



The Ellis South End Neighborhood Association, Inc.  
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April 29, 2005

Mr. Andrew D. Brennan  
Director of Environmental Affairs  
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority  
10 Park Plaza, Room 6720  
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Mr. Brennan:

I am writing to inform the MBTA that The Ellis South End Neighborhood Association will oppose construction of the proposed Phase III Silver Line Portal on Columbus Avenue at Berkeley Street.

We understand that your report on Phase III is delayed. As such, we have taken the necessary time to meet with residents, affected businesses, elected officials, adjacent neighborhood associations, and community groups to ensure that our position as an Association is consistent with the wishes and best interests of the neighborhood. And it is.

We base our opposition on the following negative neighborhood impacts:

- Disruption of traffic flow into the South End by making Columbus Avenue one-way from Park Square to Berkeley Street
- Redirecting traffic into the South End via Cortes Street, which has no capacity to handle additional traffic flow.
- Already strained traffic patterns and potential spill-over to smaller residential streets (i.e. Cortes and Isabella Streets);
- Increased potential for, and severity of, rush hour traffic jams (Berkeley, Columbus Ave., Tremont, Herald, Arlington, and small side streets);
- Lack of neighborhood demand for Silver Line service on Columbus Avenue.
- Existing and faster and more direct neighborhood service to airport via Orange and Blue Lines;

- Inferior substitute ride to South End residents who were promised “an equal or better alternative” Orange Line replacement service on Washington Street;
- Added bus traffic in South End and Back Bay;
- Potential reduction in number of resident parking spaces;
- Increased traffic noise;
- Increased traffic vibrations;
- Negative groundwater impact in an already recognized ‘hotspot’ area;
- Lack of MBTA accountability on existing neighborhood groundwater problems;
- Reduced air quality;
- Negative impact on historic buildings, parks, cultural resources;
- Negative construction impact;
- Conflict with other very large construction projects about to begin in the same location, e.g. Columbus Center and Clarendon Tower;
- Negative impact on public safety—particularly for children using new parks and day care centers that will abut the proposed route as well as students, elderly and handicapped students who either live or attend classes on Warren Avenue and Berkeley Street.

Additionally, we are also concerned that the Columbus Portal has not been proposed as the best alternative, but rather as the most expedient. If it were the best, it surely would not have been proposed so late in the process where it presents itself as an after thought.

Given the significant negative impact that this Portal will have on our neighborhood and the tremendous cost of construction, we would expect that the MBTA would surely find the best solution, which we believe is clearly is not the Columbus Avenue Portal. If you have any questions, you can reach me at 617.563.2505.

Sincerely,

Norine Shults,  
President

Cc: Rep. Michael Capuano  
Mayor Thomas Menino  
Speaker Salvatore DiMasi  
Rep. Byron Rushing  
Rep. Marty Walz  
Councilor James Kelly