

21 November 2007

Michael Lewis, Director Central Artery Tunnel Project
Massachusetts Turnpike Authority
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160
Boston Massachusetts 02116

Re: In Honor of Ted Hamann – better bike/ped accommodation on CA/T streets

Dear Mr. Lewis:

On May 10, 2000, 150 people attended the second of three “corridor-wide” public meetings on the future of the surface artery. Among them was Ted Hamann, a long-time urban bicycle and pedestrian advocate. According to Thomas Palmer in the Globe (“Planners Take A 3-Hour Virtual Trip Down the Surface Artery”, 05/15/2000), Hamann noted that while there are plenty of sidewalks, there is no bike path designed on the Surface Artery. “[Bicycles] are not allowed in the Ted Williams Tunnel. They won't be allowed in the underground Artery. So what is the Big Dig doing for bikers?”

Palmer reported the response by then-spokesman Terry Brown: "We do allow for bikes in the central corridor, the whole length," he said. In both directions, "The right travel lane is going to be wider than it normally would be by several feet in order to permit bikes to share it with other traffic." He noted that Big Dig architect Fred Yalouris is putting together a map for bicyclists of the whole Central Artery project area, including bike lanes and, in the Charles River Basin, bike trails. "There's quite a lot of it. Bikes are a major part of this project."

And a little bit of history (as reported by Palmer): In the 1991 state Environmental Affairs certificate permitting the Big Dig to be dug, Secretary Susan Tierney wrote, "I encourage participation with bicycle advocacy groups to determine the best means of accommodating bike travel along the Artery." And six months earlier, in a similar document, Tierney's predecessor wrote: "I also direct that more attention be paid to making the roadway accessible to bicyclists," and specifically that the state "provide for continuous pedestrian/bicycle paths along the entire length of the corridor." The 1995

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Surface Transportation Action Forum (STAF) “Consensus Plan” says, “Provide a continuous shared bicycle lane through the corridor.”

Where are we today? While somewhat wide outside lanes exist on some stretches, conditions for cyclists on most of the streets designed as part of the Big Dig project is poor, with little attention to intersections and connectivity. (e.g., for the stretch that runs by Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, no wide lanes, no connection to the newly extended bicycle path.) Bicycle and pedestrian accommodation at Leverett Circle is poor, though this intersection cuts through the Charles River bike/ped path, and the Science Museum Bridge is an important gateway onto the Rose Kennedy Greenway. Bicycle parking is sparse or non-existent. The critical bicycle and pedestrian bridges promised as part of the Big Dig project are significantly delayed and at risk of being eliminated or reduced significantly in scope. The Cross-Roads Initiative has yet to incorporate best practices for bicycle accommodation into its streetscape designs.

On Tuesday November 13, 2007, Ted Hamann passed away. In Ted Hamann's honor, and because it is the right thing to do, we should all put our heads together to accomplish the things that have not yet been done along the Surface Artery streets, the Rose Kennedy Greenway and the extended Charles River Parkland. There is no time like the present to make up for past practices. There is new direction from above (both at EOT and the Mayor's office). There is new energy among the ranks of cyclists and walkers, new awareness of the importance of our public spaces, and a new environmental imperative. Some of this will be easy—revised pavement markings, signage, bicycle parking. Other changes will be more difficult—changes to curbs and ramps means digging things up and adding or reconstructing barriers that provide safe and pleasurable use of our public spaces by all. For projects not yet implemented, designs should be reviewed immediately before opportunities are lost.

The imperative is there. Decisions need to be made and actions taken. A good starting point would be a list from the CA/T Project of the topics and actions with which you are ready to move forward. We can then work collaboratively with you to ensure that stakeholders are involved and details are worked out. Even at this late hour, we believe that, together, we can improve conditions on the CA/T project for bicyclists and pedestrians. Please contact me to discuss: (617) 939-3824 or jeff@livablestreets.info.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey L. Rosenblum, PE
Executive Director, LivableStreets Alliance

cc: Bernard Cohen (EOT), Mary Jane O'Meara (MTA), Michael Kineavy (Mayor's Office), Robert Tuchmann (Completion Task Force), Dan Wilson (MoveMass), Wendy Landman (WalkBoston), Chris Hart (Adaptive Environments), David Watson (MassBike)

BOSTON GLOBE

Planners Take A 3-Hour Virtual Trip Down The Surface Artery

By Thomas C. Palmer Jr., 05/15/2000

About 150 people had some fun and made a contribution last Tuesday night at the second of three "corridorwide" public meetings on the future of the surface artery, held at the Federal Reserve building. The subject was the roughly 27 acres of space under the elevated old Central Artery and down through Dewey Square that is being reclaimed by the expenditure of \$13.6 billion to put I-93 out of sight and out of mind.

The master planners hired by the Turnpike Authority -- Karen Alschuler of SMWM of San Francisco, Steve Cecil of The Cecil Group, and Craig Halvorson of the Halvorson Co. -- stayed remarkably upbeat for the duration of a three-hour meeting, as they presented the broad options for this land, organized participants into six groups that were instructed to come up with their visions, and then listened to those sometimes contradictory results.

The consultants, our guides, outlined four broad types of public or open space that could materialize on the surface. (Twenty-five percent is reserved for commercial development or housing of some type.)

The options: green or "oasis" space; civic or "celebratory" space; formal or "iconic" space; and good old neighborhood park space.

Slides of some famous examples of each were shown. "Tasty things to think about," as one consultant put it: Rittenhouse in Philadelphia and Paley Park in New York for the oasis; Union Square in San Francisco and Las Ramblas Street in Barcelona for civic; our own Christian Science Center complex or the Piazza San Marco in Venice or even Red Square in Moscow for formal; and

finally East Boston's Piers Park or Paris's Boulevard Richard Lenoir, which runs over a navigable canal, representing neighborhood parks.

Inspired by what others have created, the participants, all volunteers, split up and each put together a big puzzle. Working with a 6-foot-high outline map of the Surface Artery corridor, they arranged little pieces of green (oasis), red (civic), yellow (formal), and blue (neighborhood) plastic along the open parcels, to represent their dreams.

Green definitely dominated.

The three difficult land parcels -- numbered 6, 12, and 18 -- are the ones with offramps or onramps severing them, though the consultants noted that the four ramps on Post Office Square have been rendered almost invisible by clever landscaping.

Some groups wanted continuity along the length of the corridor, and some were more concerned about the cross connections.

"The connections to the water -- we realized that's what put Boston on the map," said Craig, representing the Bright Green group. "We want to remind visitors this is why Boston is here."

Some were more philosophical: "I see Boston as a combination of past and present, looking into the future."

There were calls for skating rinks, fountains or waterfalls, places to sit and gather, and toilets, toilets, toilets.

"We wanted to take advantage of New England weather," Craig added. "Foliage that in the fall is going to, well, `foliate.' "

It won't be just for tourists, though. "From 9 to 5, we should be able to relish the corridor," he said.

A spokeswoman for the Yellow group summed it up: "This is a very complicated and exciting space," she said.

Some 60 to 70 people stuck it out till shortly after 9 p.m. -- many of them the same faces who have been involved in shaping Boston's new surface since it began in the early 1990s, but some new ones as well.

Said Alschuler, the consultant: "We will take all of this very seriously, as you can see." She also suggested that those who contributed should get "course credit for everybody from some institution."

The third and final round of public meetings on the Surface Artery is coming up: North Area district meeting 6 p.m. May 30 at 152 North St.; Central Area meeting 6 p.m. at Wyndham Hotel, 89 Broad St.; South Area meeting 6 p.m. at 185 Kneeland St.; and a three-hour Corridorwide meeting at 6 p.m. on June 27, location to be announced.

[...]

Now what's an item without a Big Dig reference?

In the 1991 state Environmental Affairs certificate permitting the Big Dig to be dug, Secretary Susan Tierney wrote, "I encourage participation with bicycle advocacy groups to determine the best means of accommodating bike travel along the Artery."

And six months earlier, in a similar document, Tierney's predecessor wrote: "I also direct that more attention be paid to making the roadway accessible to bicyclists," and specifically that the state "provide for continuous pedestrian/bicycle paths along the entire length of the corridor."

Unstoppable biker Ted Hamann approached us at the above-referenced Surface Artery meeting and

noted that, while there are plenty of sidewalks, there is no bike path designed into the Surface Artery.

They are not allowed in the Ted Williams Tunnel. They won't be allowed in the underground Artery. So what is the Big Dig doing for bikers?

A lot, spokesman Terry Brown said.

"We do allow for bikes in the central corridor, the whole length," he said. In both directions, "The right travel lane is going to be wider than it normally would be by several feet in order to permit bikes to share it with other traffic."

He noted that Big Dig architect Fred Yalouris is putting together a map for bicyclists of the whole Central Artery project area, including bike lanes and, in the Charles River Basin, bike trails. "There's quite a lot of it. Bikes are a major part of this project."

Edmund G. Hamann

Obituary

Edmund G. Hamann, 74, of Falmouth died on Tuesday, November 13 at the JML Care Center in Falmouth a year and a half after suffering a major stroke. He was the husband of Christine Weisiger.

Mr. Hamann, known as Ted, was born in New York City to the late Edmund H. and Mary Foss Hamann, but shortly thereafter moved to Riverside, Connecticut where his family lived for more than 40 years. He was a graduate of Vermont Academy and Hamilton College and earned master's degrees in both history and library science from the University of Michigan.

Mr. Hamann spent his working career as an academic librarian, holding positions at the University of Auckland, NZ, the University of New Hampshire, Cornell University and Harvard University. He was director of the Mildred F. Sawyer Library at Suffolk University in Boston from 1976 until his retirement in 1998. An early computer adopter, he led his staff in computerizing the library catalog. He also worked to organize the Fenway Library Consortium that included Simmons College and Emerson College, among others. Mr. Hamann was a devoted reader with a particular interest in the history of World War II.

His active passion was bicycling and he twice bicycled across the USA. He was an advocate for safer and better bicycling and served on the Cambridge Bicycle Committee, the board of the League of American Bicyclists and the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition (MassBike), for which he organized a Cape Cod chapter. Until his illness forced his resignation, he served on the Falmouth Bikeways Committee.

Despite being severely disabled by his stroke, he enjoyed riding a recumbent tricycle around his neighborhood.

In addition to his wife, Mr. Hamann leaves a daughter, Philippa Comfort of Pelham, MA, a son Jeremy H. Hamann of Wilmington, NC and three grandchildren. He is survived by four siblings, Joanna Shaw of Concord, Charles Hamann of Belmont, Victoria Lowell of Falmouth and Emma Ward of Riverside, CT and by his former wife, Barbara Scudder Hamann.

A service of remembrance is planned for December. Memorial donations may be made in his name to The 300 Committee, 157 Locust Street, Falmouth, MA 02540.