

LivableStreets Rethinking urban transportation

e-bulletin #10

February 6, 2006

Greetings,

Click here to view this ebulletin [in your web browser](#) or [as a printable PDF](#).

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We are excited to announce that we have become **The LivableStreets Alliance**, advocates for a comprehensive transportation network that improves the quality of urban life in Boston. The Boston Bicycle Planning Initiative is now a project of LivableStreets. We formed this organization with the belief that advocacy for better transportation is more successful when framed terms of improving quality of life. It's not just about better subway service, more bike lanes or pedestrian friendly intersections— it's about bringing all the different pieces together to create more livable streets.

LivableStreets takes a big-picture, collaborative approach to the city's transportation challenges and opportunities, **balancing transit, biking, and walking with autos**. We are committed to safe, reliable, and sustainable transportation that accommodates all users, including children, elderly, underserved, and persons with disabilities. LivableStreets is guided by the belief that strong, diverse, and equitable urban transportation options have the power to make Boston a more vibrant and dynamic city.

We continue to collaborate with important advocacy organizations, such as Alternatives for Community and Environment, Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership, WalkBoston, Adaptive Environments, and MassBike, and we are constantly engaging new partners to strengthen our network. Working together, **we strive to make Boston a better place to live, work, and play**.

It's 2006 and tension continues to build around the future of transportation in Boston following completion of the Big Dig. Transit commitments are behind schedule and still in

The Boston Globe

FINISHING THE BIGDIG

By Fred Salvucci
January 25, 2006

AS THE highway elements of the Big Dig near completion this month, we need to recognize that the job is only half done. Yet the state is considering changing course and walking away from the commitment to continuous improvement of affordable transit that was assumed in the Big Dig traffic and environmental projections and promised through four gubernatorial administrations as conditions of the Big Dig construction.

With construction fatigue setting in and Big Dig bashing fashionable, it's worth stopping to ask the basic questions: What if we hadn't done it? What happens if we don't complete the job? What if we'd listened to the critics and professional complainers in the first place?...

Not all Big Dig criticism

jeopardy, while available funds for pedestrian and bike bridges connecting new downtown greenspaces are dwindling. But there is reason for hope. Advocates are very pleased to have several strong leaders at the helm: Dan Grabauskus at MBTA, Steve Burrington at the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and Doug Foy at the Office of Commonwealth Development. It is encouraging to see the increased level of collaboration between agencies and advocates— for example, the DCR's comprehensive snow removal plan, which was announced last week, involved significant partnership (see article below). LivableStreets is excited to be a part of this process!

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WHAT'S GOING ON? NEW CALENDAR!



LivableStreets now maintain a comprehensive calendar of events, activities, and public meetings around issues dealing with urban transportation in Boston. Some serious (the future of the GreenLine extension), some fun (bike rides), some informative (talks about what's going on). Check out our calendar— keep your finger on the pulse. [Click here for the calendar.](#)

HIGHLIGHTS:

TODAY Mon Feb 6: Presentation by Dorothea Haas on WalkBoston's collaboration with Boston's Public Health Commission on creating more walkable neighborhoods. 6-7:30pm, Downtown. [\[more info\]](#)

Wed Feb 8: Presentation on MIT student collaboration with the Maya Pedal organization in Guatemala developing pedal-power equipment, such as grain grinders. 7-9:30pm, JP. Donation requested. [\[more info\]](#)

Wed Feb 8: MetroFuture community dialog event with Tufts Univ. on urban growth. 6:30- 8:30pm, Tufts. [\[more info\]](#)

Thu Feb 9: MassBike presentation by John Allen as a juror at the Taiwan International Bicycle Design Competition, and bicycle film by Lynette Chiang "16,000 Feet on a Friday." 6-8pm, downtown. [\[more info\]](#)

Mon Feb 13 & Wed Feb 15: DCR public hearing on Storrow Drive bridge repair. Attend and voice opposition to a plan to divert traffic onto the Charles River Esplanade parkland.

is wrong, but criticism should be considered like the label on the cereal package: measured by weight, not by volume. For example, the worst leak, a mistake caused by contractor error and failure of oversight, was corrected and paid for by the contractor, not the taxpayer. But the focus on the highly visual leak distracts attention from the much more important failure of the state to keep pace with the improvements to public transportation that were part of the original plan...

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Other Links...

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E-bulletin #10 Sponsor:



[Museum of Science Forum](#)
Forum is an experimental program in engaging members of the public in conversations about the impact of science and technology on the individual, society, and the environment.

Join our mailing list!

6:30-8:30pm, Downtown. [\[more info\]](#)

Thu Feb 23: Journey to 2030 forum. What transportation issues should the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) address in its long-range plan.

1:30-3pm, Downtown. [\[more info\]](#)

Sat Feb 25: "Rethinking Urban Transportation," citizen's dialog hosted by Museum of Science in collaboration with LivableStreets. 2pm-5pm, Museum of Science. RSVP required. [\[more info\]](#)

[Click here for more calendar events](#)

DCR SNOW CLEARING PLAN

The Division of Urban Parks and Recreation of the Department of Conservation and Recreation held a public hearing on the new Winter Storm Management Plan specifically addressing pedestrian and bicycle issues. Under the helm of



new Commissioner Stephen Burrington, the DCR with input from advocacy groups, has developed a prioritized system for making sure that snow is properly cleared in a timely manner. The system also included a publicly accessible on-line tracking system. A new relationship with Mass Highway has been forged to take responsibility for curb-to-curb clearing for many DCR roadways.

"This was the most useful and well-run public hearing I have been to in a long while," commented Kenneth Kruckemeyer, former Associate Commissioner of the Mass. Department of Public Works. Advocates are pleased with the commitment the DCR is showing to make pedestrian and bicycle access during and after storm events a priority.

Who owns what is a little confusing in Boston. All the bridges that cross the Charles River and streets and greenspace along both sides of the river, for example, are owned and maintained by the DCR.

[Click here to view priorities online.](#) (Click on "winter storm plan" and priority map on the left side of the DCR homepage). This interactive map displays parkways, sidewalks and crosswalks symbolized by their plowing priority. Also depicted are fire hydrants, hospitals, police stations, fire stations, schools, bus stops and other features relevant to snow removal planning.

On the topic of snowclearing, advocacy groups [WalkBoston](#) and [MassBike](#) are each developing snow clearing recommendations to cities and towns.

[Click here for a PDF of the handout from the January 31, 2006 hearing.](#)

COMMONWEALTH AVE. NEAR B.U. TO GET FACELIFT



Mass Highway and the City of Boston announced last month that reconstruction of Commonwealth Avenue between the BU Bridge and Kenmore Square will begin this spring. Advocates for pedestrians, persons with disabilities, and bicyclists

have concerns that they have been left out of the process. Beyond the formal hearing in 2002, input has not been solicited.

Advocates are concerned that the new plan, though certainly an improvement over current conditions, still prioritizes cars over pedestrians and bicyclists. For example, the roadway still includes two lanes of traffic each direction with a third turning lane at many intersections, and does not include bike lanes.

LivableStreets executive director Jeff Rosenblum was quoted in the Source, a BU student newspaper as being, "encouraged that there is opportunity" for improvement in the plan. "Overall it's a great project," he said. "I just think that the advocacy groups are undervalued in their collaborative contribution." Advocates only learned that the project was moving forward by reading an article in the Boston Globe in early January.

Stay tuned for developments.

[Click here to read the January 26, 2006 article in the BU Source](#)

[Click here to read the January 1, 2006 article in the Boston Globe.](#)

[Click here for more information](#)

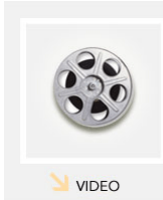
STREET RENAISSANCE IN NYC



Just opened at the Municipal Art Society, the **Livable Streets: A New Vision for New York** exhibit features fresh studies about NYC travel and transportation, new pro-pedestrian streetscape illustrations and a series of original presentations from local, national and global leaders in transportation and urban planning. "New York is a city best enjoyed on foot, yet we plan our streets for cars." The two-month exhibit is the work of the [NYC Streets Renaissance Campaign](#) of the [Project for Public Spaces](#), [Transportation Alternatives](#) and [The Open Planning Project](#).

The exhibit is punctuated by a series of morning and evening marquee presentations and the mid-February release of two groundbreaking studies: (1)

Neighborhoods and Traffic, a study by Transportation Alternatives, assesses the impact of traffic on New Yorkers' quality of life; (2) **The Auto in Manhattan: Necessity or Choice?** a study by Schaller Consulting, examines the importance of automobile travel to Manhattan's economy, and the extent to which current auto commuters have existing transit alternatives. The study has far-reaching implications for how New York's streets are best managed, apportioned and designed.



CHECK THIS OUT: Filmmaker Clarence Eckerson with The Open Planning Project has put together a series of short online videos. [Click here for a 30- second view of walking in New York City](#)
[Click here for a 40- second obstacle course sometimes called a "pedestrian crosswalk."](#)

[Click here for more information.](#)

MASS. FACES CUTS IN ROAD PROJECTS

Federal funds \$107m less than expected. The Globe reported that the state will receive 20 percent less in federal road and bridge construction funds than federal authorities had estimated for this year, and the state faces cutbacks for years to come. Click her for the full article.



The Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which approves all transportation projects in the region, took action last week to severely cut back projects in the 2006 Transportation Improvement Program— from an updated project cost total of over \$86 million to a little less than \$54 million. By and large this cut back was accomplished by dropping those unfortunate projects that were behind schedule. However, when the 2007 and 2008 transportation project list is revisited in two months there will be a severe domino effect, with many projects dropped that cities and towns currently expect to be funded and built.

The Cambridge, Somerville and Belmont "Bicycle Facility" survived by the skin of its teeth. Ken Miller, head of Massachusetts transportation planning at the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT), asked that it be kept because it is "a real project that should be ready to go soon and can be constructed". The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and other members of the Boston MPO voted to retain the project despite the budget strain.

[Click for more information](#)

WEIRD NEWS: CARPOOL LANES AND PREGNANCY

A US judge ruled that fetuses don't count toward carpool lane quotas. An Arizona woman, having been ticketed for driving alone in a carpool lane, pointed out to the judge that Arizona law counts the fetus as a person when calculating the number of victims in violent crimes against pregnant women. As evidence, she brought photos of her son, who was born two weeks after the incident. The director of an Arizona anti-abortion group supported her claim. The judge rejected it, explaining that the purpose of carpool laws is "to fill empty space in a vehicle," and the womb doesn't count.



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