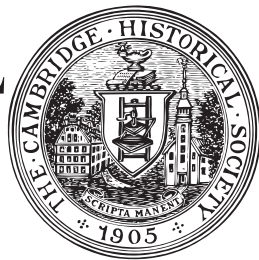


THE INNER BELT

Symposia



The CAMBRIDGE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

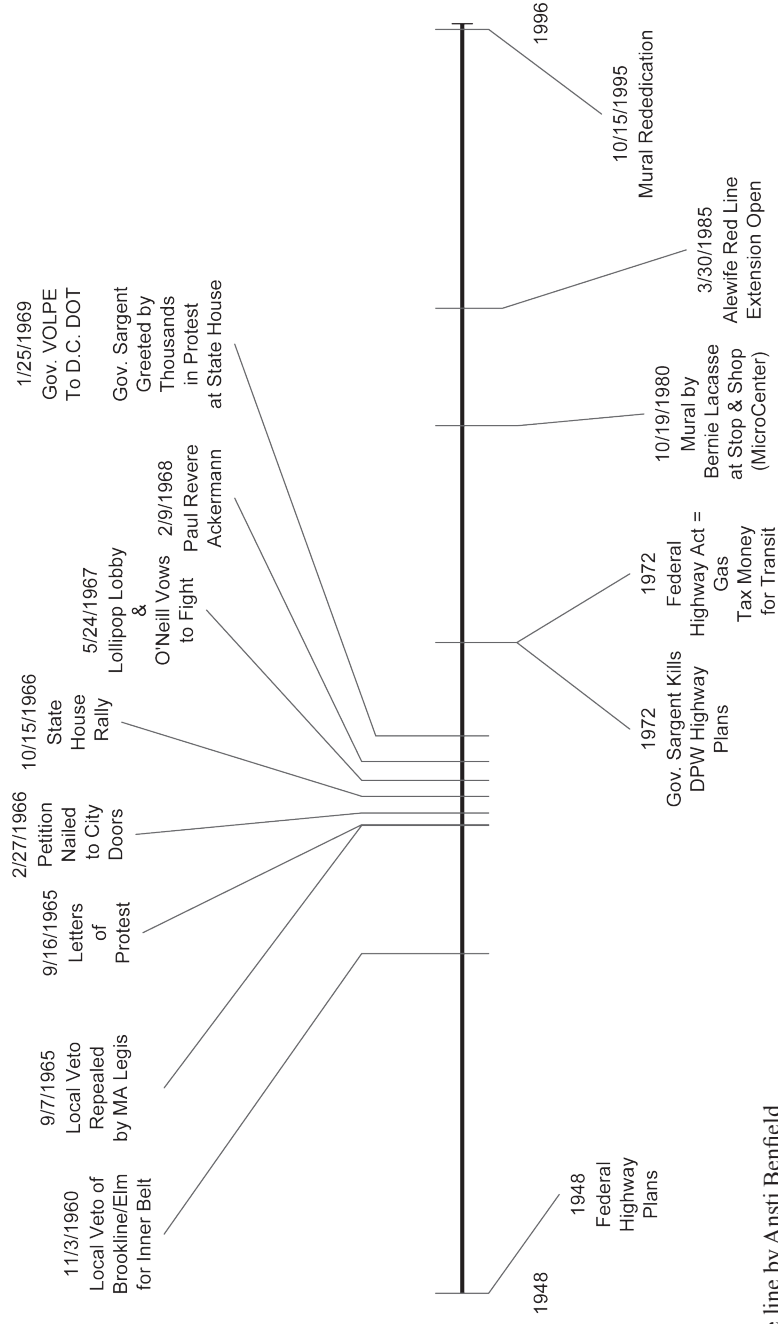


Program Two:
The Community Organizers

April 19, 2012

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Cambridge Inner Belt Timeline



Time line by Ansti Benfield

inner Boston area, with major intersections along the way: at a proposed extension of Route 2 from Alewife, at the Turnpike in Allston, at a proposed Southwest Expressway (I-95 South) originating in Dedham, at the Southeast Expressway, and at a new tunnel under Boston Harbor (I-95 North).

Opposition to the Inner Belt had begun in the 1950s in Cambridge; opposition to the Southwest Expressway began with environmentalists in the outer suburbs and neighborhood activists in the inner city. A group of city planners, community activists, universities, and politicians formed a coalition that by 1969 had become a regional alliance that included groups and officials from Brookline, Cambridge, Dedham, Lynn, Milton, Needham, Revere, Saugus, Somerville, and Boston's East Boston, South Boston, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Hyde Park, and the South End.

As a result of community and political pressure, Governor Frank Sargent in early 1970 ordered a moratorium on plans for the expressway network and called for a three-year Restudy (The Boston Transportation Planning Review) of the proposed highways as well as the proposed transit extensions. The Restudy produced the first Environmental Impact Study in the country following the enactment in 1969 of the National Environmental Policy Act. The Restudy had a "technical assistance" component to help neighborhoods develop alternatives to the highways, as well as alternative alignments for transit extensions. In 1971 the governor rejected the Inner Belt; in 1972 he rejected the Southwest Expressway and I-95 North; and in 1973 he approved plans to extend the Red Line from Harvard Square to Alewife along a new route via Porter and Davis Squares. He also led the successful effort to change federal law so that funds could be used instead for transit -- funds that were used for the extensions at both ends of the Red Line and for the relocation of the Orange Line in Boston.

Cambridge played a major role in battling one highway for decades, eventually sparking a process that led officials to remake transportation policy for the Boston area inside Route 128, with an emphasis on transit rather than highways for access to the inner core of the area. This policy had long been advocated by Governor Michael Dukakis, who succeeded Sargent in 1974.

THE INNER BELT Symposia

Program Two: The Community Organizers

Hosted by
Karilyn Crockett

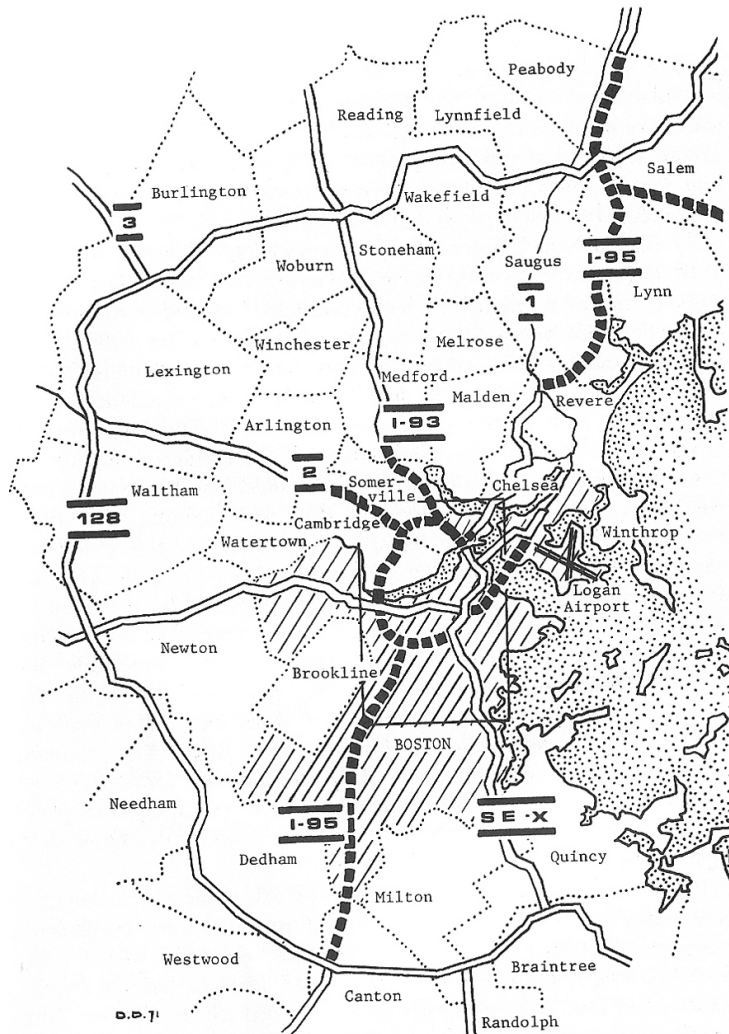
Featuring
Ansti Benfield
Gordon Fellman
Ann Hershfang
Barbara Norfleet

The Cambridge Public Library
Lecture Hall
449 Broadway, Cambridge

April 19, 2012, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Made possible by the support of
Irving House

Artist Bernie LaCasse will also be available to
discuss his mural "Beat the Belt"



Map showing new highways proposed between 1948 and 1960 as dashed lines. From *Rites of Way: The Politics of Transportation in Boston and the U.S. City* by Alan Lupo, Frank Colcord, and Edmund P. Fowler (Little, Brown & Company, 1971)

The Inner Belt was a proposed eight-lane expressway that would have begun at Route I-93 in Somerville and circled through Cambridge near Central Square, crossed the Charles River near the BU Bridge, touched a portion of Brookline, crossed the Fenway past the Museum of Fine Arts, and moved on through the Roxbury section of Boston to connect to the Southeast Expressway at the point where it joins the Central Artery heading toward downtown Boston. The Inner Belt and Central Artery thus would have been joined to create a ring road around and through the

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Planning Committee

Karilyn Crockett
Richard Garver
Michael Kenney

Gavin Kleespies
Alyssa Pacy
Jim Peters

Ansti Benfield was one of the founding members of the opposition to the Inner Belt. She recruited friends and neighbors and participated in countless meetings, discussing tactics from letter writing campaigns to direct action. She was a leading member of Save Our Cities and Neighbors United, the groups that led the citizens' opposition to the proposed infrastructure. She completed a M.A. in Urban Studies from Boston University in 1968. Her thesis was titled "Inner Belt."

Gordon Fellman is a Sociology professor at Brandeis University. He studied sociology at Antioch College and Harvard University, where he received his Ph.D. and taught before coming to Brandeis. After completing a dissertation on a political figure in India, Fellman published *The Deceived Majority: Politics and Protest in Middle America*, a study of the successful working-class protest movement against the proposed Inner Belt highway. One of the founders of Urban Planning Aid, Fellman led UPA's later successful project convincing the Boston Redevelopment Authority to accept neighborhood participation in planning the housing that replaced the units taken for the then new Madison Park High School in Boston. His publications include *The Nuclear Seduction: Why the Arms Race Doesn't Matter and What Does* (1990, co-authored), *Rambo and the Dalai Lama: The Compulsion to Win and Its Threat to Human Survival* (1998) and *The Coming End of War* (forthcoming).

Ann Hershfang was an instrumental part of the South End component of the protest against the Inner Belt. She was later the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) Boston president from 1985 to 1987 and served on the board of directors for Massport and the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, as well as serving as Undersecretary for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. She was a co-founder of WalkBoston and is still a leader in the effort to improve pedestrian safety and walking conditions.

Barbara Norfleet was a Senior Lecturer in the Visual and Environmental Studies Department at Harvard University from 1981 until she retired in 1996. She remained a curator of photography until 2001 and is still an advisor to the Department. She received her B.A. from Swarthmore College and her M.A. and Ph.D. in social relations from Harvard University and Radcliffe College. Her works have been widely shown in the United States and Europe. She has written over 15 publications. One of her first was *Six Speak*, a book of photographs and words that showed families and their homes that would have been destroyed by the construction of the Inner Belt.