

## ”Cambridge-Allston Connection by Bike, Rail, Trolley or Cable Car” 10/30/2005

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### Problem

The transportation between the Cambridge and the Allston Harvard campus is insufficient. Connectivity by car or buses is no solution. Commuting from Cambridge to Allston is currently dangerous, unpleasant, time consuming and stressful. Streets around Harvard square are congested. Additional streets or bridges will attract traffic and worsen the situation. A disconnected campus is bad for research. Students faculty and staff lose time.

### Ideas

- 1) Build new **bike paths** within Cambridge and Allston as well as between them. Explore new ideas.
- 2) Build a short **trolley connection** between Harvard Yard and Allston Campus over the river.
- 3) Build an **elevated monorail train** from the Science Center to Allston along JFK.
- 4) Create a **cable car transportation** between Cambridge and Allston.
- 5) Form a **traffic-free river area** between Harvard campus and the Charles river. (We can enjoy this for a few sundays during the year).

### Construction

Train or trolley lines could use existing streets or existing bridges. A futuristic cable-car solution has the advantage to be completely decoupled from the street traffic. Also a monorail solution could be constructed above the current car lanes. Special bicycle paths could be implemented right away. For bikers, it is important that they do not have to cross big streets, nor pass close to parked cars. Bicycle paths along existing streets are dangerous. A bicycle bridge over Memorial drive would be a first step. Alternatively, Memorial drive could be lowered into the ground near Harvard campus.

### Environment

All the mentioned transportation save energy. They are virtually silent and exhaust free. New bridges, a train or a cable-car changes the landscape and could lead to objections. On the other hand, congested car lanes along the river are not only ugly, they also produce noise and poison the air.

### Health

Traffic noise and exhaust produce stress and health problems. Crossing the Memorial drive to reach the river, or moving from Cambridge to Allston is dangerous, produces delays and can lead to accidents. All of this results in loss of productivity for the Harvard community.

### Realization

A non-conventional solution to the connectivity problem between Cambridge and Allston is not cheap.

On the other hand, anything which can save time is worth the effort. If a fraction of students and faculties can save time to commute near the Campus, these hours save thousands of hours of **work time** every year. An environmentally friendly campus is attractive for faculty, staff and students. A campus relieved from traffic would become a model for other places.

Part of the maintainance costs could be obtained from tourist tickets sold for the ride. The ride would be free for Harvard community. Tourists and visitors would have to pay a small fee. Especially a cable-car solution would attract visitors. Coffee shops and tourist shops at Cambridge and Allston could help financing the construction and maintainence the costs.