

# LivableStreets Rethinking urban transportation

e-bulletin #6

August 9, 2005

## Greetings!

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**THU AUG 11: OPEN HOUSE FOR VOLUNTEERS--** Enjoy the weather and join us along the Charles Thursday August 11, 2005, 6:00-7:30pm, by the Arthur Fielder statue near the hatch shell ([click here for map](#), [click here for googlemap](#)). Find out about great volunteer opportunities with our organization! Meet others who want to make Boston a better place to bike. Can't come but still want to help? Want more information? Email: [jeff@livablestreets.info](mailto:jeff@livablestreets.info).

**Volunteers Needed!** We can't do it all without you. Consider lending a hand. No previous knowledge or skills required. There are a wide variety of tasks and projects to suit everyone: big and small, one-time and continuous, technical and artsy, field observations and computer work, solo and group projects, activist stuff with an edge and research/ office tasks. Contribute a little something, learn a little something, and have fun in the process. You will work with committed, knowledgeable, and creative bicycle advocates who will help set you up with a volunteer activity that suits your interests and time availability. We need volunteers to help with assessing conditions of important roadways and paths--it's fun and you get to do it on your bike!

Email Jeff Rosenblum at [jeff@livablestreets.info](mailto:jeff@livablestreets.info) for more information.

**Please help spread the word!** Forward this e- bulletin to anyone you think would be interested, or direct them to our website [www.livablestreets.info](http://www.livablestreets.info).

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**BIG DIG ALMOST COMPLETE, BUT BIKE / PED / TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS MAY GO UNREALIZED**

## Feature article:

## TRANSPORTATION TROUBLES



The 1990 federal Environmental Impact Report (EIR) authorizing the Big Dig states, "When the new Central Artery tunnel is completed and the existing viaduct removed, motorists will have the choice of two driving experiences: a nonstop trip through the tunnel or the slower, stop- and-start drive along the reconstructed surface streets

flanking the Artery right-of-way for access to local areas."

The component of the Big Dig project designed to greatly improve automobile access is almost complete. But what is happening to all the promises made for improvements to pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders? Outlined below are some, but by no means all, of the concerns voiced by advocates.

### **Pedestrians**

**What they said:** "Pedestrian needs will be a high priority in the development plans for the corridor," states the 1990 EIR.

**What they're doing:** While the focus on the \$14.6 billion Central Artery Tunnel project has been largely on roads, "budget issues" threaten to kill two of the three long-awaited pedestrian bridges linking Charlestown, Cambridge, and Boston over the Charles River Basin that were promised in a 1993 agreement to offset the pollution and inconvenience of building the Big Dig. These bridges are key parts of an emerging regional network of paths and parks surrounding the Zakim Bridge.

[Click for more information.](#)

*For more information on pedestrian concerns, see the article below on WalkBoston's concerns with 500 Atlantic Avenue.*

### **Bicyclists**

**What they said:** "Narrowed streets designed to accommodate vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation," including, "a shared bicycle lane," states the final 1995 "Consensus Plan" recommendations of the Surface Transportation Action Forum (STAF), a collaborative public/private working group (which have been adopted by the City of Boston). The document states that the roads along the new Rose Kennedy Greenway above the tunnel will "have travel lane width limited to 11 feet, a 1 foot shoulder, 3 feet to accommodate bicyclists, and 9 feet for permanent parking lanes."

**What they're doing:** Engineering documents indicating exactly how bicyclists will be accommodated have not been made available to advocacy groups or the public. Although temporary, the lane striping on the completed portions of the surface artery do not accommodate bicyclists, raising concerns that the end product will not either.

### **Transit**

**What they said:** The original set of transit commitments, agreed to in the early 1990s, provided for balanced investment between urban and suburban areas and across the metropolitan Boston area.

**What they're doing:** While many commitments have been met, "Symbolic fines and routine bus fleet upgrades cannot make up for the years of delays and missed deadlines on so many projects and the resulting air quality impacts," said Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) President Phil Warburg. CLF has recently filed a lawsuit against the Commonwealth stating, "In addition to the Arborway Project, Red-Blue Connector and Green Line Extension, the Commonwealth has fallen behind with its obligations to complete transit investments including purchase of

*by Michael S. Dukakis,  
Boston Globe Op-ed,  
Aug. 6, 2005*

FOR THOSE of us who ride the T on a regular basis, the news that ridership has gone down for the first time in years is not a revelation.

Service is deteriorating. Stations look shabbier. Graffiti is everywhere. Escalators are invariably out of service. The public address systems in many stations are virtually unintelligible.

And since the Romney administration took over, we have been treated to the wholesale spamming of the system. Buses and streetcars are covered with booze and bleach ads. Park Street has been turned into advertising heaven, and we are being submerged there in a welter of Dove Curves ads that cover virtually every square inch of wall space and feature a bevy of young women in their underwear. . . .

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### **Other Links...**

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Sponsor:**

Orange Line cars, modernization of Blue Line platforms and signalization technology to give priority to mass transit vehicles throughout the metropolitan Boston area."

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## THE "BUSYCLE" PROJECT GAINS MOMENTUM

In the summer of 2005, two artists, Heather Clark and Matthew Mazzotta, and a crew of volunteers are constructing the



Busycle, a fully functional 15 person 100% passenger pedaled vehicle. The Busycle itself will run solely on the energy of its passengers. Although driven by a Busycle driver, all passengers will pull their weight and pedal in their seats. Once construction is finished in September 2005, anyone and everyone is invited to Busycle around the City of Boston following a community-determined route and schedule. Eventually the artists and 13 friends will Busycle across the country taking in many sights along the way.

The first stage in the development of this project is supported by the Berwick Research Institute, a 501c3 non-profit, artist-run space located in Dudley Square, Roxbury, Massachusetts. Artists Heather Clark (Boston, MA) and Matthew Mazzotta (Burlington, VT) were awarded a residency through the Berwick Public Art Satellite Program ([www.berwickinstitute.org](http://www.berwickinstitute.org)) to invent, construct and pilot the Busycle.

[For more information](#)

## MIT STUDENTS HELP GUATAMALAN BICIMAQUINA PROJECT



**Maya Pedal**

Farmers in the hamlets of rural Chimaltenango are using bicycles called "bicimaquinas" for grinding grain, drawing well water, shelling macadamia nuts, compacting concrete, tilling

soil, and generating electricity. The bicimaquinas "are technologically self-sufficient, as they don't need fossil fuel or electric energy to function," wrote Mario Siquinajay, 35, executive director of Maya Pedal, the organization that manufactures the machines, in a recent e-mail from Chimaltenango.

A crew of MIT students who learned about the bicimaquinas in December traveled to Chimaltenango to help turn its wheels. This spring, they won an award for their own creation of a bicimaquina. And many of the bicimaquinas in Chimaltenango have been made from bicycles donated by Bikes Not Bombs in Roxbury. Those that can be refurbished are fixed up, then sold to ride. Those beyond repair are stripped and the parts are used to make bicimaquinas. The ultimate in low-emissions machinery, a bicimaquina is powered by a rider who pedals it like a normal bicycle.

*(excerpted from the July 17 Boston Globe article)*

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## **\$3 BILLION GUARANTEED FOR BICYCLISTS & PEDESTRIANS IN FINAL FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION BILL**

The new federal Transportation Bill, H.R. 3 SAFETEA-LU, almost doubles the amount available for bicyclists and pedestrians from the previous bill, guaranteeing at least \$3 billion will be spent on bicycle programs through 2009. The bill creates a new Safe Routes to School program, with \$612 million allocated for the program over the next 5 years.



[Click for more information](#)

## **UPCOMING BICYCLE RIDES AND EVENTS!**

### **AUG 10 (Wed): Neponset River Greenway Festival bike ride, 6pm**

MassBike Board Member Doug Mink will lead a ride exploring the new proposed section of the Neponset River Greenway from Mattapan Square to Paul's Bridge in Hyde Park and back. All level cyclists welcome; most of this 7 mile ride will be on roadways. Helmets required. Meet at Mattapan Bridge in Mattapan Square. (email [doug@bikethehub.org](mailto:doug@bikethehub.org) for more information).

[Click here for more information](#)



### **AUG 13 (Sat): Boston Midnight Ride!**

Seventeenth Annual Tour of Architectural and Historic Sites. Meet at 11:15 pm in front of Trinity Church in Copley Square. Midnight 'til dawn! Ride ends on Sunday morning at Castle Island in South Boston to watch the sunrise. Bring a bicycle with a light and wear something reflective; helmet recommended. Commemorative T-shirts available. Bring snacks for breakfast. Sponsored by the Back Bay Midnight Pedalers For information, call 617-522-0259.

### **AUG 14 (Sun): Hub On Wheels community bike ride**

"The Long and Short of the Mysterious East"! The long of it: a ride through 5 towns, riverside paths, harbor walks, 4 bridges, several parks, the new East Boston Greenway, and around the Martian landscape of Deer Island's new paths. Leaving Franklin Park at 9 AM, round trip 40+ miles. Or the short of it: meet us at the caboose marking the start of the East Boston Greenway at the southern, water-front tip of South Bremen St. at 10:15 AM and join us for the 15+ mile loop to Belle Island Reservation and Deer Island. Bring water! Helmets required.

[Click here for more information](#)

### **AUG 14 (Sun): Larz Anderson Bicycle Show**

From 9am – 2pm at the Larz Anderson Auto Museum in Brookline. Aimed to promote the bicycles important role in society, the festival features a Bicycle Concours d'Elegance, tours, author signing, exhibits by bicycle related organizations, demonstrations and more. Show highlights also include a demonstration of the Wheelman in period costume on Highwheelers, lecture on the history of the bicycle, and the Museums newest traveling exhibit "New England Paves the Way." At this year's show, the Museum has added a new twist, a Children Concours and Safety

Rodeo.

[Click here for more information](#)

### **AUG 27 (Sat): MassBike Summer Bike Festival in Concord**

MassBike's Summer Bike Festival is back and better than ever. This 3rd Annual Bike Festival and Pie Race is a fun day of rides for all ability levels, with a bike expo and a free BBQ from Redbones! Register by August 13th for the Festival (individual or family registration) and receive ONE free t-shirt at sign-in.

[Click here for more information](#)

### **AUG 28 (Sun): Bike Design Challenge #1/Tallbike competition**

Got a funky bike to show off? 1-4 pm at the Radcliffe Quad, Harvard campus (between Shepard, Walker, Garden, and Linnaean Streets half way between Harvard and Porter Squares). Test your engineering and riding skills against our grueling challenges. Enter your bike or just come watch -- all tallbikes welcome. Everyone is invited to bring a picnic and enjoy the show.

[Click here for more information](#)

**FOR A GREAT LIST OF RIDES:** [Click here!](#)

## **500 ATLANTIC AVENUE DEVELOPMENT DISREGARDS CONSENSUS PLAN AND IS BAD FOR PEDESTRIANS**

Plans for the Rose Kennedy Greenway frontage of the new Intercontinental Hotel, now under construction, interrupt the



continuous sidewalk. The City of Boston has granted the developer a permit for an 18'7" vehicle loading/unloading zone which occupies all the sidewalk space and requires pedestrians to circle onto private property behind the building columns and beneath its upper stories, very close to active hotel and condominium entrances. Pedestrians and the disabled will have to negotiate two 4-inch curbs and a row of bollards. Pedestrian sightlines will be compromised by columns at the garage entrance/exit ramps.

**500 Atlantic Avenue Sidewalk (Intell Boston Harbor):** As proposed and permitted by Intell, there is not a continuous sidewalk within the public way in front of 500 Atlantic along the Greenway. Instead, pedestrians must pass behind the building's columns, beneath the upper floors, and detour in by the front door of the hotel and residences. There is also inadequate sight distance for pedestrians at the garage entry/exit. **The sidewalk does not conform to either the letter or the spirit of the approved guidelines for the Rose Kennedy Greenway (STAF plan) and will set an extremely unfortunate precedent for subsequent development along the Greenway.** The Intell project as proposed in the MEPA and Article 80 documents had a continuous sidewalk. Although the project changed substantially after its MEPA and Article 80 permitting, no Notice of Project Change was filed and a PIC permit was obtained without that MEPA notification and review.

WalkBoston has filed a "Notice of Project Change" demanding that these important issues be addressed. [Click here to view a copy of this document.](#)

[For more information](#)

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