



Charles River Watershed Association

November 8, 1990

Cambridge City Council
City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Councillors:

This letter represents a follow-up to the Charles River Watershed Association's testimony at the public hearing held by the Council on Monday, November 5, regarding the Charles River Crossing of the Central Artery/Tunnel Project. Again, we thank you for your interest and attention to public concerns about the Massachusetts Department of Public Works' proposed action, "Scheme Z".

CRWA is not a newcomer to review of this project; its tremendous influence on a river that is so much a focus of the area's historic character, cultural identity and quality of life warrants the fair - but strident when necessary - scrutiny, advocacy and criticism for which we are known and respected.

Since 1985, the bridge crossing has expanded, the ramps have multiplied and support structures eat up riverfront shoreline, eliminating open space and inhibiting pedestrian access. The considerable environmental and aesthetic burdens to be shouldered by the Charles and Millers Rivers must not continue to be secondary to the overall benefits of depressing the downtown Central Artery.

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and the proponent of the New Boston Garden Development have finalized their plans for North Station based on Scheme Z. Indeed, their planning efforts have focused on accommodating their projects with Scheme Z for at least two years. Now the proponents of the New Boston Garden Development have requested a waiver from the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act to enable them to proceed with the arena portion of the project without further review. One corner of the arena would be structurally in conflict with a tunnel alternative; its construction will preclude consideration of any tunnel option.

Scheme Z was favored internally by the Secretary of Transportation as early as 1987, yet the public and, most disturbingly, the community most affected yet least serviced by the crossing, Cambridge, were not informed of the choice until last year and not involved by the MDPW in the review

process until final approval of Scheme Z is almost assured. The Central Artery/Tunnel project has been characterized by a lack of compliance with state and federal regulations designed to protect public resources and ensure public benefits; influence and political deals have supplanted the public process.

The City of Cambridge must take a strong and vocal stand against a process that has ignored community concerns and a preferred alternative, Scheme Z, that sacrifices the Lower Charles and Millers and severs the City's opportunity for a viable waterfront.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen I. Pelto", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Karen I. Pelto
Acting Executive Director

KP:kp\centcamb.kip

5. S-1143

Comm. from Karen I. Pelto, Acting
Executive Director of the Charles
River Watershed Association, relative
to the Charles River Crossing of the
Central Artery/Tunnel Project.

In City Council,

November 19, 1990

Placed on file

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