

Transcript

Veterans of the Battle Reflect on Defeat of Cambridge Inner Belt Highway Plan

50 Years Since Cambridge Was Saved

Conceived, Planned & Hosted by Steve Kaiser June 4, 2022

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(Note: Timestamps align with the audio file which does not include approximately 30 seconds of title slides that appear at the beginning of the video.)

Steve Kaiser:

My name is Stephen Kaiser. I welcome you to the June 4, 2022 Zoom Meeting on the Cambridge Inner Belt Highway, almost 50 years after Governor Francis Sargent eliminated the 8-lane Inner Belt road and all but one proposed expressway from the Highway Master Plan for the Boston area.

We have a panel of 12 participants, all veterans of those intense Inner Belt years who can speak from personal experience to look back when transportation planning was a priority, and many of them became activists on issues of highways and transit.

Our first speaker will be Governor Michael Dukakis, whose 12 years as governor followed those of Governor Sargent.

He will speak to the need for new transportation thinking and planning as we in Massachusetts prepare for a new governor to arrive in office in January of next year.

Michael, you had this idea for looking at what the next Governor's transportation policy should be.

At the same time, we have a group of people here who are looking back at what happened over the last 50 years and was like a reservoir of experience for that, and I wondered if you had any further thoughts on how we might go into that.

Michael Dukakis: Looking ahead?

Steve Kaiser: Yes

00:01:33 Michael Dukakis:

Look, I'm not happy with the current transportation situation in the state. I don't think the people who are running the T these days and are making transportation policy are bad people, but I just don't see anything happening. I mean, it's a disaster every week. And they simply don't seem to be able to get their act together.

We're having, you know, constant problems here and there's no reason for that. So, the next administration and the next Governor is going to have to put together a first-rate team. And go to work. And in my opinion, do three major things.

First, the North-South rail. Absolutely essential. Absolutely essential. It's not going to cost \$20 Billion. That's nonsense. Secondly, the East-West [*rail*], which I think is a good thing, should go all the way to the Berkshires. Could we just kind of, at least, just do it to Springfield? Interesting questions. Not difficult, however, not difficult.

And the third is South Coast rail, which is under way but slow, taking a lot of time. No reason for those kinds of delays. But southeastern Massachusetts needs a rail link into the City. And that's what, that's what the South Coast railway project will do.

Those are the three key projects, I think, ahead of us. They're quite doable and I would like to see a new administration get on with them as soon as possible, as soon as possible. Requires putting together a first-rate team and people that know what they're doing. But those are the three key projects.

I'll leave to you whether or not we should spend \$4 billion on new bridges to the Cape when \$60 million will build you a railway to Hyannis [*inaudible*]. And that's an open question.

00:03:35 Michael Dukakis:

But it's these three major projects, which I think, a new administration has to get going on right away. And eminently doable. I don't know how you feel about that. Feel free to react to it, but that seems to me to be, those are the priority projects as far as I'm concerned. And they're essential.

I mean, North-South, we can't tolerate the situation we're in. People are stopping in South Station and taking the T to get to North Station to go North. I mean, it's ludicrous.

I think the West deserves a connector, a good one that will involve and actively and fully in what's going on in eastern Massachusetts. And the South Coast rail is obviously one that is under way and terribly slow.

Why the T is having the problems it's having is an interesting question. I'll leave that to you but there's no excuse for that. I mean, it just a...

And I was blessed, I have to tell you, I was blessed as Governor with a wonderful team, led by Fred [Salvucci]. And including Frank Keville [inaudible], who knew Keville, worked with him. But superb guy, you know.

Northeastern Co-op students in Dorchester co-op'ed the T when we worked the T. And Frank was an important part of that team as well.

But we've got work to do and the sooner we can get going on it, the better. We reacting is...[inaudible]. But that seems to me to be the, those are the three projects that we must do and the sooner the better.

Any reaction?

00:05:25 Steve Kaiser:

Quick reaction, Michael. As I think the Republican party is a bit of a basket case these days and the Democrats don't seem to have many good ideas.

So, the 16 faces I'm seeing on the screen may be a good place to start. You can start with your list and build on that and then in the end we might have the only transportation plan in the city but we can do it. So that's my...

00:05:51 Michael Dukakis:

I had a superb Secretary of Transportation who just joined us here. And Fred was an absolutely key factor in all of this. No question about it. He put that team together and he led it. I enthusiastically participated with him.

But remember at the time, I mean, we were looking at all kinds of stuff that didn't make a lot of sense to me. And if you were to say to me, so why were you so strongly opposed to the projects that we were being told were essential, I guess I kept looking at Los Angeles and saying, this is a disaster. I mean, is that the route we want to take here? Is that the way we want to go? Or isn't there a better way to do this?

But fortunately, Fred had put together a wonderful team of people. And I had a great time working with them. And we got stuff done.

Fred, I don't know whether you want to comment on this. [Inaudible]

Fred Salvucci: No, no, as long as we've got you able to be with us, we should be listening to you. Any other recollections, Mike, of...?

Michael Dukakis: Well, my memory still is okay but I find myself having difficulty recalling details. All I know is that, you know, you were the Secretary. We went to work and began doing

things with really first-rate people. And it was a joy to work with you, with all of you, you know, with you and with your team.

Jack Wofford: Mike, I as I recall before the restudy was begun or just about that time you indicated you didn't need a restudy to realize that these highways were terrible ideas.

00:07:51 Michael Dukakis:

Yeah, right, right. And we didn't, in my opinion. But we really slowed down and I don't if it's worth getting into this but I don't understand why we can't get things done these days. I don't think it's bureaucracy. I don't think red tape. But it does require us all [inaudible]. And if you are part of this it does require focus and intensive work on a regular ongoing basis. And that's what you made possible.

My soapbox here.

Steve Kaiser: Michael you've been very helpful today and you've given us a full...

Michael Dukakis: I've been looking forward to this but got to leave you. But I hope with a new governor we can put together the same kind of team we had before and go to work.

David [Lee], how are you? Good to see you.

David Lee: I'm good and do say hi to Kitty for me. I don't know if she heard me a minute ago.

Michael Dukakis: And really get cracking on this because this is not, I don't think this is a complicated agenda. It's limited. Three projects. Let's go to work and do them.

Anyway. Jack [Wofford], great to see you. Steve, Thank you so much.

Steve Kaiser: Thank you.

Michael Dukakis: And I hope we will be working together in some form in a new administration. Thanks so much. Appreciate it.

Fred Salvucci: Thanks, Governor.

00:09:34 Steve Kaiser:

OK, my next speaker is Bob Simha, long time planning director at MIT. And he's the only one on our panel whose memory of Inner Belt events goes back to the 1950s. He met the planning director of Cambridge in 1955, who told him he was having problems with the Inner Belt. And I was a 12-year old in grade school in New Jersey at the time.

So, I knew nothing about that. But he has the memory of those years, which is absolutely vital.

So, Bob, why don't you take it away?

Bob Simha: Hello, can you see me?

Steve Kaiser: Yup.

00:10:20 Bob Simha:

OK, well thank you very much for that introduction. One of the things I should tell you is that, and I'm sorry that Mike [Dukakis] has left the podium for a second, but we have something quite unique in common. Both our mothers were born and raised in the same city in Greece. And when he was governor he was kind enough to arrange a little tête-à-tête for these two old ladies to reminisce about their childhood in the city of Larissa in Greece. And we had a wonderful day in his office that time. And I'm still grateful to him. That was a wonderful memory for our family and certainly for my mother.

But let's swing back to my recollections about the Inner Belt. My first encounter with the Inner Belt highway came in 1955 when I was a graduate student at MIT. I met Mark Fortune, who was then the Cambridge City Planner, and he was in the midst of preparing a new comprehensive plan for the city that would allow it to participate in the Federal Housing and Renewal programs that had been established under the Housing Act of 1954.

One of the things he told us was that he identified the Inner Belt Highway, part of the State's highway plan, as deeply troubling, more so when the State announced the River-Lee Street route through the city, a route that would devastate a neighborhood of color and cut the city in two.

At the Planning Board's request, he was able to engage Bruce Campbell & Associates to provide a broader range of alternatives. Their report explored 5 different paths through the city that included Memorial Drive, the Brookline-Elm Street route, and the Grand Junction Railroad right-of-way.

00:12:30 Bob Simha (Cont'd):

In 1957 when I graduated, I left for a Fulbright year in the Netherlands where they actually do planning. And Mark was deep at that time, was deep in difficulties with the city officials in Cambridge regarding the highway's impact on the city.

They really couldn't get their head around dealing with it directly and getting the state to shift their orientation.

When I returned in 1958, we met again and he had already reviewed the 1957 report to the State Highway Department that trashed the Inner Belt Highway plan as unworkable. He was trying very hard to get the city to press for a shift to a transit-oriented plan, but without success.

He left the planning board that year and took over as executive director of Cambridge Community Services, the coordinating agency for Cambridge's nonprofit social service organizations.

But finally in 1959, he decided to put Cambridge far behind him and he went to work in Turkey. That's about as far away as you could get from the conflicts here in the city.

00:13:49 Bob Simha (Cont'd):

But he was replaced by Alan McClennen as planning director. Alan was an MIT trained city planner, as was Mark. He was born and raised in Cambridge, and a firm believer in the inevitability of the highway plan.

His view was that the 90/10 funding formula established by the federal government was too powerful and it set it for the state not to focus on highway construction. There was at the time no similar funding for public transit.

Well, in 1960, I was asked to head up MIT's Planning Office and while preparing for that role I reviewed all the public documents that might have some impact on MIT's academic aspirations or research programs and our new initiatives at Technology Square, which was intended to kick start the rebuilding of the city's economy.

At that time, the city was in terrible shape. It couldn't even float a bond issue. It was clear to me that the Inner Belt Highway was an artifact of another time and that other public transportation solutions would be preferable to serve the Boston region.

In that same year, the legislature gave Cambridge some breathing room by giving the city a 5-year veto over any highway crossing the city.

00:15:10 Bob Simha (Cont'd):

But by 1962, opposition to the highway on the River Street route began to grow, so Cambridge proposed the Brookline-Elm Street route to the State Highway Department as an alternative.

Some felt this route would be an effective divider between the Cambridgeport industrial district and the adjacent residential neighborhood.

But this route too did not warm anyone's heart.

During 1965, a number of routes were explored near MIT. As attention focused on routes that would directly affect the campus, our concern grew.

James Killian, MIT's chairman, asked that we seek the counsel of our faculty and civil engineering and city planning regarding the merits of the highway plan.

Unfortunately, we found little consensus on the part of our faculty. Some thought it was an important part of the region's transportation system and would help revive the Boston economy, and others felt the Belt Highway was an outdated solution that would fail on social as well as technical transportation grounds.

00:16:18 Bob Simha (Cont'd):

Well, during this period, Alan McClennen informed me that some public officials were intent on supporting a route along the Grand Junction Railroad which ran through the MIT campus.

I immediately informed Chairman Killian and other senior members of the MIT administration of these developments and its potential negative impact on the Institute's academic and research facilities. I then represented to city officials the potential impact of this route on MIT, as well as the nascent economic developments at Tech Square, which were key to the city's economic renewal.

Unfortunately, in early 1966, McClennen called to say that the City Council had hired new transportation consultants who were prepared to strongly recommend the railroad route. We were stunned and realized that MIT had no other choice but to mount a strong defense of our interests.

With the assistance of special counsel Edward Hanify and under the leadership of Chairman Killian, the planning office prepared the necessary materials to publicly oppose the railroad route and described its impact on MIT's facilities and operations.

A public information program was organized in which the materials describing the impact of the highway on MIT, along with a statement from Chairman Killian, were presented to the news media and public.

00:17:48 Bob Simha (Cont'd)

While many people were sympathetic with MIT's position, others supported the construction of the elevated highway through the MIT campus, fearing it would otherwise be routed through their own neighborhoods.

At the press conference, Chairman Killian pledged MIT's readiness to join with others to find solutions for those whose houses might be affected, whatever the route the Inner Belt takes. He said, "We stand ready to join in sponsoring nonprofit, low-cost housing and in sharing its financing if necessary."

Killian directed me to develop housing plans that would ease the impact of highway construction on Cambridge residents. I hired Gordon Brigham, another seasoned MIT planner who, with the cooperation of MIT's Real Estate office, developed a number of contingency plans in the event the highway were to be built.

Shortly thereafter, Governor Volpe called a meeting with MIT and told us that the railroad route was no longer an option and urged MIT to accept partial responsibility for finding housing for families that would be dislocated.

Not long after that, State Public Works Commissioner Frank Sargent at the time announced that the highway would be located along the Brookline-Elm Street route.

Meanwhile, there were changes in city leadership and also its administration that opened new opportunities for cooperation between MIT and the city.

00:19:21 Bob Simha (Cont'd)

The new mayor, Daniel Hayes and the new city manager, Joseph DiGuglielmo, asked for a meeting with the leadership of the two major universities to help Cambridge address a wide range of issues facing the city, including the Inner Belt.

At the meeting, I recommended that the city retain new professional planning services that could bring fresh leadership and ideas in community planning and development to the city.

I suggested that they seek out the services of Justin Gray. He was familiar with Cambridge and, who I knew from other professional experiences, was able to develop creative solutions in difficult circumstances.

Justin had been a Ranger in World War II and had been one of the few survivors in his unit at the Allied invasion of Italy. His survival qualities were well-founded.

After meeting with him, the mayor and the city manager invited Gray to come to Cambridge and lead a new community development department and to take up issues including the Inner Belt Highway and the increasingly difficult housing problems of the city. Gray played a key role during '68 and '69 in convincing the Massachusetts Highway Department and the senior leadership of the state that the Inner Belt highway had limited utility and that alternative transportation investments would better serve the metropolitan area.

Through Justin Gray's efforts, together with other city officials, and most importantly, Cambridge residents and MIT, the highway threat diminished and finally was abandoned when in 1971, then-Governor Frank Sargent announced that the highway plan would be terminated.

In that same year, with the help of representative Tip O'Neill of Cambridge, public financing for mass transit extensions was passed in the Congress. Now, after all that, MIT could once again develop with confidence and regain what had been our congenial relations with our Cambridge neighbors.

I hope you find that interesting.

00:21:31 Steve Kaiser:

OK, thank you Bob. You mentioned just very briefly, Governor Volpe. We're familiar with Governor Sargent's role in the Inner Belt, but Volpe is a bit of a mystery man. Nobody quite knows what he was like. He changed from being totally pro-highway to actually going along with some of the highway and transit changes at the end of his career.

So, while nobody is an expert, I asked Alan Altshuler if he could comment on his observation of how of Governor Volpe worked with the various, well, no, it was a Volpe as Secretary of Transportation, worked with the officials in Sargent's government to get an understanding.

And I'd like him to explain some of the stories that he and observations of Governor Volpe that he has pulled together. Alan?

00:22:36 Alan Altshuler:

Well, thank you, Steve. So nice to see so many old friends here today.

Steve said that I would talk about Volpe. I said I don't know that much about Volpe. I did encounter him a few times and I'll talk about that. But I could talk about the Volpe-Sargent relationship, which I had a better view of. So, I'll do that. Steve said that would be OK, so I'm doing that.

So, Volpe, for those of you who are not familiar him, started a major construction firm, became Volpe Construction in 1930, became one of the largest construction firms in the United States.

And then he turned to public service in the 1950s. First, he was Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Works, appointed by Governor Herter. And then when the federal government enacted the interstate system, he was the first Federal Highway Administrator.

So, it's not surprising that he was a passionate supporter of expressway development during the 1950s and 1960s.

He was also, it bears note, more open than many to spending highway money to mitigate the social impacts of highways. So, he supported the depression of the Central Artery through Dewey Square. And he was open, that was in the 1950s and in the 1960s, Volpe was open to the idea of depressing part of the Inner Belt, particularly as it went across the Charles River.

So, that's where he was in 1969 when I came on the scene.

00:24:16 Alan Altshuler (Cont'd):

So, Frank Sargent had a very different background. Although he had served for two years as Public Works Commissioner, of course, Public Works Commissioner meant Highway Commissioner as its most important responsibility in those years, he had previously spent 10 years in state government as director of Marine Fisheries, and he had founded and run the largest sporting goods store on Cape Cod.

So, he had an outdoor recreational experience and something of an environmental experience as well as this brief highway experience. As DPW Commissioner, he had fixed views. He had championed the highway plans of the state. He was loyal to Volpe in that respect, and I don't think he had thought that much about it, frankly.

But he didn't apparently have fixed views when it got to 1970 and he succeeded as governor when Volpe went to Washington about the merits of the highway plans versus the arguments of the protesters on social and environmental grounds.

What Sargent did know, of course, was that some of the most powerful interest groups in the state, including those particularly active in the Republican Party, were thoroughly committed to the highways. And that meant basically the entire business community and, of course, the entire labor community as well. And the Democratic leadership of the state legislature was as committed to the highways as the Republican leadership was at the time.

So, Sargent was a very liberal Republican, probably as a matter of family inheritance. I don't know that he had chosen the Republican Party on the basis of deep thought but his public career had been entirely as a Republican and he had to give some consideration to where the party stood on this.

Well, he had become Lieutenant Governor under Volpe in 1967 and then Governor when Volpe went to Washington following Nixon's election in 1968. So, he succeeded as governor in January 1970, 1969.

As all of you know, I'm sure he was immediately confronted with intense public protests right on the steps of the Statehouse against the highways and to some extent against expansion of the airport.

00:26:37 Jack Wofford: Alan, here's a picture of Sargent addressing that crowd at the steps of the Statehouse.

Alan Altshuler: That's a very famous picture and we've looked at it many times. Thank you, Jack.

Jack Wofford: And here's the demonstration.

02:26:51 Alan Altshuler (Cont'd):

That was the first day he was governor, I think.

Well, to make a long story short, Sargent committed during the early months of his administration, profoundly influenced by a liberal Democrat named Al Kramer, who he had made his chief policy adviser, that he would appoint a task force to review the highway controversies and decide what should be done about them. And, for some reason, I don't really know what it was, I had no contact with Sargent or with Massachusetts politics, but somehow Kramer came up with me and Sargent adopted his request and appointed me to be Chair of that task force and Jack to be Executive Director of the task force.

And a few months later, the task force, having been radicalized during its few months of study of these issues, unanimously recommended a moratorium on all the highway projects inside 128, all the expressway projects, except I-93.

They passed on I-93 because it was mostly completed in construction by that time. But everything else that was still in the planning and even land clearance stages as I-95 South was, they recommended a moratorium and a comprehensive restudy.

Sargent was literally astounded when we presented this to him. Jack was there and his face went red. He was really...Al Kramer had deliberately not kept him fully apprised of where the task force was going, although Kramer was fully apprised.

But then after about a month of consulting with his staff, he decided to go along wholeheartedly with the recommendations for the moratorium and for a comprehensive restudy, a restudy that Mike Dukakis knew wasn't necessary, and maybe it wasn't, but in order

to bring the public along and the legislature along, insofar as it came, and the general public along, maybe the restudy was necessary.

00:28:55 Alan Altshuler (Cont'd):

And here's where the Sargent-Volpe relationship comes in.

Sargent was concerned enough about Volpe's reaction that he didn't inform Volpe that he was going on statewide television to announce the moratorium and restudy until an hour before he actually went on television and when everything was set.

And of course, he was going to need federal money to finance the restudy. Most of the money would be 90/10 interstate money that the state wasn't using because it was slow in spending its interstate money. And the legislature was going to be hostile and it wasn't going to appropriate money for the restudy, so he needed Volpe to get this money to do the restudy.

Ten days or two weeks after he gave the talk – maybe Jack remembers exactly when this was but I don't know – Sargent traveled to Washington to appeal to Volpe personally for his support in funding the Boston Transportation Planning Review (BTPR) and to explain in-person why he had felt he had to do what he did. And he brought along on this trip several of his top advisers who now included me.

It was the first time I had ever been at such a meeting and here's what happened. So, Volpe – this meeting occurred in the empty Vice President's office in the Capitol, Volpe had to be there for some reason that afternoon – and Volpe strode in, we were all there waiting for him, he strode in with several of his own staff and proceeded, following the introductions, with a tirade against Sargent. He went on for about 10 minutes just blasting Sargent for what he had done. And when he was finished, Sargent, who still called Volpe "Governor" and Volpe called Sargent "Frank," so anyway, when he was finished, Sargent very mildly said, "Well, Governor, you have to listen to the people."

03:31:05 Alan Altshuler (Cont'd):

Volpe swirled around and he pointed to me who he had just been introduced to, and he said, "Frank, you're listening to the wrong people." And believe me, I remember this verbatim. I told a lot of people at the time, so this is not just an approximation of what he said.

Over the following months, though, it developed that we had some supporters at the Department of Transportation, including Volpe's own top personal deputy who was Joe Bosco, who he had brought from Massachusetts, and the Assistant Secretary for Policy, a fellow named John Hirten, and his very dynamic deputy Mike Cafferty. And these guys had to go to war with the Federal Highway Administrator and the Federal Transit Administrator, whose money this was going to be, and who would determine that none of it should be used to support the Boston Transportation Planning Review.

Somehow along the way, as we made progress toward designing the Boston Transportation Planning Review, that is, Jack and I in consultation with a broad advisory group that included

Fred [Salvucci] very prominently on behalf of the City of Boston, Volpe invited me to meet with him one-on-one for breakfast one morning at his DC apartment, which ironically was in the Watergate complex. And there he gave me a chance over breakfast to make our case without any of the contending staff present.

He was, I would say, distantly cordial and friendly. There was no tirade during this discussion. He was reserved but cordial and friendly. And he gave me about an hour, most of which after a brief presentation by me, he was asking questions and I was trying to answer them.

00:32:56 Alan Altshuler (Cont'd):

And in the end, Volpe overruled his highway and transit administrators, and he gave Massachusetts the full funding that we needed for the BTPR, which ended up being something about \$4 million, maybe a little over \$4 million, which I looked up today, that would be equivalent to \$28 million today, so this was a fairly substantial effort.

At the conclusion of the BTPR, of course, Sargent rejected all of the expressways under review. This was November 1972, almost 50 years to the month from now. His decision to kill the Inner Belt, of course, came first about halfway through the BTPR and then finally, in his final decisions, Sargent rejected all the others while announcing a massive transit program.

Getting back to Volpe, what was striking was that during 1972, his final year as Secretary, Volpe became a vigorous supporter of a proposal that we had initiated here in Massachusetts to enable states to trade in their interstate highway money if they couldn't build the interstate highways for alternative highway, or more importantly, mass transit projects.

This was known, of course, as the Interstate Transfer Provision. And we in Massachusetts were the ones who lobbied this through the Congress with the aid of Tip O'Neill in the House, and surprisingly, a senator from West Virginia, Jennings Randolph, who was Chair of the Senate Public Works Committee in the Senate, but with whom we had some contacts here in Massachusetts.

00:34:48 Alan Altshuler (Cont'd):

We got it through the Congress, but Volpe got it through the administration and got the Nixon administration to endorse this and to sign the legislation with this provision when it came through. And Massachusetts ultimately got about \$1.4 billion, equivalent to about \$6 billion today, for mass transit as a result of this provision with Volpe's support.

Just one final word about Volpe and Sargent. They were both genuinely liberal Republicans, Sargent more liberal than Volpe maybe, but both very liberal Republicans, a breed that has essentially disappeared, almost disappeared today, there may be a few left, and they evolved very dramatically during an extraordinarily turbulent time in terms of the interactions between transportation, environmental and community values.

It was an extraordinary privilege to have a chance to interact with them.

I'll leave it there.

00:35:52 Steve Kaiser:

OK, thank you, Alan.

I'd like to ask Jack Wofford that, underlying all of Alan's explanation of what was going on and the decisions that were being made, was in the assertion by the governor's office to say that transportation planning was now going to be done through the governor's office. It was no longer going to be monopolized by the State Highway Department.

And it started with the task force that you ran, and this transition had an odd twist at the end too, because a lot of that power that was taken by the Governor's office was given back to the public through citizen participation. And you watched this whole process and you were a part of it, and I'd love to hear your reaction to what went on.

00:36:46 Jack Wofford:

Sure, thanks. Well, you know Alan described our first meeting with Governor Sargent saying that the task force was recommending a moratorium, I remember in his office. I think it was the last week of December which is a useful way for me to remember it because that was also the week that the United States Congress enacted the National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA. So, I think the protests that Alan described that met Sergeant on his Inauguration Day really reflected a couple of themes that have a political basis to them.

One theme is the environmental movement which was very active by that time. But the second theme was one I had personal involvement with, namely, Lyndon Johnson's War against Poverty and the enactment in 1964 of the Economic Opportunity Act, which had the Community Action Program as part of it and, famously, required maximum feasible participation by members of the poor in describing what they thought should help them deal with poverty.

So, I came to Massachusetts imbued with sort of a community action philosophy, including its pluses and its minuses. And Alan, of course, had done a study of citizen participation. So, he was a natural pick for the governor to make to direct the task force.

00:38:50 Jack Wofford (Cont'd):

I think what is important to say about Sargent when he decided to impose a moratorium is that he was doing that in the face of putting at risk a billion dollars of highway aid for the Inner Belt and the other highways and that he was also facing 14% unemployment in the construction industry.

So, it took real courage for him to do what Alan described and go on statewide TV.

But my theme really is that the outcome was really a potent mix of politics, process and policy. And it wasn't one or the other alone, but it was a mix of these. And you know, in the political context we also need to remember that 1968 was the assassination of Bobby Kennedy and

Martin Luther King with urban unrest and violence and the Vietnam War was underway, so it was a very volatile period, which I would assume had some role in believing that community organization could create an amazing coalition of advocates opposed to the highway plans and to the expansion of Logan Airport.

I just want to say about the BTPR (Boston Transportation Planning Review) process, that its themes were a bunch of words that end in "ity" - receptivity to community ideas, objectivity in dealing with old and new ideas, creativity in taking a raw idea and making it feasible, combined essentially with impartiality.

Alan mentioned the advisory group which Fred was part of, and it started in the summer of 1970 to define the scope, the work of the BTPR itself, because there was such a lack of credibility in all the prior studies that Alan and I felt that this was a way to develop confidence in the restudy process but as a, you know, as a result of that, a better process.

So, the essential elements of the process were that it would be advisory-only to the governor as decision maker. So, Steve, you were saying, how did things move to have the governor as the, you know, chief client or chief leader or chief responsible person, it was set up that way, and that it would be an open process to analyze all options with full environmental, economic, transportation impacts and wide community and municipal involvement.

00:42:24 Jack Wofford (Cont'd):

It was supported by a multidisciplinary team of 75 or so professionals who were committed to impartiality. The scope and study for the BTPR required that the consultant team not take stances on the controversial highway or transit proposals. And as director, which I succeeded after Alan having been the director became the first State Secretary of Transportation, I chose to kind of emphasize my impartiality and, as Alan knows, I had no stated views on outcome until the very last weeks of November 1972, when Sargent was making up his mind about the Southwest Expressway. That's when I spoke up privately in a session in the governor's office that he had with Alan and me and Walt Hansen and a couple of others to say, OK, guys, what do you really think at this point? And I did speak up at that point.

But the other thing that Alan really reminded us all is that an advisory process can talk forever. So, it had to have deadlines. And my memory, Alan, of the funding was that Sargent at least said, let's take the \$6 million or \$6.5 million that was earmarked for the design study of a central artery of the Inner Belt through Central Square, Cambridge and we'll do the restudy for about half that, which is really about what it was, \$3-4 million.

And so, it had deadlines. And the process was completely open and the advisory committee continued as a steering group. And amazingly, for the 3 years that the steering group was in effect, it dealt with all issues of process, it kind of had an overview of the process on an advisory basis. But every issue of process, including budget priorities, attention to new ideas, responsiveness to neighborhood workshops. The editing of final reports was done by an editing committee that the steering group created, so every word of the big thick corridor reports that

were the first draft environmental impact reports in the country under NEPA, every word had been reviewed by stakeholders who had different views of outcome.

00:45:18 Jack Wofford (Cont'd):

So, in the end it was public hearings where people could then speak up on outcome. But in the meantime, it's amazing that for 3 years the steering committee reached every decision by complete unanimity.

And I just want to emphasize too, contrary to what some recent authors have tried to say, and I've corrected them over and over until the printed version is correct, that the BTPR itself made no recommendations. It developed options. It laid out the impacts. And it left the decisions to public hearings where people could speak up on outcome. And so elected officials would make fully informed decisions.

That's really the essence of what I wanted to talk about. And just to close by saying that the Inner Belt did get killed about halfway through the process, and that's because from the very start the BTPR was set-up in a phased approach. There was going to be a phase one and a phase two. And only things that warranted moving to phase two would make it through.

And so, you know, the plan which everybody on this call is familiar with had the Inner Belt as the red circle that was going to connect with these four new spokes to create a wheel at the center. Was going to have I-95 in the north, I-93 coming down also from the north under construction. There would be an extension of Route 2 from Alewife in to meet the Inner Belt. And there would be a Southwest Expressway coming up from Route 128.

So, you know, it was a very harmonious engineer plan of the harmony of the spheres and the spokes of a bicycle wheel somehow combined to give it a mystical value. And really the analysis of the impacts of the Inner Belt not only environmental quality of life, but takings of businesses, takings of houses as well as with the intersections work, I mean, Mike Dukakis said, oh my God, if...

Steve Kaiser: Hey Jack, could you finish up please?

Jack Wofford: I am in the last couple of sentences.

Steve Kaiser: OK.

00:47:57 Jack Wofford (Cont'd):

Mike Dukakis said, hopefully it won't be like Los Angeles. And I can imagine the intersection, the analysis we developed showed that the intersection, you know, at Central Square, Cambridge would have been like those red lights on LA expressway limiting appearance.

So, the Inner Belt was killed on its own terms. It fell by the wayside. And the BTPR then focused on one other main issue of interest to Cambridge, the extension of the Red Line to Alewife.

And with that, finally, I'll say about four years after the Governor had killed the Inner Belt, I had occasion a few times to call Leo DeMarsh who had then been the head of that office and I would call him up and the phone would answer, "Inner Belt." So, you know, old highways take a long time to die.

00:48:56 Steve Kaiser: OK, thank you, Jack. The next speaker is David Lee. I think you may need to unmute yourself.

David Lee: Yup, I had.

Steve Kaiser: There you go. OK, now...

David Lee: Well, hi, everybody. OK, go ahead please.

00:49:09 Steve Kaiser:

David, I believe you've been an architect for almost all your professional life. And you've worked with planners and you've also worked with highway engineers. And that can be rather difficult exercise sometime. As a traffic engineer, I have lots of difficulties with highway designers.

But as an architect and somebody who works with planners, I wonder if you could describe a little bit of that human chemistry, either good or bad in your experience, that you have observed.

00:49:41 David Lee:

OK, well a couple of things. One, it's great to see so many people looking great. Jack, Fred, Bob. Fred [Salvucci], if it wasn't for the gray hair, you haven't aged a bit.

At any rate, my first involvement frankly, around the Inner Belt thing, just briefly, was when I was in Graduate School at the GSD. And we were not particularly happy with our studio offerings for the upcoming semester, and we wanted something with a little more meat on it and at the time the Inner Belt controversy was going on. And we actually got the university to sponsor a studio with a guy named Joe Passineau to teach that studio. And Joe had been working with what was kind of a new discipline, in a way, interdisciplinary planning. And we knew that was possible and that the outcome could be pretty good from that.

I grew up in Chicago, by the way, where I was a victim of both urban renewal and highway construction. But, of course, Chicago has its wonderful history of public works. And, you know, we knew there were, as architects, we knew about things like the Merritt Parkway with such a wonderful intersection of a lot of disciplines.

00:51:02 David Lee (Cont'd):

So, what was happening was, you got to also remember kind of the political context of that time, the war was raging, you had advocacy lawyers, you had advocacy planning movement that was in its nascent stages. And, at the same time, there was sort of a new discipline being

created called Urban Design, which was sort of at the nexus of architecture, landscape architecture, planning and civil engineering, where we were all trying to talk to each other so that the whole became greater than the sum of the parts.

So, I was involved with the project on a lot of levels. I'd just graduated from school and was working with Don Stull, at you know, now Stull & Lee Inc., but a very important architect in the city. And he asked me to go to a meeting one night because the BTPR (Boston Transportation Planning Review) had just started up. And so, I went to that meeting and sort of listening on behalf of the Community and so forth, and then shortly after that, something was formed called the Southwest Corridor Land Development Coalition.

And that was very important, because this was a group of people not just focused on stopping the highway, but in what an alternative could be.

00:52:17 David Lee (Cont'd):

So, with a small grant from Model Cities of about, I think, \$30,000, a group of people from Harvard, from MIT, from BU, a lot of different students came together. And Ken Kruckemeyer and I sort of shaped a task force, if you will, to kind of look at some of the design implications of all of that. And that's when we got to meet Steve Kaiser, and, of course, Fred and all the others.

The important thing, I think, though was, it was a period in which we were moving from this notion of planning for the community to listening to and planning with the community. Community organizations were becoming much more powerful and much more savvy about things. And so it was in that context that we began to think in a more holistic way about this.

A couple of things were really important, I thought. Obviously, the transfer of funds, as I think Alan mentioned earlier, so that you could now use highway funds or gas tax funds to fund transportation, was very important.

Someone mentioned about the construction zone then, you know, just unemployment and stuff like that and we're saying that, gee, you know, if you stop the highway, there are all these construction jobs that are going to go away.

Well, what was important to note was these guys, mostly guys unfortunately, but these guys wanted to build something. They didn't care whether it was highways or transit. So, you know, once you started thinking, OK, we're going to build transportation, they were fine as long as the jobs were out there.

So, as Jack said, the process was so important and so well-crafted in terms of the way that the project was broken down into the different segments and the stationary task forces, the numbers of community meetings that were scheduled, the environmental considerations, all of these kinds of things became very important in the process.

00:54:33 David Lee (Cont'd):

But, I think, you know in the final analysis the most important thing to me, I think in terms of this, was the moment at which I realized that this was not a transportation problem. This was a community development problem with a transportation component. And once you began to think about it that way, your design responses followed. So, for example, there's still places I know of in the South End and in Jamaica Plain where, if you would truly look at this just from a transportation lens, you wanted the trains to run as fast, you know, as fast as they could, so you wanted not to have a lot of sharp turns. So, what that meant was, you had to take out some really important open spaces or buildings, either in the South End or JP or another places, but once you looked at it from the land development, the more comprehensive approach to this thing, you said, OK, well maybe the trains don't go 70 miles here, maybe they go 60 miles here because you're going to make a sharper turn in the network which will then allow you to save this historic building or this park or open space.

But it was important that you had a group of engineers and architects and landscape people who were talking to each other and listening and responding to the community.

And then, just to close, I remember once the MBTA, all of these structural things were really important, so when they set-up the Southwest Corridor Office within the MBTA that Tony Pangol ran and then later Ken Kruckemeyer, it was important because they brought, you know, people from all of these departments and things together in the same room.

00:56:22 David Lee (Cont'd):

And I remember doing a presentation once where I put up a whole bunch of images of things that architects like, a whole bunch of things that engineers thought were important, and then tried to find the place in the middle so that we could go through those slides and we could decide. So, for example, if an engineering criteria was there had to be some kind of a pull box anywhere between 100 and 200 feet on center and from an architectural perspective we wanted to add 125 feet on center, we had a match. So, what we did was we kept looking for those places where we could come together and we could not only meet engineering criteria but meet the other criteria as well in terms of creating developable parcels and the open space.

And then I did say, here's my last point. I remember in the midst of all of this recognizing that we had all of this land that would be leftover that had already been cleared for the highway but was no longer necessary because the transit was going to take less land. And I remember going to the parks people, I can't think of the name of the State Parks Commission, and saying, look we got this 90 acres of land. We have an opportunity here to actually do something wonderful in terms of park and so forth. And I had these drawings and diagrams. And I remember they looked at me and said we can't, we can't take care of what we have. All we don't need is another 90 acres of park land. But cooler heads prevailed and we ended up getting the Southwest Corridor Linear Park.

00:57:56 Steve Kaiser:

OK, thank you, David. The next speaker we added to our group this morning. Thomas Corrigan, if you can unmute yourself, was a vital leader in the citizen protest groups in the late '60s and early '70s.

And I was going to be the last speaker and I'm going to give up my time to him because I think he's going to give you a lot of valuable information from a religious viewpoint.

In those days and 50 years ago, religion was so much more important than it is today. And we had Catholics, we had Episcopalians, we had Quakers, we had liberal Protestant groups, all working together against the highway.

So, it was a fascinating process to go through. So, Tom, by all means, give us some more details.

00:58:59 Tom Corrigan:

Well, thank you, Steve.

I'm kind of, I have to explain that I'll be 83 this summer, so my memory isn't as good as it was in the days when Fred [Salvucci] and I would drive to Brighton in the middle of the night to get him home.

I wanted to say that this is a very impressive group and I wasn't always aware of what you were doing while we were sitting around tables in rectories and houses trying to figure out what the next step would be in trying to stop the airport from encroaching on the East Boston community. But one interesting thing is that the one public official who sat at that table Tuesday after Tuesday after Tuesday night was Fred Salvucci. And I think that was a wonderful experience for both us in the neighborhood and, hopefully, for him in Mayor White's office and his other activities, as we moved through.

Alan Altshuler was someone we met with occasionally, especially when he was at the Port Authority, and although his answers to our questions and our demands weren't always in our favor, I always sensed an openness in him and a seeking to have a relationship with the community of East Boston and other... So that was very helpful. It was helpful to me.

01:00:48 Tom Corrigan (Cont'd):

The religious aspect of it wasn't as quite as ecumenical as Steve mentioned earlier, because most of us came to our positions in the various groups from the local neighborhood, from the parishes.

I was ordained in 1965 and stayed in the priesthood until about 1978. So, it was, as several people have said, a time when, to me at least, not to be involved in the community and not to be involved in these issues was crazy because that's where people were.

We did come together in an ecumenical fashion from time to time, but I think it was mostly the individual priests and ministers and rabbis and other religious leaders who came to it because of their ties to the community.

And I think the communities kept moving through all of the efforts at the BTPR (Boston Transportation Planning Review) and the other groups had. But to be frank, our emphasis was on the Governor Sargent and Dukakis and White and Mayor White and the others, and those were the people we tried to access. And with help from people like Fred and Alan and others, we managed to have meetings that were very, I think, reinforced in those leaders their concern for how these projects would impact the neighborhood.

Things are a little different today, I think, for the Catholic community. The Boston Globe's exposé of the problems of child abuse by members of the clergy has caused the church to step back a little bit and to be more focused on their religious mission.

01:02:52 Tom Corrigan (Cont'd):

Although I can say that I never, except at the very end, when after I had become involved in Boston Fair Share and got some people upset, I never really felt pressure from the people I've lived with in the rectories or from people higher up in the archdiocese to calm down or to stop what I was doing. And that was always helpful.

I think that may be different now because the church is taking a different approach to the communities that it values and supports and needs. I hope that will change. Maybe with a new generation of priests and ministers and bishops, but we'll see.

I believe that the community groups, not only the Greater Boston Committee on the transportation crisis, and those last words get left out in the popularization of our name, but it was a crisis for people in Jeffries Point in East Boston who were right at the end of those runways and knew that their days might be limited if they didn't speak up. And I'm sure the other members of the Greater Boston Committee were in similar positions.

It was not a "how do we plan this and how do we plan that?" But it was the life and death situation for them, many of them facing the loss of their homes and their neighborhoods. And they had the good sense to form organizations like – we had terrible names – but the Massachusetts Air Pollution and Noise Abatement Committee, which was basically the anti-Logan Airport group with some help from Cambridge and a few other communities.

We were fighting for our livelihood and to preserve homes and neighborhoods that we had built, some of us, and had, you know, had invested a great part of our money and family structure in.

So, it was a little bit more, it was very hard for us sometimes to connect with the planning groups because we kind of viewed them as up there, but fortunately, from what Jack has said and others have said, they were open to what they were hearing from the groups and many of their conclusions supported our efforts.

So, I think this is an important conversation. I hope it continues. I hope Fred that, that Steven that your book is successful. Fred will never write a book because he knows too much. But thank you for inviting me.

01:06:04 Steve Kaiser:

OK, thank you.

I live in Cambridgeport, which was one of the hot points in Cambridge for opposing the Inner Belt. And we had two leaders in the group down there. One was an old union organizer. And the other was a rather young housewife at the time, named Ansti Benfield.

And the combination of those two providing leadership, working with different groups opposing the Inner Belt, was rather crucial, and also getting help from the archdiocese to pay for their budget.

So, it was a very interesting interactive process between all these groups, and I'd like to give Ansti some time to talk about what it was like to be a leader and to face up against the highway planners and to speak out in public as she did many many times.

OK, Ansti?

01:07:12 Anstis Benfield:

Thank you, Steve, so much for organizing this. And I want to thank my daughter, Becky, for her technical help on this Zoom.

First of all, my memories start in 1963 when we bought our house at 140 Chestnut Street, which was right next to the Belt route, with the assurance from the realtor that the veto by the state legislature would hold the Inner Belt at bay.

But in 1965, the veto was revoked and they were all set to build right down Brookline-Elm. And so, at that point, with letters to the editor from Bill Ackerley and me, we went out and collected over 1,000 petitions from residents to please stop the highway.

And I nailed that petition in February 1966. (News Article Photo showing Ansti nailing petition.) And there I am with Becky on my back, nailing to the wooden doors of City Hall the petitions that Bill Ackerley and I had collected. And the next thing that happened, of course, was that the city changed those wooden doors to glass.

The next thing that happened was that in October of 1966, 1,500 housewives and kids marched to the Statehouse with signs all saying, "Cambridge is a City Not a Highway." Next picture. (News Article Photo showing housewives and children marching.) And that sign is really important because it comes up later.

The next thing I have in 1966 was the Cambridge Civic Association published a little booklet called "Six Speak." I'm just going to show it to you here. It's bright red, by the Civic Association. It had interviews by six families in the route there whose homes would be destroyed. But it also had six churches, Cambridge churches, which either would be demolished or their parishes would be destroyed. And "Six Speak" had interviews from six of those ministers from those churches.

01:09:55 Anstis Benfield (Cont'd):

OK, the next important event was our bus trip to Washington in May of 1967. We made appointments to meet with Congressman Tip O'Neill, Senators Ted Kennedy and Ed Brooke. And we traveled overnight from Cambridge to Washington, and did meet with them all.

There they are. (News Article Photo showing senators.) There's Ed Brooke and Ted Kennedy up in the right-hand corner.

But it was called the "Lollipop Lobby" by the Washington Post because there's Kristen, my older daughter sucking on a lollipop, waiting for her parents, her family to come out and everybody to come out from the Senators' offices. (News Article Photo showing "Lollipop Lobby".)

01:10:56 Anstis Benfield (Cont'd):

The interesting thing about that trip to Washington on the buses that went overnight with 78 adults and 25 kids was that the kids all had, we had those signs that I showed you earlier on the buses, and the kids all sang:

*Cambridge is a city, not a highway.
They will never build roads through our homes.
So, we are going to stop the highway
And beat the belt, beat the belt, beat the belt in Washington.*

And those kids sang that all night long. (Laughing) And we nearly went crazy.

Anyway, the next event was January, I think, it's 25, 1969 when there was a massive, we had a massive march from City Hall to the Statehouse. Mayor Ackerman rode a horse up Brookline Street. And anyway, then there's a video of a speech made at the Statehouse that day, and it was recorded on public, "Divided highways" on PBS.

Becky, do you have that video?

01:12:25 "Divided Highways" PBS Documentary – Narrator:

...accept the hundreds of millions of trust fund dollars the federal government would give the state to build the highway.

"Divided Highways" PBS Documentary – Anstis Benfield:

In all, an area of 15,000 residents, this road would go right through the middle of it.

"Divided Highways" PBS Documentary – David Lee:

A large gathering of citizens came together literally across the street from the Statehouse to register their opposition to this interstate highway program and, specifically, the extension of I-95 and the building of the Inner Belt. And as the governor looked out, he saw that these were very earnest well-meaning people who had some very serious concerns about what might happen.

Being a smart politician, he looked out there and said, well, look maybe I better rethink this thing and listen to this constituency.

“Divided Highways” PBS Documentary – MC:

We have with us now the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Governor Frances Sargent, to speak to all of you. (Cheering)

“Divided Highways” PBS Documentary – Governor Sargent:

I was the Commissioner of the Department of Public Works. I was the person who made the decision back a number of years ago, regarding the route through Cambridge. I made that decision. And I made it then and I said at that time and I say now, that if we ever build highways, we must build them with a heart. And I say, I want you to know, we will not place people below concrete. We are going to place concrete below people.

01:14:08 David Lee:

Hey Ansti, there's a moment in that documentary where they're talking to a couple of highway engineers and they were talking about the fact that these highways generally ran where people did not have a lot of political power and they mentioned one that had been planned in Minnesota.

Anstis Benfield: Right.

David Lee: And they said that Minneapolis, or whatever town it was, didn't have very many Black people there but the Highway Department found them.

Anstis Benfield: Thank you. Thank you.

Steve Kaiser: All set, Ansti?

Alan Altshuler: David, I wrote my doctoral dissertation part about that.

01:14:42 Anstis Benfield (Cont'd):

Two more quick things, in 1972, Governor Sargent did stop the highway and Congress reallocated the funds to the public transportation.

And the only other thing that I want to mention was that a mural was painted on the back of the Stop & Shop on Memorial Drive, depicting the whole battle with the residents with me leading the bunch. There we are (Photo of mural and commemoration displayed), and it's rededicated with Mayor Ackerman at the front and all our neighbors and all our friends. But there I am shaking my fist at what turns out to be [Governor] Volpe's bulldozer.

Anyway, that is the end of my...

Speaker?: That's great.

Anstis Benfield: And thank you again, Steven and Becky.

01:15:40 Steve Kaiser:

OK. OK, our next speaker is somebody who worked very closely with Ansti, Rebecca Hall, and in one of their famous events they got together with themselves and four little kids to go down to MIT to see the top brass down at MIT to address their concerns about the Inner Belt.

Speaker?: Do you remember that?

Steve Kaiser: Yes. So, Rebecca, you might want to talk a little bit about that.

01:16:08 Rebecca Hall:

Thank you, thank you. My name is Rebecca Hall and these are my memories.

I spent four years fighting the Inner Belt with Anstis from 1965 to 1969.

In 1963, my then-husband and I bought our very first house on Acorn Street in Cambridgeport, half a block from the Brookline-Elm route. In this quiet neighborhood with beautiful trees everywhere, our backyard had a sandbox, a swing, picnic table and a hammock. Oh, and next door we had a teenager who would babysit for a dollar an hour.

Our single-family home was red and needed some paint, which I did, the whole house. The Boston Globe had the picture of me to prove it. Our Acorn Street house cost us \$18,000 in 1963. It was a place we dearly loved.

My then-husband worked at Draper Lab on the Apollo Moon Shot and I raised the kids. When we purchased our home, we did not know that it was in the path of a potential highway.

One day in 1965, two years after we had purchased our home, a woman came to our door with a clipboard. She said her name was Anstis. She lived a block away and she told me that the city of Cambridge was planning to tear down our homes and build a highway right through our neighborhood.

I signed her petition.

And a few days later, she invited me to drive with her to Spy Pond on Route 2. We pulled off the side of the road and watched and listened. Bulldozers were mowing down and crushing small Cape Cod houses along the north side of the road up Belmont Hill, making room for the widening of the highway. I will never forget the sounds of the splintering wood and the shattering glass that we heard over the roar of the bulldozers.

01:18:26 Rebecca Hall (Cont'd):

A few months after our trip to Spy Pond, I joined my first ever protest. The kids were dressed in sheets with only their eyes showing, the ghosts of Cambridge future. We joined dozens of residents, including some clergy, on a March from the Cambridge Commons through Harvard Square down Mass Ave. to Central Square. And we were dragging a coffin on wheels that read, "Cambridge is Dead."

The Boston Globe was all over us, taking pictures and asking questions. They knew that something important was happening and they needed to give it their fullest attention.

The next year, in 1966, we held a sit-in at MIT. I was on the floor outside of the President's office feeding the children peanut butter and Jelly sandwiches, and Anstis was negotiating an audience with the then-President Howard Johnson, who soon welcomed us into his office.

We knew MIT was for the Belt down the Brookline-Elm route. We were asking them to change their minds, which they finally did, but not until the route changed to Portland-Albany and a lawsuit threatened by Simplex Wire and Cable did MIT come around right.

In the meantime, we kept the pressure on moving our fight to the national capital, the nation's capital.

01:20:07 Rebecca Hall (Cont'd):

In 1967, Anstis made appointments, as she told you, with Ed Brooke, Ted Kennedy and Tip O'Neill to meet us in DC. And my numbers were there were at least 100 of us, including 20 children who left Cambridge at 10:00 at night for the 11-hour bus trip.

Upon our arrival, the politicians were not ready for us, so we marched with our signs back and forth outside their building, signs saying:

“Don't Make Cambridge a Ghost Town.”

“Don't Take the Heart Out of Cambridge.”

“People Not Cars.”

“Cambridge is a City, Not a Highway.”

And one said, “You Took My Son in Vietnam. Don't Take My Home.”

Finally, our representatives were ready to meet with us.

In 1968, three years after our fight had begun, the then-Planning Director of the City of Cambridge, Alan McClennen, who was still for the highway, reached over the line to me, a protester, and out of the blue said, “So how do you imagine Cambridge's future?”

I hadn't thought what I wanted, only what I didn't want, so it took some moments for me to respond. “Well, actually, I can see Cambridge with bike paths and parks.” And he answered, “My, my son thinks that.” [Note: Alan McClennen Jr., as Planning Director in Arlington, invented the Minuteman Bikeway.]

I now live in an apartment on Sidney Street in Cambridge with bike paths and parks all around. And this week, I walked the Brookline-Elm route, taking pictures of the houses we would have lost had we lost this fight.

I'm very proud of my involvement in this truly amazing achievement.

Thank all of you for your part in saving Cambridge.

01:22:10 (Slideshow of houses, parks, businesses and other buildings today along the Brookline-Elm route)

Speaker?: None of them...

Speaker?: What?

Speaker?: None of them cost \$18,000 anymore.

Speaker?: So, she's got Howard Johnson came after Killian. We had Killian...

Speaker?: Yes, yeah.

Speaker?: ...making the decision and then they're still working on it under Johnson?

Speaker ?: Howard came after Stratton. Killian was the chairman.

01:22:50 Jack Wofford: Well, I recall Alan McLennen, I think, saying to me that the era of the three decker is over. It was really astounding.

Rebecca Hall: Thank you.

Steve Kaiser: OK, yeah, we all set, Rebecca?

Rebecca Hall: Yup, we're all set.

01:23:12 Steve Kaiser:

All right. Now the next speaker is going to be Gordon Fellman, who is a sociologist by background, and had done some very interesting surveys of Cambridgeport residents and how they felt. Some were angry, some were passive. But he was also part of an advocacy planning operation called Urban Planning Aid (UPA) which volunteered to help citizens in their own interest, where they couldn't afford things.

And Gordon felt that trying to find an alternative to the highway was actually wrong. They shouldn't have anything to do with an alternative highway, whereas Fred and number of others said we've got to go the alternatives route. And in the end things worked out quite well.

So, I'd like Gordon to describe that little internal division that we had within UPA and how you figured it worked out in the end.

Gordon Fellman: OK, I'm glad to. Can people hear me?

Steve Kaiser: Yes

01:24:31 Gordon Fellman:

Ok, I'm a sociologist and when the Inner Belt became an issue, I decided I wanted to study it. So, I started going to every meeting and taking notes, field notes in what I saw. And after a while, I realized that wasn't adequate. I needed to be an activist, not just a sociologist observing something going on.

So, I joined what became Urban Planning Aid. And I'm a sociologist, the Urban Planning Aid was organized before I joined it by an architect, an urban planner, an engineer, a lawyer, and I came in with zero experience in urban issues like that, but I felt I had something to say.

So, I decided to make a study to interview people whose houses would be taken and that wasn't quite enough, but I thought it was kind of important. The issue that my colleagues in Urban Planning Aid was where we could relocate the highway. And Portland-Albany seemed to be one location.

I opposed that. I opposed putting it anywhere. I thought, well, let's just try to kill the highway. And I was assured because these are all people whose professional work had taken them in directions mine hadn't that I was wrong and it had to be relocated.

OK, so I decidable (inaudible) I'm really not going to go along with that.

So, when it came to the, my favorite moment in the whole thing, was when it came to the possibility of Portland-Albany location for the highway, there was a big meeting MIT called and they had a the most expensive lawyer in Boston. This is my favorite moment in the whole history. And he explained how if the highway went down Portland-Albany, it would take a small MIT building which was where National Defense planning took place, so if we insisted on putting the highway there, America's future might be put at risk.

I just thought that was wonderful. It really, it took a kind of imagination and a flair or two to make that out of what was going on.

So anyway, my colleagues thought we had to find some other location for us. And when I was, why not oppose to it altogether? Just oppose it all together. We don't need this highway.

01:26:58 Gordon Fellman (Cont'd):

And, that finally, it took place. We finally stopped trying to relocate it and decided the hell with it, let's stop it. And I thought it was a great victory and I'm just delighted Steve [Kaiser] put this together as a kind of a memorial to what we accomplished and where we were.

So, that's what happened, we killed it. Just wonderful.

Let me just say one other thing. At one point, it came to a City Council hearing and I was either asked to or volunteered to make a case there and I thought if I had gone in as a neighborhood person and just yelled, "Dammit, don't put that highway here," I would get nowhere. So. I'm an academic, right? I put on a suit, a necktie, came to the City Council meeting with a chart and sort of impressed them, you know, here's this guy with all this information and he's dressed up and he's an academic and that, I think, I thought that played a little part in some way that the city needed to...

Those of you who remember, we worked on this city for a while. It didn't just happen automatically that they would oppose it and accept our objections to it. So, I was glad I could do that.

01:28:31 Steve Kaiser:

OK, thank you, Gordon. The next speaker is probably going to be the most knowledgeable person in the room about the Inner belt, which is Fred Salvucci. And Fred is going to discuss on one particular aspect of this project, which is the vital strength of the Boston Globe as a power, as a spokesman and supporter for the Inner Belt, and how that was all changed in the early 70s by a change in the editorial approach in Boston.

So, Fred, you might want to just give us an introduction to how that all worked out.

01:29:10 Fred Salvucci:

OK, thanks, Steven. Thanks for pulling together this terrific reunion. It's really great to see everybody on this discussion and remember some people who aren't at the discussion. It was a very exciting process that we were all part of.

I think that Geri Denterlein and Jack Thomas are going to speak after me who know the Globe much better than me, so I'll skip through a couple of things and generalize it a bit to the role of media, in general, because often in planning processes, we act as if, we ignore the fact that the media is critical to how the public understands an issue like this.

The issue just within Cambridge, the amount of destruction in the Brookline-Elm corridor, was horrible and it's what motivated a lot of us to get involved and fight the thing.

But it was several thousand dwelling units in a city that's much bigger than that. Most of the city had taken the attitude, well, it's not my block. And they would voice some sympathy but there was no muscle in what the city was doing when I sort of first got involved. But there were a couple of very creative uses of the media that I think began to change things because, initially, at least my perception as a reader of the Globe and Herald at the time, was that the newspapers were all for building these roads.

There was a writer at the Globe named Abe Plotkin, nice fellow, but he got most of this information from the Department of Public Works. And the view expressed on the pages of the Globe was, there's a lot of federal money at stake, you know, this is going to happen. You know, traffic is bad. We've got to build this road and not much of a different side to it.

01:31:32 Fred Salvucci (Cont'd):

And people like Ansti [Benfield] began to change that perception in part by what they did. Now, correct me if I'm wrong, but the first dramatic press event that I remember was the ladies marching against the destruction of the so-called Sycamores on Memorial Drive. Ansti, Were you part of that brigade? Or Rebecca? That opposed...the point is the MDC at the time wanted to change Memorial Drive so it would look exactly as ugly as the Soldiers Field Road side on my side of the river. So instead of, let's have equality of our awfulness (laughing) rather than making the Allston-Brighton side of the river as nice as Memorial Drive, let's make Memorial Drive as horrible as Soldiers Field Road. That was the MDC skoal.

And they, the London Plane trees [Sycamores] which are still there mostly were in the way, so they all had to be cut down. The ladies organized a bunch of baby carriages around the SOS banner, "Save Our Sycamores," and the engineer for the MDC said, "What ignorant people. They're not sycamores. They're London Plane trees." Oh, of course, well then let's cut them all down if they're only London Plane trees. To get a sense of how people didn't get it.

Fortunately, I don't remember the name of the engineer who made that stupid remark, but it was certainly an expression of how they felt about defending their neighborhood. But it got attention and it was in the papers and just by the visuals, even though the Globe and Herald were editorially writing in sympathy to the Highway Department, the pictures were showing a different picture. That there was another side to this. That there was a lot of destruction that these things could do.

The very eloquent description that Rebecca gave of Spy Pond, I always loved those Willow trees that bordered Spy Pond. I remember going by there when they were all cut down with their heads in the lake, it was just horrible. It was like a massacre of trees.

Those images, I think, began to jar a different message that this was not a simple one-sided issue and there was another side to it.

01:34:09 Fred Salvucci (Cont'd):

Later, a Globe reporter named Alan Lupo, God rest his soul, began systematically covering the neighborhood sides of these issues, airport issues, highway issues, and there were still columnists in the Globe supporting the highway and the airport, but at least there were two points of view being given and that was amplified from the efforts of the citizens with the very graphic demonstrations to actually reading some different points of view in the newspaper.

But, on the role of the media, we are dealing with issues where a small number, a relatively small number of people feel very passionately because their environment is going to be totally destroyed. But a lot of other people kind of have other things to worry about and don't get so involved, and it's through the media that the passion of the people who have so much to lose began to get magnified and grow the political strength that ultimately led to successful change of this direction.

In the period that Gordon Fellman's talking about, I was part of that original group. We changed our name about every week. For a while, we were called the "Cambridge Committee Against the Inner Belt" and eventually "Urban Planning Aid" was the name we used when we applied for some federal funds.

But the group of six or seven of us were all basically technical people, most of whom lived in Cambridge. I lived in Brighton but I was the only one that wasn't a Cantabrigian. And in many ways, I think the leader of the group, although like most groups at the time there was no leader, it was just all of us, but Dennis Blackett was really key. He's a Cambridge resident, a civil engineer, he was an architect by background. And Dennis had this brilliant insight that the City

Council in Cambridge met on Monday I believe, and that the Cambridge Chronicle came out I think Monday morning. But the paper was put together the prior Thursday.

01:36:30 Fred Salvucci (Cont'd):

Anyway, Dennis figured out the mechanics and made sure that every week there was an article on the front page of the Cambridge Chronicle saying, Cambridge is in cahoots with the state government by not even proposing alternatives to be considered. They're condemning the Inner Belt to go right down Brookline-Elm and it's outrageous. And every week, Dennis was getting an article in just hammering home the point that this was wrong.

And, as Gordon says, most of us were convinced that in the politics of the time, we were losing the argument that maybe the highway wasn't needed. The highway was coming and the people on Brookline-Elm were going to lose their homes as a result. And the priority is to fight that.

As a graduate of MIT, I felt that the routes close to MIT were a lot less destructive than the one through the neighborhood. Rather have no road, but if there was going to be one, it seemed to me there was a very significant difference between the two.

But Dennis' press strategy was really in having a press strategy, is what I think really made a difference here in getting this issue communicated in a way that the vast majority of people who didn't have a personal stake, at least didn't know that they had a personal stake, to understand and sympathize with the people whose lives were really going to be upended. And that was happening in East Boston by the Corrigan and the fight against outrageous behavior by Mass Port.

But it was a similar kind of dynamic of a small, relatively small number of people very adversely affected and a lot of other people who kind of sympathized, but, you know, have other things to do. And how do you get people motivated? The role of the media in getting that magnification, I think, is an essential thing to get at.

Steve, I'll ask you, I have a bad habit of talking way too long so please cut me off whenever my time is up. I do want to...

Steve Kaiser: Your time is up.

Fred Salvucci: It's up. Good enough.

Steve Kaiser: Yes, OK, thank you very much though.

01:38:51 Fred Salvucci (Cont'd):

Alright, let me say two things then. One, Mike Dukakis was way too modest about his role. And two, Alan Altshuler was way too modest about his role. Without what Alan did and Jack and the BTPR (Boston Transportation Planning Review), we would not have won this fight.

I mean, it may be kind of a wonky technocratic thing, but the process that Alan led was, in my view, absolutely essential, not just to stopping bad things, but to laying the groundwork so that

good things could happen instead. Cause if all that had happened was stopping bad things, the bad things would have come back.

It was the substitute possibilities of using that money that came out of the BTPR and Alan's brilliance in Washington with the, and I see Bob Curry on this, getting that interstate transfer language so that there was another way to use the money.

Those were essential building blocks. We never would have won except for the work that particularly Alan and the people with him, Jack Wofford, Bob Curry, and many others. Alan is way too modest about the role he played in this.

Sorry for going over.

01:40:10 Steve Kaiser: That's OK, thank you. Is Geri Denterlein still there?

Geri Denterlein:

I am still here. [Inaudible] Hi. You know, it's been fascinating for me to hear this history, which predates me a little bit, but as the roots in it of all the important issues that we still struggle with on the values and the lure of big money versus the commitment to people and the lives they lead.

Jack was writing editorials and our family has heard these stories many times over the years about how important that moment in his life was to have the ability as a young writer to meet all of you and work with such important issues of the day.

Jack over to you.

01:40:55 Jack Thomas:

Well, it's difficult to believe that we are talking about, in detail, about events that happened 50 years ago. Can you believe it, we have had that much time passed?

And yet, what has had a greater influence on our lives as Bostonians. And the courageous and imaginative leadership of Governor Sargent back in 1971 with the suspension of highway construction. And then in '72, with a grand decision to divert from highway construction to mass transit.

I rarely drive through Central Square, my hometown, my home city of Cambridge, without thanking my Lord, that there's no mass highway spiking down across Main Street, a big concrete structure with on and off ramps that lead nowhere.

It was a different time alright. You could buy a suit at Filene's for \$40.00 and a Presto toaster at Lechmere sales for \$10. And you could also buy a Ford Pinto down on Route 1 for about \$2,000 that would enable you to sit in the kind of traffic and wonder when the hell is somebody going to do something about all this.

Well, the time came, thankfully, with the election of Frank Sargent.

In my case, I was a city editor of the Boston Globe. And I was tired of management. I wanted to get back to writing. The editor of the Globe, Tom Winship, offered me a fellowship at either Stanford or Harvard, all expenses paid, salary paid, in a year after study. I chose Stanford.

The agreement was when somebody came back from a fellowship that he would write editorials for a year. Well, why would that be? Brilliant, brilliant decision by Tom Winship. His theory was that the traditionally stodgy editorial department would benefit from somebody who stepped back from the campus, thinking progressively, thinking these young people would tie in more substantially to younger readers with the Boston Globe.

01:43:19 Jack Thomas (Cont'd):

Well, I was already an editorial writer my first few months. I was specializing in prisons and I spent a week living undercover at Deer Island to expose the brutality of prison, against prisoners there.

But here's why I love the Boston Globe and have admired it since I was a teenager. Tom Winship called me into his office one day. Now at the time there was no, it was the most confusing issue on page 1 every day of the highway issue, whether to build, whether to not build, transit, and a combination. And Bob Healy said, no issue in the history of Massachusetts had been studied more and less had been accomplished on it than transportation.

So Winship called me in and he said, I want you to take some time off, so take as much time as you need, travel wherever you want to go, San Francisco, Washington, New York. Talk to whomever you think we should talk to. But come up with a transportation policy for the Boston Globe that won't embarrass us.

It was like an intellectual challenge and a gift and an opportunity to do this. You don't engage in too much research on transportation without having heard over and over the person who talked to his Fred Salvucci. So, I called Fred and we chatted and we couldn't find a time or place until we decided what...I said Fred, why don't you come to my house?

So, Fred showed up one night. He had John Vitagliano in tow, his ally. And Fred had more maps of Boston and Massachusetts under his arm than I had remembered from my classes, since my classes when I studied Western Civilization.

01:45:15 Jack Thomas (Cont'd):

Well, we entered my dining room. Fred said, we're going to need a big table. We entered the dining room. Fred spread out these maps of Boston all over the table and we used salt and pepper shakers and candlestick holders to hold down the corners. And what followed was a 90-minute lesson for me and the ins and outs of transportation highways, structure, a lot of detail, very technical stuff that at that time was somewhat beyond me.

Well, what impressed me most about what Fred was saying? That transportation was not an issue of highways. It's not an engineering feat. It has to do more with how and where highway

is placed that affects not only the well-to-do but poor people, immigrants, Black folks, and it ought to be looked at carefully from that perspective.

Well, it was a great head start on this issue. I did my traveling. I spent a lot of time reading texts that were arcane at first but gradually became clear. And I wrapped myself around Fred's philosophy about the importance of a social aspect of highways.

And finally, and I think it was November of 1971, after more than a month of work, maybe six weeks or so, I produced an editorial that ran, unprecedentedly, about almost 3,000 words. It took up half the editorial page. I'd never seen an editorial in the Globe that long before.

And it pretty much asked the Governor, it was called "The Time for Courage," and it asked the Governor, please consider these social considerations, to spend this billion dollars he had at his disposal now not so much on highways and more on mass transit, a submersion of the Second [Third] Harbor Tunnel, emphasis on the kind of transportation near homes in the development of neighborhoods.

As it happened, the Governor approved nearly every aspect of the editorial except one and that would be the butt that now stretches off the upper Expressway as it heads over the Mystic River heading north.

01:47:59 Jack Thomas (Cont'd):

It was a great privilege to write this and I always come back to my resource. And my inspiration really for writing that was Fred Salvucci.

It reminded me of a story that Fred and I were coming back from a lunch somewhere down in east of Boston and I was driving along Summer Street and Freddie was the passenger. And we got to Otis Street and Fred said, "Turn right here." At the time, he was Kevin Whites' traffic commissioner.

Freddie said, "Turn right here."

I turned right and, at the last moment, I noticed it was a one-way street going against us.

So, I made a quick turn and took us back onto Summer Street and I said, "For Christ sakes, Fred, if you don't know the ways of the one-way streets of Boston, what hope is there for the rest of us?"

And in the end, I still admire him. (Laughing)

Steve Kaiser: OK.

Jack Thomas: That's my story.

Steve Kaiser: Thank you, Jack. OK, thank you, Jack, and for all the efforts that you made to change the Boston Globe because it was with tremendous power in favor of the Inner Belt before and I think your role in serving as a new direction was really very vital, so I appreciate that.

01:49:24 Jack Thomas:

I think the praise and inspiration there goes to Tom Winship. I don't think there were many editors in the country who would have said to a simple writer like myself, take as much time as you need, talk to or go wherever you want. There was no talk about expenses. And when I wrote the editorial, there was no admonitions from him to head one way or the other.

And when it was finished, completed, there were no changes made.

This is why I love that institution, the Boston Globe, as I said before, since I was a teenager. There were reporters from other cities who worked at other newspapers, they were astonished. It was unusual. And all the growth and intellectual development of the Boston Globe, in the past 40 years, is largely due to him.

And the editorial, in the end, goes to him as much as to Fred Salvucci. I was the typist.

01:50:25 Steve Kaiser:

OK, thank you.

Our next speaker is going to be Charlie Sullivan. Charlie for many years has been the director of the Cambridge Historical Commission, going back almost 50 years, and he was the one who encouraged me to write the history of the Inner Belt. I sort of looked at him blankly and said, "I don't write books." But for some reason he had a confidence and I'm 5 years into a 10-year project of writing the history.

But Charlie also has a sense for the city and of sort of smelling out what's going on. And it's my contention that for many years Cambridge was like a seedbed of protest movements. I mean, the mention has been made about the Save The Sycamores. It was Bill Callahan and his plan to fill in 8 acres of the Charles River. And there was even, in the extreme case, the Kennedy library out of Harvard Square and into Dorchester.

So, Cambridge has this long history of local opposition. So, you say, well, how could it have happened in Cambridgeport, it's because they had a lot of seedbed out there to work with and a lot of people to help.

So, Charlie, I'd be interested in some of your thoughts on that, and just an overall perspective of this strange creature called the City of Cambridge.

01:52:07 Charles Sullivan

Well, thanks, Steve, and thanks for keeping this circus on schedule.

That's a major achievement today. And thank you for sticking with the history of the Inner Belt. This is something that when I we discussed five years ago, I never expected it would take this long or that you would discover so much amazing detail about the background and the intricacies of this project.

So, Steve suggested that I focus on one activist in particular who's been really neglected in the recent history of Cambridge, and that was Mary Newman.

01:52:47 Slideshow on Mary Newman and Cambridge in the 1950s

Mary Newman was one of just dozens of activists. I mean, it would take a dissertation and much more than a feature length movie to talk about the history of activism and Cambridge.

But Mary Newman was a particular figure who I think was, whose contribution has largely been overlooked. She was born in Philadelphia in 1909. Was a Quaker, a birthright Quaker. Was a conscientious objector. Ran a CO camp in California during World War II. Came to Cambridge in 1946 with her husband, who was on the faculty at Harvard.

Mary Newman got involved in local politics in 1953. She beat Walter Sullivan in a race for state representative in the 2nd Middlesex District. Served a term until 1954. Was beaten by someone else when she ran, but then ran again in 1957 and served until 1970.

She resigned in 1970 to run for Secretary of State. Did not win that that post. Was appointed by Frank Sargent as his Secretary of Manpower Affairs, a predecessor of the EOCD today, in 1971 and 1974.

So, the key thing about Mary Newman, and it's hard to imagine today, is that she was a Republican and a classic, perhaps Northeastern Republican, you know, now we call them Rockefeller Republicans. Or we could call them Baker or Weld Republicans, who were interested in good government, who were fiscally conservative and socially liberal for the period.

So, I think Mary Newman played a pretty key part in [Governor] Sargent's approach to these issues. Because she was a Republican, because she was in his cabinet at a critical time, as well as being previously in the legislature, she was able to reach him in ways that perhaps other people weren't.

So, the context though, is that the Inner Belt was not a new idea. It wasn't originated in the highway plan of the late 1940s. It originated before World War I. This article in the Cambridge Chronicle in 1911 is talking about a State Board of Metropolitan Improvements that was recommending a highway, a north-south highway across Somerville, and the northern part of Cambridgeport.

01:55:32 Charles Sullivan (Cont'd):

The Cambridge Planning Board, starting in the 1920s, had ideas of a boulevard of Brookline Street. But the Cambridge that Mary Newman came to in 1946 was a city in decline. When those earlier proposals were being made Cambridge was gaining population at a terrific rate. Peaked out at 120,000, nearly 120,000, in 1930.

In the depression, all construction stopped. Most industries closed. It was the beginning of a decline that lasted until 1990 when the population began to recover slowly. It was after 10

years of depression, 5 years of world war in 1946 when she arrived, parts of the city were, at least from the outside and to many Cambridge observers, in really, really rough shape, such as the Rogers Block that was replaced by Tech Square in 1957.

These houses on Cottage Street (photos shown in slideshow) show the signs of decades of neglect. These are now assessed in the \$2 Million range. Houses were derelict and abandoned and Cambridge was just a tired place.

(Other panelists saying “Wow” at the sight of the photos from the 1950s showing derelict properties in Cambridge.)

It was struggling. There were people who loved Cambridge and people who populated these neighborhoods and who worked on their houses, fixed them up, but the overall character of much of Cambridge east of Harvard Square was in decline and I think to the planners who were doing the big picture transportation planning, the kind of planning that I was taught to do at the Graduate School of Design from 1965 to 1968, was to seek out these deteriorated places, put a highway through them and clean them up.

01:57:37 Charles Sullivan (Cont'd):

That, I think, was the attitude. And these were the scenes that people saw. But Mary Newman, I think, saw through this. The Cambridge Planning Board has been referred to many times. This is a slide taken in 1946 of the Centennial Parade. Here's the planning board float promising new housing. That's great. Long range plans.

Well, that's a mixed bag, but express highways, this was seen as a panacea for what was ailing Cambridge.

But the Inner Belt came along as a proposal. The city, as you've heard over and over again, mobilized. Mary Newman, by this time, was in the legislature, and said in 1960, it was folly to put a 300-foot speedway through a thickly settled, historic city. This road should be placed only in a prairie and stressed the tragic shortage of homes already existing here.

A couple of years later, she says, “Cambridge is an old, crowded, interesting and well-loved city with thousands of people who want to live and bring up their children. And it is also an area of land over which other thousands of people want to travel as quickly as possible while commuting from the suburbs to Boston and back. To what extent can the set desires of these travelers be satisfied without sacrificing the identity, beauty and vitality of Cambridge.”

So, her insider role was expressed again in 1965. She is a member of the Cambridge Committee on the Inner Belt and she is going to State DPW Commissioner Frank Sargent, who shortly after this meeting, affirmed the plans. But in the 1970s, as you've heard, he reversed himself, and I have to believe that, as much as the protests made tremendous impact on the process, but the insider work of someone like Mary Newman, it made a critical difference.

01:59:51 Charles Sullivan (Cont'd):

So finally, in 1971, at the end of the year, the Globe reports the Inner Belt plan is dead. But maybe there's going to be a truck-bus road down the Brooklyn Street corridor. You know, it finally did die in 1972. By that time, Mary Newman was out of government or was no longer an elected official, but she was still in Sargent's cabinet.

She's called "The Fighting Quaker of the Massachusetts Republican Party" when she died in 1995 and Governor Weld credited her with bringing him into politics. So, that's really a vignette in the much larger picture of the Inner Belt, but one, I think, that deserves some notice.

Thank you.

02:00:43 Steve Kaiser:

OK, thank you, Charlie. I just want to thank you, in particular, for the Mary Newman piece because I requested it for a particular reason. About 30 years ago, I gave a presentation to another historic society in Cambridge on the Inner Belt, thinking I'd had information and knowledge to give. I got all the events right. I got all the dates right. But Mary Newman came up to me at the end and said, very pleasantly, you didn't say anything about the people.

And I realized, my God, if we're going to do a history of what went on, look at the screen. Look at the people. Look at all that he's been told about the names of the people and what they did. And that should be the essence of the history of the Inner Belt and I thank you for your work.

Charles Sullivan: Thank you.

02:01:39 Steve Kaiser:

Yes, OK? Now, the last speaker has one of the biggest problems because 50 years ago he wrote up a major study, a 2-inch thick masters thesis at MIT, comparing different cities on how they dealt with highway controversies. And it is like trying to compare three or four different Cambridges to know about a city and then compare them. So, there's no bigger task than this. Some historian needs to take it on.

But Ken Geiser made some rather intriguing efforts to get a grip on things and also to think over the past 50 years, how do we deal and compare one city with another? What was the reason that Cambridge won out, that the citizens won in Cambridge? And look at possibly some other experiences, even without the details, at least to start the process of saying, here's how we could begin this little trip of different cities and how they did.

02:02:58 Ken Geiser:

Well, thank you, Steve and I will say that it's an honor to be here and to see people that I have known for many decades ago. And it's a privilege to see some of you again.

I think what Steve alludes to is I was a young graduate student. I'd been a community organizer in Baltimore and come to, where I'd been working on highway, trying to stop a highway in Baltimore, I came to Boston to come to MIT, and in particular, to work with Urban Planning Aid.

Soon after I got here, I met with Jim Morey, who set me up as a sort of an assistant organizer in the Southwest Corridor and I did some of my earliest work in Boston there.

But the big thing was that I got a grant from MIT for a year-long study of highway controversy across the country. And I wrote this very large tomb which was published by MIT at one point here in Systems Lab.

I started that piece of work as a student in Alan Altshuler's political science course, so I'm sorry Alan has left but it was a great way to have started the work.

Steve is right, trying to wrap up such an amazing 2 hours of tremendous memories and all is really difficult and a daunting task. I'll try my best to set some context and to sort of say a little bit of what I think made the Boston controversy and the Boston struggle so successful in the end.

And I just wanted to start a little bit where Charles left off and that is a little bit the broader context. The 1960s were a very large period of urban turmoil. The cities were in crisis. The cities were being depleted by people moving to the suburbs and businesses moving out. The need was to rebuild the cities, to do urban renewal. And the federal government was pumping large amounts of investment into the expansion of airports and urban renewal districts and into ports and, of course, into highways, highways being the most *crème de la crème* because of the funding formula meant it was really cheap for states to take on highways because it costs them very little.

02:05:37 Ken Geiser (Cont'd):

It was not unintentional that these projects would displace housing. Housing, a lot of inner-city housing, was seen as dilapidated. The word "slum clearance" was part of the rubric at that time. And efforts were being made to attract jobs from the suburbs and middle class people to move into the cities and in middle class housing. And it was argued that the dilapidated nature of many inner cities was precluding that kind of real estate investments.

Countering that, though, was a very political time with, basically, a lot of legitimacy and popularity to protest and to social resistance. And whether it was civil rights, antiwar, women's rights, whatever it might be, people did go in the streets. People did present their angst about things that were going on in this country.

And out of that grew a set of really very experienced organizers. The whole idea of community organizer was building around some of the institutes in Chicago that we're doing training. Saul Alinsky's work and others were leading to a bunch of really well-skilled and well-talented organizers that were available to help cities, help communities protest the kinds of urban renewal and housing displacement.

Let's shift a little bit, taking a look at highways itself. The media was talking about an urban highway revolt going on across the United States. City after city was seeing protests to stop construction of highways. Lowell Bridwell, who was the Federal Highway Administrator, I

remember was quoted as saying at that point, there were 26 active urban highway controversies stopping highways in cities across the country. They all involve neighborhood organization and community popular mobilizations. In many cases, these were cross-class mobilizations and that they were quite diverse with populations of ethnic and racial compositions in arguing for the protection of inner-city and working class people's housing.

All developed and benefited from experienced and passionate leaders. One of the things that didn't show up in Boston was litigation. I just heard about the Simplex litigation. There was one small lawsuit around Fowl Meadow, but there was very little. Other cities saw protests turn to litigation itself. New Orleans, Memphis, Washington, all saw big court challenges in some cases, quite successful.

02:08:49 Ken Geiser (Cont'd):

But here in Boston, one of the things that's so notable is the breadth and comprehensiveness of the vision of essentially reconsidering the entire transportation system. And it was rare that many cities got to this point as they did here, including the replacement of the longstanding Central Artery, as a possibility.

I want to just list several factors that I think were really important in Boston that made it possible for Boston, and these are just came from my research. I'm sure that many of you probably could list some additional factors because you've lived these various conditions.

One is that Boston had a long history of protest and public mobilization. It has always been seen as a feisty city for politics and people often express themselves quite literally and quite aggressively in streets and in public hearings. In the city, that was common, and it was accepted.

Boston also had very well defined and close-knit neighborhoods and multiple municipalities. So, it was possible to organize in various different locations around different areas. So, if the organizing in one area that's not going well, it could go very well in another area. East Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, the southwest area of Roxbury, JP, all were areas of popular mobilizations.

The organization in Boston was supported by exceptional and very experienced professionals. Urban Planning Aid (UPA) was unique across the country. There were definitely professionals who worked with other community groups in opposing highways. But UPA was funded by the Quakers. It was staffed by Jim Morey, a man of exceptional talent. Dennis Blackett, Bob Goodman, others including Lisa Peattie and Chester Hartman and others, were folks who had long histories in thinking about popular mobilization and all, as well as people like Justin Gray and Chuck Turner and Ron Hafer and others in the Southwest Corridor area.

02:11:15 Ken Geiser (Cont'd):

Another thing that makes Boston stand out particularly well is the significant involvement at the churches. Not all cities across the country saw the amount of church activity, whether it

was Father McManus, or as we already heard, the wonderful work that Tom Corrigan did. Or just the commitment that Colonel [Cardinal] Cushing made. All were parts of the Catholic churches, support and legitimacy given to questioning the highway.

And this was not just Catholics. Quakers, Episcopalians, and others also led in their own parishes, and all.

Steve, the other thing was notable about Boston was there was a lot of different state and city agents involved. And the leadership of these different agencies changed and changed often, and there was in-fighting and ill-coordination amongst the various agencies. But it was the BRA by the DPW or MAPC or the Boston Public Roads, I'm sorry the Bureau of Public Roads, all of them had different leaders and those leaders changed and didn't agree with each other, so there was always a chance to find somebody who was willing to listen to a protest.

Obviously, the struggle between William Callahan and John Volpe also set a big framing of that kind of inner confused way in which the government was acting.

And lastly, the sort of political leadership was often hard to win but once won was very strong. That certainly was the case with Frank Sargent. It was also the case with Kevin White, who changed his mind about the road through the Southwest Corridor and all. And the particularly talented people like Al Kramer and Barney Frank and others who were the really staff that had led the leadership of those political figures. That's really important as well.

02:13:35 Ken Geiser (Cont'd):

So, I think the last thing to say in thinking about it is maybe because of the number of planners involved, architects, others involved and maybe it was simply the kind of leadership that Massachusetts tends to develop, the vision of how to stop the highways was so well-embedded in a larger vision of a transportation reconsideration.

What the GBC was able to do, the Greater Boston Committee, was able to do was really know a suburban to inner city reassessment with people brought together with a bigger vision, an idea that Boston could be a city without, and someone said a city of bikeways and communities, not of highways with such a compelling vision that I think it just swept across a lot of people and gave people like Fred [Salvucci] and others who really were the workhorses of this the cover of a big vision to reconsider Boston.

So, those are some of my thoughts or things that I saw in the work of looking at various cities. I just salute all of you who did such important work in this and we today stand looking at a Boston that is a beautiful and effective city with some remarkable neighborhoods because the highway system did not wipe out the very essence of our city.

0:2:15:05 Steve Kaiser:

OK, thank you, Ken.

We're just about at the end of our time limit. I was going to be the last speaker, but I think I'm going to be very brief in my comments.

I do want to mention the name of Tip O'Neill. Tip's leadership in the years 1965-1967, getting a restudy going that removed the plans and the plan approvals of the Brookline-Elm alignment is so crucial in those times. You could spend a whole show on Tip O'Neill and his leadership, as Fred Salvucci knows.

The other thing is Bob Simha in his comments brought us knowledge of the name of Mark Fortune who most people had never heard of before. And Mark Fortune was the first person to turn against the Inner Belt, as far as I know. Some of his staff did too in Cambridge. And then he totally turned against it in the late 50s, became pro-transit and wrote a huge chapter for the city's plan on transportation. It was transit-only, no highway. What happened to him? He got fired.

Now, Mark Fortune is the first hero on the Inner Belt for Cambridge. There's a whole bunch. Many of you on this screen here were part of that at some time or other, and Mark was the first one and he got punished.

He may have been the only one to be punished. I don't know. But he did a professional job, made a professional judgment and all of the engineers at the Mass Highway Department, who supported a defective highway plan, got away. They were never punished.

So, please remember the important thing that Mark Fortune did. It took courage on his part, but it really took professionalism. He had to say this is what I think. I'm going to act on the basis of this and I'm going to do the right thing.

So, my last comment is the next step. As I said earlier, I'm going to try to pull together some ideas for a transportation plan, just draft ideas and get them out by e-mail to everyone. So, we can start thinking about this. We have June, July and August. And then there's the primary in September. And the main election in November.

02:17:47 Steve Kaiser (Cont'd):

And if the Democrats and the Republicans can't come up with a decent transportation plan, I think we can.

So, I would like to thank all of you for participating today.

We made it through with very few technological glitches. And I'm very appreciative of that.

And Becky Benfield has done a superb job of operating this system and seeing that it doesn't – in case anybody doesn't know, Becky Benfield is the daughter of Ansti Benfield. And when Ansti showed that picture of her nailing the petition on the front door of City Hall, that was Becky in the back seat, so to speak. And that was 56 years ago.

David Lee: Hey, Steve.

Steve Kaiser: Yes.

David Lee: I just want to thank you for the invitation and I'm reminded of the statement that says if you're always the smartest one in the room, you're probably in the wrong room. But I was in the right room today.

Steve Kaiser: Yes. You were. Good, good, thank you very much.

02:18:52 Rebecca Hall:

We are going to have an event, a memory event from the people of the neighborhood, people in the Belt. But we can't do it till COVID is completely...So, just keep an eye open for that announcement and it'll be by the end of the year.

But we're trying to get the residents to share their stories, even if, and there are many that are relatives of the residents, so we're going to reach out to them as soon as we feel it's safe because it has to be in-person.

Thank you.

Steve Kaiser: Yes, we can share a lot of those stories by e-mail as well. And if we ever open up Fred Salvucci's brain, we'll get an absolute flood of very good stories. So, OK, again, I thank you for helping out today.

02:19:50 Jack Wofford:

Steve, could I ask one quick thing that I would like to say? It was really remarkable that these people designing the scope of the study for BTPR persuaded the powers-that-be that 10% of the budget of the restudy should be devoted to community liaison and technical assistance.

And that was a remarkable change in an approach to citizen participation because it wasn't just the citizens are out there, but we had a staff devoted to going out and reaching those people, hearing their ideas, and bringing them back to those technical people in BTPR and see if they could transform them into something feasible.

And the reason that the Red Line goes from Harvard to Porter through Davis Square to Alewife is really because the Study Element Two folks were at a meeting where a graduate student at Tufts said, hey, there's this abandoned rail line going from Davis to Alewife. Maybe we should use that for the Red Line.

And it was one of those a-ha moments when the staff came back and said, hey, here's a new idea. Should we take a look at it? And, you know, the result is the extension of the Red Line which was paid for by the Interstate Transfer Provision that Alan mentioned, substantially paid for by that.

So, you know, everything is related to everything else but the process piece of this was able to be added to the advocacy that we've heard so effectively described today. And it's that

combination of what I would call insiders and outsiders that really led to significant change in transportation policy and plans.

02:22:00 Alan Altshuler:

Jack, you may remember the name of the mayor of Somerville, whose name slips me at the moment, who was just unrelenting in his lobbying for that. And Fred, you might remember his name too.

Fred Salvucci: Probably Ralph, Mayor Ralph. Lester Ralph.

Alan Altshuler: Yes, it was Lester Ralph who did it. And it was originated, but then had to be lobbied through and it was the tremendous lobbying effort, as I recall, that brought it about.

Jack Wofford: Well, that's the insider and the outside to beat the big clients.

Alan Altshuler: That's right. And Steve, thank you so much for putting this together. This was a great achievement and we're all grateful to you for it.

Steve Kaiser: Good, thank you.

Bob Simha: Steve, can I make a remark?

Steve Kaiser: Sure, Yup.

02:22:48 Bob Simha:

As we look back over 50 years and the extraordinary role that that all of us had an opportunity to play, one of the things, and I guess this comes from being an MIT planner, is that all the things we accomplished have come back, are essentially back on top of us in ways that we did not fully comprehend, so that the state of Cambridge today, when we started trying to rebuild the economy of this city back in 1959, 1960 has burgeoned to the point where the transportation needs of this area have become extraordinary. And the problem we have today is the same problem we had in the 50s.

We do not have a comprehensive transportation plan to deal with the implications of what we have done and what is still going to be done. And we have the same conflicts right ahead of us. So, if we don't organize now to do that intelligently, we really should be embarrassed.

02:24:00 Steve Kaiser:

Just one thought to add to that, Bob, is, I was fascinated by the fact that the State Highway Department gave terrible presentations during most of these studies. And they turned around and admitted it that Urban Planning Aid and the cities did a better job of it. And Fred Salvucci knows that the locals did a better job. They were always ahead of the State. The State were the bumblers.

So, if we're going to get a new and a better plan for the Boston area we're going to need better engineers and planners at the Highway Department and at the MBTA. So, our challenges are

out there. They're interesting. But if we can give some definition to that problem, we have a good problem statement this summer, I think we'll have made some progress.

Bob Simha: Amen.

Steve Kaiser: OK, we all set?

Alan Altshuler: OK, thank you.

Fred Salvucci: Thank you.

Ken Geiser: Yeah, thank you, Steve.

Everyone: Thank you, Steve.

02:25:05 Slideshow of houses, parks, buildings, and children playing at Morse School playground, all along the Brookline-Elm route, as we see them today

Music during slideshow:

Song written and performed by Evergreen Byway
"Could Have It All"
Po Saetia, Aimon Benfield-Chand, Dario Rojas

Where the summer breeze
It gently weeps
And pines grow thick and strong
Where the children play under chestnut trees
And the nights grow ever so long
There's a place where I was born and raised
Where the leaves do gently fall
Where the City of Squares keeps fighting year-round
And I could have it all
Where the rain it falls
Against these walls
And the trees do bend in the wind
I know this place will keep me safe
And also my children
There's a place where I was born and raised
Where the leaves do gently fall
Where the City of Squares keeps fighting year-round
And I could have it all
Where the City of Squares... (fades out)

Thank you for watching!

Comment/Questions? Email cambridgeinnerbelt@gmail.com