framed in such a way that it would never question (a) the need for the road, or (b) the possibility of several alternative routes. He is also trying to ensure that his department will design and direct the study. In other words, the study will not really question anything.” The implication is that any hearing on Route 2 would be rigged and would conclude in favor of Route 2.

Gray in his letter to HUD shifted his focus from Ribbs to Federal DOT : “DOT is trying to force Cambridge to accept this version of the study by ... holding, in 1969, a hearing to make the final determination for a Route 2 extension corridor scheduled to be built between 1975 and 1990.” Why rush a public hearing when road construction is at least six years away? Gray challenged the fairness when “HUD programs which might inconvenience DOT programs must be held up.”

"In fact," he continued, "DOT programs are seriously jeopardizing HUD programs which are already approved and underway. Where is the parity between Departments? Who should be invoking the interagency agreement?" Gray noted that "priorities are seriously distorted. ... thousands of dollars for two housing programs are withheld so that millions can be spent on two roads ...."

On May 4, Justin Gray wrote a four-page letter to Father Richard Butler, Priest of the Blessed Sacrament Church, and temporary chairman of the Meeting on Housing and Highways. He alerted him to the national importance of the housing vs. highways issues, because actions giving highways precedence over housing were a problem across the country. Extensive local and state organizing was a priority. He reported that Senator's Brooke was beginning a probe into HUD's apparent capitulations. At the meeting of the Coalition of Cambridge Community Organizations concerning the conflict between housing and transportation, the group opposed any action that "puts highways above homes..."

FHWA's strategy of interfering with Cambridge housing programs had the side effect of stimulating a long-time concern among opponents of the inner Belt – that housing values were being sacrificed to highway priorities. Route 2 seemed to its critics like a repeat of the Inner Belt error. The emotional level of the conflict reached new levels.

If the highway advocates had thought they could intimidate Cambridge, it appeared that they had achieved exactly the opposite response. On May 5 Senator Brooke reported that the Department of Transportation informed him "that they are now proceeding with a reevaluation of the Inner Belt program and that until that study is completed (which may take more than a year) no decision will be taken on this controversial question." He was correct with respect to the status of the Inner Belt. Route 2 was a separate issue, not resolved in the Senator's report.

Gray's memos also mentioned the option of going directly to the White House, notably newly appointed urban expert and former anti-highway advocate Pat Moynihan. They preferred to stay with known allies in the House and Senate, and did not approach Moynihan.

On May 6, Assistant Secretary Floyd Hyde of HUD wrote to his counterpart, James Braman, DOT's Assistant Secretary for Urban System and Environment, "Knowing of your deep personal concern and commitment for the proper development of freeways in such a way as not to destroy a community, I felt you should be advised of this situation." Braman, a former Republican Mayor of Seattle, was an avowed supporter of transit and defender of the environment and played a part in canceling highway programs in New Orleans and San Antonio. From 1969 to 1970 he was the primary highway critic in Federal DOT.

By May 14 the conflict reached a fever pitch. The Cambridge Chronicle on May 15 told how City Manager James Sullivan reported he was powerless to do more and implored "the people in every neighborhood ... to write or wire Governor Francis W. Sargent requested that he not permit the State DPW to hold a hearing on Route 2 within 60 days as Commissioner Ribbs has threatened." Sullivan sought citizen actions because there was "nothing he could do" to stop the roadbuilders.

The article disclosed significant information on the aggressive role of FHWA. "John Hansen, of the Federal Bureau of Roads regional office, recently requested Ribbs to hold a Route 2 hearing within 60

days.” Sullivan said “Ribbs at first refused, declaring the State was not prepared, but later agreed to hold the hearing.” He continued, “Even though the officials of the higher echelons expressed amazement that such a [housing] threat had been made, the threat nevertheless was made by regional officials in Boston.”

This description of events cast a new light on the internal tensions. The scenario now had FHWA Regional Administrator John Hansen as the instigator. His “request” -- more likely a demand -- had been refused by Commissioner Ribbs, on the grounds that the state was not ready, which was true. When Ribbs later agreed to hold the hearing the likely explanation was that Hansen ordered him to. FHWA was paying for 90% of the Interstate construction costs, and typically along with money comes power. It is not unreasonable that Hansen overrode Ribbs' reservations and compelled him to change his mind. If so, how many of Ribbs' previous actions that has seemed so threatening could have been the result of pressure from Hansen? The push for the hearing in 60 days came from Hansen, not Ribbs.

Ribbs' description of John Volpe as being hands-off towards the Inner Belt and letting his underlings handle the belt could have translated into Hansen playing such a prominent role. Volpe could still have remained active, despite Ribbs' claim of neutrality, but the facts are unclear, since Volpe was going through a transformation of his own views towards road planning.

The role of John Hansen is consistent with his reputation for great aggressiveness in pursuing highway projects. Visiting Civil Engineering Professor at MIT John Clarkeson (also head of Clarkeson Engineering, the designer of the Southwest Expressway interchange with the Fens section of the Inner Belt) provided an insightful description of Hansen's priorities. In 1970 Clarkeson told me how Hansen had insisted that -- because Los Angeles had a four-level interchange on its freeway system -- he wanted to have one in New England. He insisted that Connecticut build one on Interstate 84, west of Hartford at Farmington. It was a formidable boondoggle, built in 1966, with large soil embankments to raise roads up to the fourth level. Its interchange with Route 9 was never completed, because Route 9 was never extended through West Hartford Reservoir lands. Fifty years later, of twelve different ramp connections, only six had ever been used by traffic.

Route 9 approaching from the south had once been part of a planned Interstate circumferential beltway I-291 around Hartford that was stopped in the early 1970s by anti-highway opposition. Like I-695 for the Inner Belt in Boston, the I-291 interstate designation was abandoned, and the primary remains of Hansen's dream is the semi-comatose four-level interchange. Once proposed as the site for a 2,000-car parking garage in 1974 ([Boston Globe](#), January 17, 1974), the state of Connecticut now has plans to replace it with a simple two-level “trumpet” interchange. After fifty years, the archaeological ruin of Hansen's Folly will be no more.

At the May 23 Task A Inner Belt Committee meeting, Justin Gray was not to be outdone by threats from FHWA. If FHWA was of a mind to push highway proposals through, Gray was the constant strategist to delay highway plans by proposing new alternatives. He put forward such a plan as a variation of the BRA/McGrath/DPW/von Szilassy plan. His plan would have stayed on Fresh Pond Parkway to the Charles River, with an undefined connection to the Turnpike. John Culp of Gray's staff presented this plan for review by the DPW and the Task A Committee on May 23.



# Take interchange — and park for the day

Associated Press

FARMINGTON, Conn. — A lonely four-decked expressway interchange that leads nowhere may end up as a garage that will cut down rush hour traffic into Hartford six miles away.

Built in 1966, the interchange was designed to connect Interstate 84 with a beltway around Hartford, Interstate 291. But environmentalists

and angry citizens succeeded in stopping the planned road construction.

In a radical departure from policy, the state Transportation Department has recommended that the \$12 million swirl of concrete and steel be converted to a regional transportation hub. A plan submitted to the governor envisions a 2000-car garage, commuter buses to downtown Hartford six miles away and possibly a rail link.

If the plan is approved, the southern half of I-291, already under construction, will stop at the door of the interchange turned-garage.

"The antihighway people are getting their foot in the door," said James Shugrue, deputy state transportation commissioner who coordinate the new plan.

"We're not to the point where we'll be stopping highways but we are refocusing our attention" to integrated transportation systems, he said.

State Sen. Nicholas A. Lenge (R-West Hartford), who has led a legislative battle to divert highway funds into mass transit, said:

"Up until the last session I always had the feeling that Department of Transportation was giving us new highway plans under new titles. Here's a real switch."

Included in the department's 60-page report is the formal recommendation to abandon the northern half

of I-291 and another section of interstate road on the east side of Hartford. The roads would have plowed through a reservoir preserve and considerable open land.

Shugrue said the \$115 million set aside for the abandoned interstates could be diverted to build the interchange garage, buy buses and revitalize rail-passenger service.

The immediate concern is the rush hour.

"It's like the tide coming in in the morning and going out at night," said Shugrue. Buses transporting auto passengers from the outskirts of Hartford would alleviate the congestion.

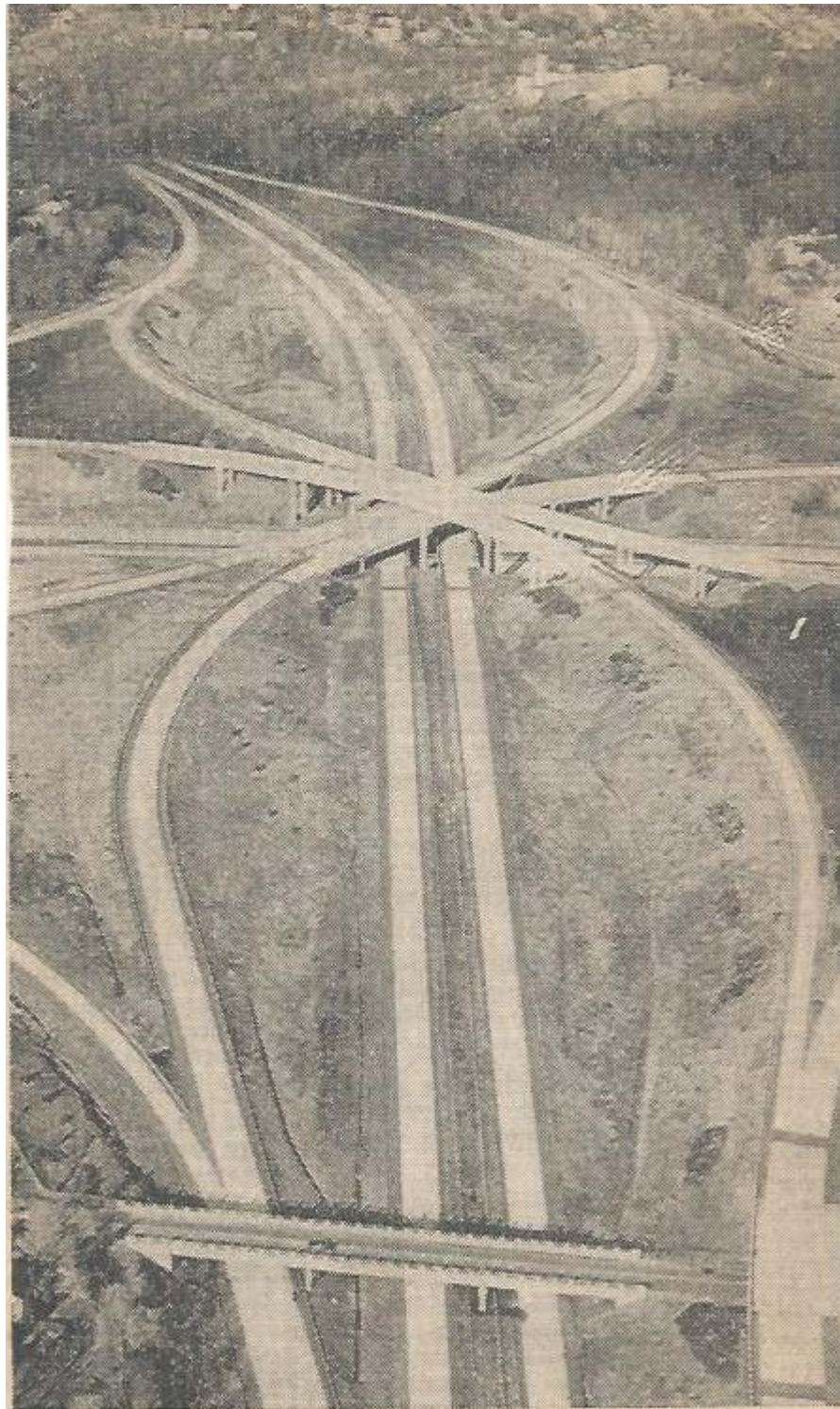
"We are coming to a middle ground," he said. "There was a time when everyone was concerned when you were going to build a road, not where. Then they reached a point where they wanted all the roads badly, but not here in their area. Then there was no place acceptable. And pretty soon, they wanted no roads."

## PROPOSAL TO REVISE THE I-84 INTERCHANGE AT FARMINGTON CONNECTICUT

Convert the Four-Level Los-Angeles-style Interchange favored by FHWA Regional Administrator John Hansen into a Parking Facility.

No changes were made and the interchange remains as built in 1966.

Current plans by the State of Connecticut are to demolish the 50-year old interchange and replace it with a two-level "Trumpet" interchange.



What was started in 1966 as a four-decker interchange near Hartford has never been used and may end up as a 2000-car garage. (AP)

AERIAL PHOTO OF I-84 INTERCHANGE AT FARMINGTON IN 1974  
Looking North towards West Hartford, with I-84 Oriented Left to Right



Several committee members were critical of the Cambridge proposal generally and especially for being tardy. The minutes of May 23 included the decision “that Cambridge would submit to the DPW a written proposal” and if review could proceed without delay and additional cost “the DPW would accept the proposal.” Justin Gray submitted his alternative on May 27 to the DPW. The DPW responded on June 2 indicating that there were six reasons why the Department could not accept Cambridge's proposal, including cost and time delays.

However, the DPW decided “we shall accept the Cambridge proposal because this Department wished to complete the study in a way that will leave no opportunity for any community to claim 'foul.’” The DPW letter noted “We are pleased to note that the present Cambridge officials acknowledge the need for some expressway facility within the boundary of their City.”

The Cambridge plan complete with a Globe graphic was reported by Abe Plotkin in the June 4 Boston Globe. Gray claimed that Cambridge had been forced to submit an alternative for two reasons. The Task A guidelines did not allow for a transit alternatives, and the “Ribb's plan to press for extending improved Route 2 eastward ...”

Commissioner Ribbs claimed that the Cambridge plan was a delaying tactic, which it probably was, and that it was flawed in traffic terms, yet everyone's plans were flawed for traffic. Ribbs then agreed to study the alternative, and the study would take several months. Justin's strategy had succeeded in monkey-wrenching the the FHWA hearing plans. Ribbs was opposed to the hearing and foresaw a “bloodbath,” so it was not unreasonable for him to agree to a study and a delay.

Six days later the Governor went further than Ribbs, and announced a “citizens' review of all transportation plans in Massachusetts.” The study would not be done by the state highway agency, but by a task force of architects, social and political scientists, economists, and 'the taxpayers who foot the bills.’”

On June 24, Governor Sargent wrote to Boston, Brookline, Somerville and Cambridge : “I am accordingly directing Commission Ribbs, and he has given me assurance of his full cooperation, to postpone any hearing on a Route 2 corridor of the nature requested by Mr. Hansen of the Federal Highway Administration until the results of the 'joint concept' study are known. I am doing this in order that options open for study will not be foreclosed by such a hearing.”

Sargent's letter recognized what had been obvious for several months. Ed Ribbs was in the awkward quandary of having two bosses -- one at FHWA and the other was the Governor. He was being placed in an impossible position, if instructions from the Governor and from FHWA were in conflict. To establish the Governor's primacy to instruct state agencies, Sargent made clear that he had directed his highway Commissioner to cancel the hearing, and in effect to negate Hansen's “request” for a hearing. The Governor was in charge of his personnel, and he as Governor gave the commands to the state DPW, not FHWA.

The events of 1969 show a quite different Edward Ribbs than has been recognized in the past. Ribbs had refused to comply with John Hansen's initial demand to call a public hearing. The state is not ready, said Ribbs. He was overridden by a strong-willed Federal bureaucrat. He had recognized that the

# Cambridge Offers Belt Alternative

By A. S. PLOTKIN

Staff Writer

Cambridge, which has long fought the state's proposed Inner Belt route, has

suggested as an alternative a network skirting the city, based on converting 5½ miles of MDC parkways into highspeed expressways.

It would use the Mystic Valley, Alewife Brook and Fresh Pond Parkways in, or bounding, Medford, Arlington, Somerville and Cambridge. They would be widened, straightened and all access cut off except from a few specified interchanges.

The expressway would have six traffic lanes, shoulders and median strip, and handle 90,000 vehicles a day.

The plan promptly drew criticism from the state DPW, which called it "another delaying tactic" and unworkable. Nevertheless, said Comr. Edward Ribbs, it would be included in a study already underway as a gesture of fairness to the communities.

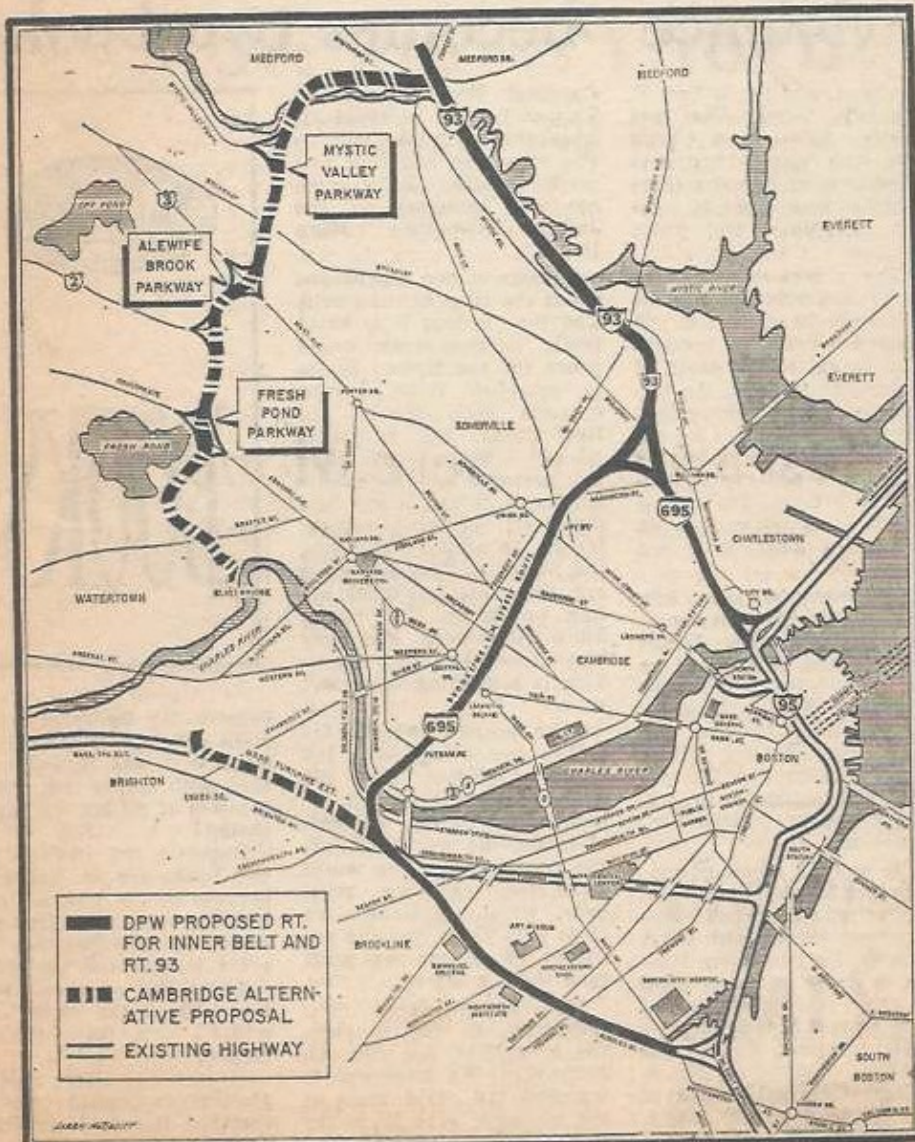
The idea came from Justin Gray, assistant to the Cambridge city manager for community development. It will be analyzed by DPW as part of the restudy of the Belt problem ordered last year by then-Federal Highway Administrator Lowell Bridwell.

Gray said last night that Cambridge was forced into submitting its alternative idea because Ribbs' plan to press for extending improved Rte. 2 eastward, especially in the area of interchange with Alewife Brook Parkway.

Cambridge's proposal also suggests a way of tying in with other parts of the Belt in Brookline and Boston. DPW's preferred route would tunnel under the Charles River near the Boston University Bridge.

Cambridge would carry the expressway South across the river from Elliot Bridge, and turn right in North Brighton at the Mass. Turnpike extension. It would abut, or run above the Pike road, and tie into the belt near the B.U. bridge.

The Boston Globe — Wednesday, June 4, 1969



INNER BELT ALTERNATIVE



Route 2 venture would result in bloodshed, and said so publicly. He chose to accept Justin Gray's tardy and flawed alternative road proposal and study its implications. None of these actions fit the normal Ed Ribbs image as a highway ogre or someone who engaged in relentlessly paving people over. Nor does he seem to be quite as anti-intellectual as his critics labeled him.

I attended four meetings where Ribbs was present, including two where I had an interaction with him. In all instances, he appeared calm, polite, obedient, not arrogant or obnoxious. He may have been compliant and willing to do the bidding of others with more powerful personalities, such as John Hansen or Ed King. But inherent abuse of power was not obvious from my observations.

Ribbs was later to oppose the new direction of transportation planning during the BTPR and made himself so unwelcome that Alan Altshuler felt compelled to recommend his dismissal. Ribbs had earlier shown a distaste for the Governor's new transportation adviser. As a PhD political scientist, Altshuler did not fit with the Ribbs ideal of how transportation studies should be conducted. In the Spring of 1970, Altshuler's Task Force proposed a new study working on non-traditional participatory principles. Sargent report to the DPW commissioner that there was a difference in philosophy between him and the DPW. When Ribbs asked who put the study together, "Sargent said 'Altshuler.' Ribbs said something about Altshuler's ability was mainly in philosophical areas. The Governor said, 'That's the point.'" (Lupo, Rites of Way, p.109)

Ribbs had started his career as a rodman on a state survey party. Such a role is passive and non-inspirational. He left in the 1930s to join the Army Corps of engineers, and over the years was promoted to the rank of Colonel. It is likely that during his military career he learned to obey orders, as military personnel are expected to do. When he became Commissioner of Public works in the mid 1960s, he probably brought that sense of obedience to his new job. He became the object of calls for obedience from FHWA and from the Governor. The Governor won that contest, but Ribbs remained sufficiently rebellious to cause his termination in August 1971. Ribbs died years ago of cancer, but it would be revealing to seek out a wide range of opinions about his character and style as a military man within a civilian government function.

The fight over the Inner Belt is usually characterized as a confrontation between cities and the state of Massachusetts. The role of Federal influence and indeed undue power has never been adequately explored. With the push for the Route 2 extension, an appointed Federal bureaucrat was clearly seeking to overrule the Governor of Massachusetts, with highway commissioner Ed Ribbs caught in the middle. In this instance, State power overruled Federal power.

This conflict over power, policy and influence was happening while the U.S. was engaged in the Vietnam War. The controversy in Vietnam was over Federal government decisions, not those made by states. In the dust-up over Route 2, Justin Gray had highlighted mistakes by the Federal government, and sought action by the top state official – the governor – to resist Federal intervention and chart a new transportation course for Massachusetts.

A contrast with the civil rights experience of a few years earlier is suggested by Federal judges and military force being used against southern governors who “stood in the schoolhouse door” to oppose integration. The southern governors were on the wrong moral side of the issue ... and lost. In Massachusetts, Governor Sargent was on the right moral side of the issue ... and won.

The battle for Route 2 was over, and to some extent the war was over, except for numerous skirmishes in the next two years. Never again would Federal bureaucrats seek to bull their way past opposition from the Governor of Massachusetts.

One factor not envisioned by either side was the strong opposition to the Route 2 extension that came from local businessmen. The Western Gateway Committee was basically a business group concentrated in the Alewife Triangle. There were protesting business takings from a massive Alewife interchange proposed in the DPW plans. The leader and spokesman for the group was George A. McLaughlin, Sr, a lawyer living in Belmont, and an able prosecutor. He was tough, determined and played an aggressive ballgame. If Justin Gray had not stopped the Route 2 plans of John Hansen, George McLaughlin probably would have.

The BRA/McGrath/DPW/von Szilassy/Gray plan for a expressway along the Fresh Pond and Alewife Brook parkways would make two more appearances after the summer of 1969. On October 10, the Western Gateway Committee issued an eight-page report signed by Denis Blackett, Paul Dietrich (later to become chairman of the Cambridge Planning Board), Prof David Wilson from MIT and four others. Business leaders had joined to support Justin Gray's strategy.

Some time in 1971, during the the BTPR restudy of the northwest corridor, Justin Gray attended one meeting and supported the inclusion of his parkway plan, including the option in the von Szilassy version for a connection to Watertown via the B&M rail corridor. When a citizen expressed criticism of any new expressway idea, Justin had to explain carefully that he was being strategic and not seriously advocating for any road option.

During BTPR the lack of public sympathy for any of the highway alternatives soon made itself clear. Justin would likely have had his defenses up for another Route 2 gambit, but it never happened. By 1970, the highway forces had been routed, and their morale shattered. The primary emphasis during BTPR was on mass transit : on extending the Red Line to Alewife and relocating the Orange Line in the southwest corridor. It was a bleak time for the highway advocates.

After August 1971, when Ribbs was replaced by Bruce Campbell as Commissioner, the authority of the Governor over state transportation matters had been established. The one hold-out was Ed King, Executive Director at Massport (and elected governor 1979-1973) who remained an independent opponent for several years, until replaced by a vote of the Massport Board several years later.

The anti-highway forces also saw important leaders depart in 1969 and 1970. Key was the announcement of Richard Cardinal Cushing in September 1978 that he was resigning as Cardinal of Boston, effective that year. He was persuaded to stay on longer, and formally resigned in September

1970, dying of cancer two months later. Save Our Cities declined in significance throughout 1969 and lost much of its funding. Anti-highway advocate at US DOT James Braman resigned in September 1970.

Justin Gray and his team at Community Development in Cambridge left *en mass* in mid-1970, as Justin formed a new consulting group, Justin Gray Associates. Another major loss was the election defeat of City Councilor and former Mayor Dan Hayes in November 1969. For almost four years he had been a major force in Cambridge government against highway building in the city. A conservative businessman by nature, he had run a local fuel oil business in North Cambridge for many years. He had been willing to cross ideological boundaries and work with citizens groups at all economic levels. He had chaired the Mayor's Advisory Committee on the Inner Belt, with its high-level membership of college professors, supported by the presence of Jim Morey from UPA and Henrietta Jackson from Save our Cities.

No parting assessment from Justin Gray has appeared, but on December 22, 1969 Dan Hayes wrote what was a farewell message to his compatriots on the City Council. He reported the good news that the Inner Belt and Route 2 had not been built. He noted that “the Greater Boston Committee on the Transportation Crisis, born out of the demonstration led by Cambridge on the State House last January, has grown into a strong and vigorous organization comprising low income, middle income, and high income neighborhoods in the metropolitan area. .... A large number of professionals in a wide range of disciplines have been mobilized to provide technical assistance in the development of new and constructive ways for dealing with the transportation crisis.” He noted the numerous calls by public officials for the governor to declare a moratorium on highway construction.

Hayes recognized three negatives : “Cambridge's Save Our Cities Committee, long in the forefront against the Inner Belt, is no longer a vital force .... My imminent departure from the City Council and that of Justin Gray, John Culp and Ellen Feingold from the employ of the City Manager's office leaves the City without many of the technical, political and legislative continuities that are needed in our work” with agencies and committees active in highway issues.

He concluded by asserting that “The State Department of Public Works seems to be more determined than ever to build the Inner Belt and the Route 2 Extension. They are skillfully manipulating data to show that only the Inner Belt through eastern Cambridge is the best alternative. All evidence indicates that the state's determination is wholeheartedly supported by the Federal Highway Administration.”

“My analysis of the pluses and minuses suggests that we can be cautiously optimistic of our chances to halt the construction of the Inner Belt and the Route 2 Extension. Technical and rational arguments are on our side. Time is on our side. Politics is on our side.

“But this hopeful situation is very fragile. Cambridge cannot halt the Inner Belt or the Route 2 Extension with rhetoric alone. Hard and technically skillful work is required if we are to prevail. And we must continue to provide the leadership and technical assistance to the other communities. If we don't we can lose the united front which has been developed, and which is absolutely essential to any successful effort to stop Route 2 and the Brookline-Elm Street route of the Inner Belt.”

In retrospect it is regrettable that Cambridge voters did not realize the extraordinary level of leadership that Dan Hayes gave to the city. He should at least have been rewarded with the recognition of re-election. Instead in November 1969 he finished 11th in a nine-person race. Over the years Fred Salvucci among a few others had come to recognize the vital role played by Dan Hayes in those difficult days in the late 1960s. It could have been that his opposition to Route 2 was reinforced by his residence in North Cambridge, and his sympathy for the businessmen who would lose their properties at Alewife. The record does not show strong citizen leadership coming from North Cambridge as it did from Cambridgeport, but the business community was a very significant force in opposition to the Route 2 extension, and Dan Hayes was a part of that effort.

In terms of tactical genius, Justin Gray made a two-in-one move when he introduced his version of the BRA/McGrath/DPW/von Szilassy plan. He entered the plan into the discussion of Task A, as an alternative to be studied that did not include an Inner Belt. At the same time he offered an alternative to the DPW's Route 2 plan, notably complicating the state/FHWA strategy to consider only one alternative through Alewife during their accelerated hearing process. The strategy may indeed have been a stalling tactic, as Ribbs claimed, but it was effective in thwarting progress on **both** Route 2 and the Inner Belt. It achieved the objectives of Cambridge officials.

John Volpe would become transformed during his stay in Washington, as he sought new opportunities for transit. When he left office in 1975, he received awards from historic preservation groups -- out of recognition for the many highway projects he had stopped and the historic buildings he had saved. When I asked Alan Altshuler what made Volpe change his mind about the Inner Belt, he replied "Some people just change their minds." But Volpe's change of mind was not so firm as that of Frank Sargent, who made up his mind and proudly never looked back.

Volpe was less sure and had second thoughts. He would look back in 1978 and urge that the Southwest Expressway be completed for traffic reasons, as did a handful of transportation officials over the past four decades. I cannot recall one instance of a call to build the Inner Belt and no proposal to build the Route 2 Extension was ever made after June 1969. The Route 2 gambit of 1969 was a devastating loss for the highway advocates, equivalent to the sinking of the Titanic. In Massachusetts, they never recovered.

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#### APPENDIX D UNMET TRANSIT GOALS : Proposals for Today

One “big picture” lesson is that Gresham's Law has some application to the resolution of the Inner Belt crisis. In the field of economics, Gresham's Law of economics states that "Bad Money drives out Good Money." The generic form of Gresham's Law is simplified to “the Bad drives out the Good.”

Bad highway plans drive out good transit plans. Bad bureaucratic habits drive out good ones. The modern reversal of Gresham's law is that through **almost superhuman effort**, society can reverse the process, and the Good can drive out the Bad. Such a result occurred with the victory over the Inner Belt. Priority for highways was replaced by priorities for transit in 1970.

Citizens opposed to the Inner Belt plan assumed that they could appeal to the “good” side of government, to take preventive action against the “bad” side of government, as represented by the highway builders. The good side of government in Cambridge has been very effective over half a century in protecting homes from highways and urban renewal. But in the past thirty years the goal of excellence in transit was slipped, most noticeably during the February of 2015 snowstorms. Transit performance, reliability and everyday on-time performance have not been what they should be. Trains and buses are uncomfortably crowded. Governor Baker enjoys a 70 percent approval rating, while the MBTA does not.

The challenge is to ask, what did anti-highway activists do to create improved transit service during the Sargent/Dukakis years 1970 to 1979, and 1983 to 1990 ? Under Governor Baker, what could he do to jumpstart transit service improvements for both the short-term and long-term? Imagine how the community leaders and technical experts of 1970 should be able to advise the current Governor. Could we apply the lessons we learned decades ago -- to transform the MBTA into a responsive, effective, performance oriented and caring organization in all respects?

Governor Charles Baker should seek to emulate the example of Frank Sargent by recognizing that growth cannot be accommodated with large highways, without making traffic congestion worse. The answer is to provide more and better transit, and to create an MBTA that can meet those needs. He should assist Cambridge in planning for growth by setting positive transit goals. Whereas in the 1960s, the state tried to impose its master highway plan on Cambridge, the state can help Cambridge in its own master planning efforts called Envision Cambridge. Thoughtful transportation planning is much needed around the BU bridge, Kendall Square, North Point and Alewife.

Cambridge and the MBTA should set a joint goal of increasing the proportion of trips made by transit from the existing 30% and raise it to 60% in a decade. Such a shift would be matched by a high quality alternative to the use of cars in the city. The MBTA would seek to double the ridership at the peak load point on the Red Line from present-day 9,500 riders an hour to 19,000 riders an hour. State and city personnel would work with community groups to implement these goals. The state would similarly work with other cities, from Boston to Quincy. The Governor should encourage working partnerships, such as between MIT and the Volpe Center.

Community groups in the Boston area should re-establish the GBC, and rechristen it as the Greater Boston Committee on the Transit Crisis. Business groups should recognize their joint interest in a quality



transit system for Boston, and should fund the operations of the GBC. MIT should look at the contributions by astute transportation faculty such as Professors Alan Altshuler, Robert Wood at HUD, and Fred Salvucci in terms of contributions made in their roles as citizens and as government officials. MIT should lead the service quality improvement effort to reduce the **bunching** of trains and buses that plagues the MBTA and many other transit agencies **worldwide**.

MIT should become transit technical experts and problem solvers, using the Red Line, Green Line and MBTA bus operations as demonstration projects for improvement. MIT should instantly start up a \$500,000 study effort in combination with the Volpe Center to accumulate international experience in dealing with bunching and improving on-time performance for all transit modes. These funds would come from the \$8.5 million already pledged by MIT program as part of its Volpe project at Kendall Square. The message should be that the City of Cambridge can grow – and that we will not be stifled by traffic jams and long transit delays.

Harvard should build upon the past contributions of leaders such as Jack Wofford, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and John Kenneth Galbraith. Back in 1930, Harvard planning Professor Robert Whitten produced an impressive “Thoroughfare Plan for Boston,” with the help of graduate students. The new modern equivalent would be a “Transit Plan for the Boston area” which would include priority recommendations for Harvard’s 10 million square foot development program in Allston. An important goal would be to keep traffic congestion in Allston from spilling over into Cambridgeport. This plan should be rapidly advanced in the coming year and could become the crowning achievement of the final year of President Drew Faust’s tenure at Harvard.

Historical Societies and Arts Councils in both Cambridge and Boston should combine in a program to assemble a web site on the history of transportation planning and service, to include the extensive system of trolley lines culminating at the Park Street Station a hundred years ago, as well as the 50 percent increase in ridership on the Harvard line during World War II. The Cambridge Arts Council demonstrated on September 28 their commitment to restoring the historic Inner Belt mural in Cambridgeport. The Boston Public Library has engaged in an extensive program of scanning historical planning reports in Boston, and similar efforts should be supported to include Cambridge. Local historical societies should seek to display historical maps, photos and other information at the Harvard Square Station (expanded from the existing concepts at Park Street and Kendall Square), showing both the past and the future of mass transit.

The Cambridge and Boston Chambers of Commerce should take on the task of monitoring transit performance on rail and bus lines, and working with MIT and others to improve the quality and credibility of the data. The Chambers would serve a quality control function, as well as disseminating the data to the public.

Cambridge City Hall should recognize it needs to supercharge its transportation planning process, as it did in 1967 by hiring Justin Gray. Justin and his staff of analysts not only assisted in developing strategies for transportation but also helped the Governor by writing his speeches. The transportation and environment unit at the Community Development Department should be overhauled with a primary focus

on practical rail transit performance. Specific planning projects would include proposals for the Red and Green Lines, including coordination with the Green Line Extension and improved service on the Boston College Line, which also serves Cambridgeport.

Bike and pedestrian planning should be expanded to include the Somerville community path and Grand Junction corridor path, in conjunction with Somerville Planning. CDD should investigate flooding potentials in Cambridge, especially possible flooding of the Red Line tunnel in a major storm. CDD should expedite the sale of state-owned land at North Point (Commonwealth Tidelands), with the proceeds to be used to fund Green Line improvements.

CDD should work with the MBTA to plan an Urban Ring bus route to provide circumferential service from Kendall to Lechmere to Sullivan Square. Similarly, a bus lane should be provided from Granite Street to the BU Bridge to bypass congestion at the Reid Overpass rotary in Cambridgeport. All types of programs should be considered to reduce auto use, parking demand and the need for cars in the city generally– with practical goals and incentives, including taxis, Uber, Lift, car sharing, bikes, and better signal timing for pedestrians.

The Governor must also take other specific initiatives. The MBTA Control Board should be revamped to include technical personnel who can deal more effectively with operational issues and on-time performance & reliability. The Governor should require that the MBTA take an interest in its own history and its demonstrated ability to provide **better service decades ago** than it provides today. City and state agencies should take the lead in clamping down on the widespread abuses of PowerPoint. If we cannot control the abuses of PowerPoint, we will never control the MBTA.

Article 7 of the Declaration of Rights of the state Constitution specifies that the purpose of government is to serve the common good. When in the 1960s state government had not recognized the failures in both highway design and sensitivity to stable urban communities, state officials also needed to recognize they had violated the terms of our state Constitution. When Governor Sargent stepped forward to stop the highway plan and implement a transit program, he – for the first time in decades – was exercising the right and responsibility of the state to comply with the common good.

As they did in the 1960s and 1970s, citizens, City Hall, Community Development, Housing agencies, the Governor, and the elected representatives of the City Council, state Legislature, and Congress should all work together to create that positive transit future for the Boston region.

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## APPENDIX E HOW AMERICAN ROADBUILDING BECAME TIED TO CITIES AND URBAN RENEWAL

*The Big Roads: The Untold Story of the Engineers, Visionaries, and Trailblazers Who Created the American Superhighways* by Earl Swift

<http://www.infrastructurist.com/2011/06/09/the-secret-history-of-americas-interstate-highway-system/>

The story begins, during the Depression and before World War II. It even preceded the 1939 New York World's Fair and the General Motors Futurama exhibit of a future city with layers of high speed roadways. On a February morning in 1938, President Franklin Roosevelt called in Thomas H. MacDonald, his chief of the Bureau of Public Roads. FDR had wanted "to broach an idea: It seemed to him, the president said, that the U.S. might benefit from a system of high-speed superhighways crisscrossing the country. With that, he handed MacDonald a map on which he'd drawn six blue lines—three crossing the 48 states from coast to coast, and three running North-South from the Canadian border to Mexico or the Gulf. Study whether such a grid of highways could be built, he said, and whether there's a way we could make it pay for itself."

"That meeting marked the moment of conception for the 47,000-mile Interstate Highway System, which was destined to redraw the national map, reorder America's cities, and remake our notions of time, speed and distance. Over the next several months, MacDonald's bureau concluded that the president's six highways could not be financed through tolls—in fact, no configuration of long-distance expressways would support itself.

"The bureau instead proposed a more ambitious web of highways in and between cities, arguing that it might not only ease the country's worsening urban traffic, but *replace its slums*. ..... [emphasis added]

"But once construction started, Eisenhower discovered that the highways he'd had in mind bore little resemblance to the interstates we got. He'd had no idea that they'd snake into cities. By his own admission, he had no inkling that work on 'his' interstates had been underway since before World War II. ....

"Congress cut loose the money to bankroll most of the system on his watch, and the interstates started appearing, a segment here and a segment there, before his second term expired in 1961. "

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Eisenhower's concern over the fate of his Interstate and Defense Highway program is similar to his appraisal -- as a military man who became President -- of the military industrial complex, during his farewell address of January 17, 1961. Consider the following passages from that address, and in reading, substitute the words "highway lobby" for "military industrial complex" :

" .... America is today the strongest, the most influential and most productive nation in the world. Understandably proud of this pre-eminence, we yet realize that America's leadership and prestige depend, not merely upon our unmatched material progress, riches and military strength, but on how we use our power in the interests of world peace and human betterment.

"Throughout America's adventure in free government, such basic purposes have been to keep the peace; to foster progress in human achievement, and to enhance liberty, dignity and integrity among peoples and among nations. To strive for less would be unworthy of a free and religious people. ...

"Crises there will continue to be. In meeting them, whether foreign or domestic, great or small, there is a recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties. ...

"But each proposal must be weighed in light of a broader consideration; the need to maintain balance in and among national programs – balance between the private and the public economy, balance between the cost and hoped for advantages – balance between the clearly necessary and the comfortably desirable; balance between our essential requirements as a nation and the duties imposed by the nation upon the individual; balance between the actions of the moment and the national welfare of the future. Good judgment seeks balance and progress; lack of it eventually ends in imbalance and frustration. ....

"This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence – economic, political, even spiritual – is felt in every city, every Statehouse, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.

"In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. ....

"As we peer into society's future, we – you and I, and our government – must avoid the impulse to live only for today, plundering, for our own ease and convenience, the precious resources of tomorrow. We cannot mortgage the material assets of our grandchildren without asking the loss also of their political and spiritual heritage. We want democracy to survive for all generations to come, not to become the insolvent phantom of tomorrow. ....

"Down the long lane of the history yet to be written America knows that this world of ours, ever growing smaller, must avoid becoming a community of dreadful fear and hate, and be, instead, a proud confederation of mutual trust and respect. ...

"Such a confederation must be one of equals. The weakest must come to the conference table with the same confidence as do we, protected as we are by our moral, economic, and military strength."

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Eisenhower's words are also linked to the Boston experience with highways. When many peace activists heard the President's speech, they were influenced to seek ways to reduce the influence of the military industrial complex. Quakers became involved, as did Jim Morey when he quite his military job at MITRE. Jim went to work initially for a moderate-liberal SDS in 1964, and then 'joined the American Friends Service Committee to conduct seminars in businesses along Route 128. ... He tried to illustrate how companies could apply systems techniques to urban problems. To get materials for case studies, he called the Boston Redevelopment Authority and was put in touch with Frederick Salvucci ...." (Lupo, Rites of Way, p. 13) In the summer of 1966, when Morey and others formed Urban Planning Aid, with an annual budget from the American Friends Service Committee of \$20,000. The Quakers, who had begun with an effort to reduce the size of the military had learned that a more important threat to the cities came from roadbuilders.

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