Status Report:

The Inner Belt

By ROBERT B. HANRON

This is where the Inner Belt stands today:

—From City sq., Charlestown, where the Inner Belt connects with the Central Artery, to Joy st., Somerville, has been approved by both Mayor Collins and Mayor Lawrence Bretta of Somerville. Construction is scheduled to get under way next year.

—The route through Cambridge from Joy st., Somerville, to Putnam av., near the Charles River, is still undecided. The state Department of Public Works had recommended an alignment along Brookline-Elm sts. in Cambridge, but Gov. Volpe ordered a new study. A determination is expected late this month or early in January.

—From Putnam av. and across the Charles River either by bridge or tunnel to Beacon st., Boston, is still under consideration by the Federal Bureau of Public Roads. It is expected the bureau will withhold its decision until the Cambridge alignment is determined.

—From Beacon st. to Massachusetts av., near Boston City Hospital where the Inner Belt connects with the Central Artery, has been approved by Mayor Collins and is under final design. Construction is scheduled to get under way in late 1967 or early 1968 depending upon the availability of Federal funds.

The Inner Belt, which officially will be called I-695, will be the most expensive stretch of road ever built in the Bay State.

It will be a little over 10 miles in length and three miles in diameter.

The cost is estimated at $250 million for construction and another $75 million for right-of-way takings.

The state will pay 10 percent of the cost and the remaining 90 percent will be picked up by Uncle Sam.

It will be a divided expressway with limited access and four lanes in each direction.

The belt would intercept seven radial arteries heading into the core city of Boston. They are:

- Callahan and Sumner Tunnels.
- Mystic River Bridge to I-95.
- I-93 in Somerville which runs through Andover, Methuen and into New Hampshire.
- Rte. 2 to Concord.
- Massachusetts Toll Turnpike.
- Southwest Expressway (I-95 south) to Providence.
- Southeast Expressway.

Five of these major arteries are shown on the accompanying map. The proposed connector of Rte. 2 with the Inner Belt is not shown since this hookup would occur in Cambridge in that portion of the route still not determined. The Southwest Expressway would join the Inner Belt along Ruggles st., near Columbus av. and Tremont st.

From Boston City Hospital through Roxbury and the Fens to Brookline av., the road will be depressed except for two short blocks near Mass. av., Roxbury.

It will be tunneled from Huntington av. to Brookline av. to retain the beauty of the Fenway.

The D.P.W. has recommended that the belt cross Charles River through a tunnel rather than by bridge and this is now under study by the Bureau of Public Roads.

Cost of a tunnel here is estimated at $45.1 million and a double-decked bridge at $22.8 million.

In view of the President's recent cutback of 17.2 percent in highway funds, the feeling now is that the bridge will be approved by the bureau instead of the more expensive tunnel.

The department had also recommended a Brookline-Elm st. alignment for the road through Cambridge from Putnam av. to Joy st., Somerville, but this was called back for review by Gov. Volpe.

A group of Cambridge citizens has proposed an alternate alignment along Portland-Albany sts. and this is being studied in detail by the D.P.W.

Construction cost for the Brookline-Elm st. route is estimated at $57.6 million and right-of-way costs an additional $15.3 million.

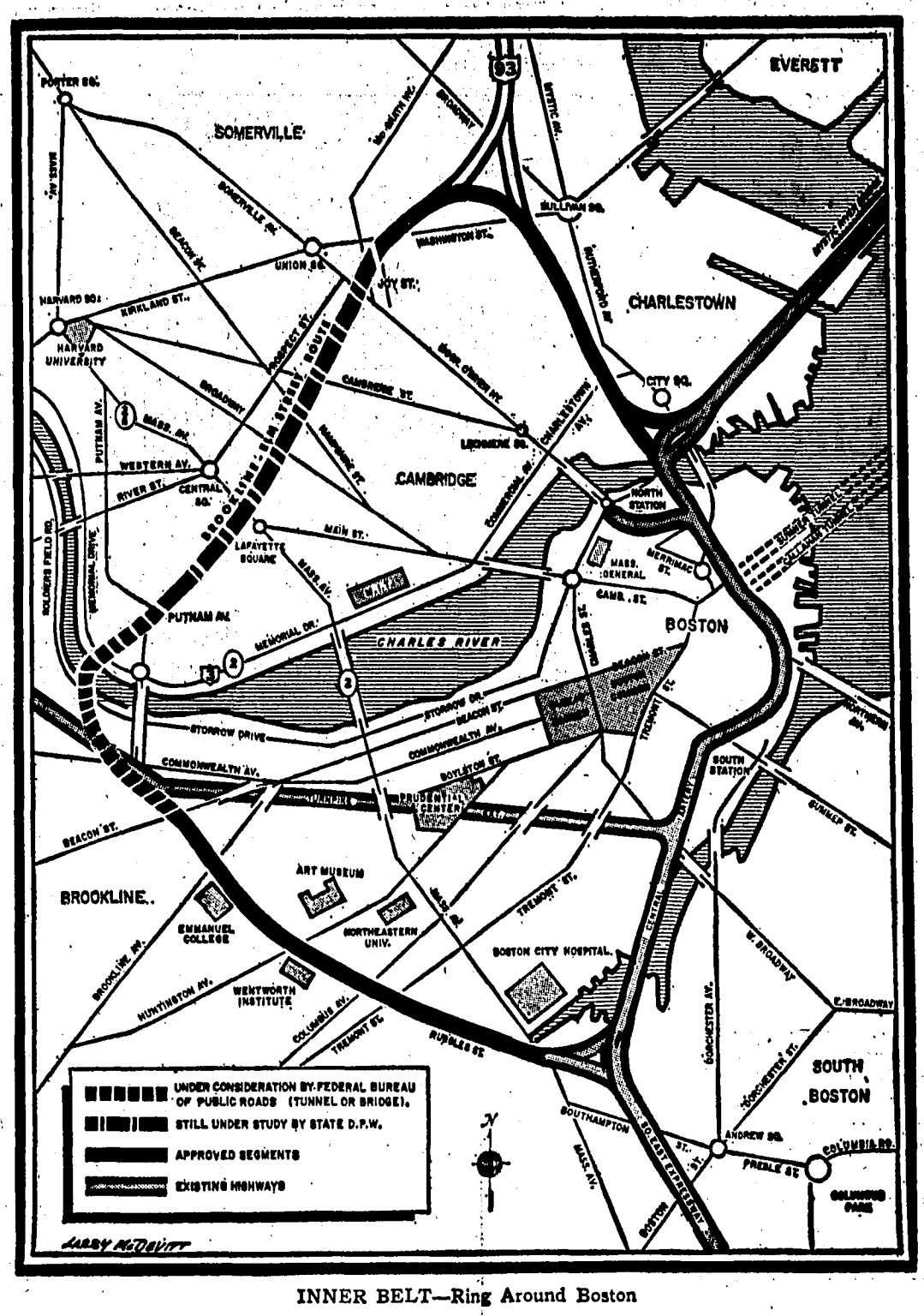
Under the D.P.W. proposal the route would run depressed through Cambridge. Legislation has been approved which would allow construction over the depressed road through the use of air rights.

There are some suggestions that the road through Cambridge should be a tunnel, but D.P.W. engineers point out that this would not only cost more, it would not decrease the number of homes or businesses displaced.

If the Cambridge alignment were approved today, it would take a minimum of two years before the design could be completed and the D.P.W. would be able to award a contract. No work on this segment is expected prior to 1969.

D.P.W. Comr. Edward J. Ribbs said the cutback in Federal highway funds ordered by President Johnson may extend the completion date for the Inner Belt.

"It does not mean we will not build the road," he emphasized. "It is an essential part of our highway plan and it is needed."



INNER BELT—Ring Around Boston

City Apartments on an Ecumenical Basis

Suburban Churches Respond to Urban Call

By ANTHONY J. YUDIS

"Concord Sq. Trust" . . . "Low Cost Housing Inc." . . . "Bishop's Housing" . . . "Union Homes, Inc." . . . "Tuckerman's Housing Corp."

Sounds like a list from a recent real estate journal. Chances are, though, you won't find the names in any realty publication even though they are corporate firms dealing in real estate.

Each has something in common: a drive to undertake an urban social responsibility. Each has a church or churches behind it assuming a greater role in the problems of the inner city, particularly where it counts most to hard - pressed families—in housing.

In some cases it's a church that has been active in the community for many years. With others it is an attempt on the part of suburban churches to get involved in an ecumenical partnership on a metropolitan basis to help the core city.

All are now at work in the South End in housing rehabilitation projects for low and middle income families.

Among the groups is a partnership that is building a bridge between wealthier suburban areas and the South End, an ecumenical movement sparked by a Newton church in which 20 churches are participating.

Banded under a corporate umbrella known as Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries (C.M.M.)," the churches have launched a three-part program in the South End. This includes housing rehabilitation, volunteer recruitment of help to existing social agencies and a project dealing with urban education.

The education project is geared to the suburban communities themselved, trying to acquaint them with what the issues are in the core city. The project is seeking ways in which suburban communities and their churches can begin responding in a creative way on a metropolitan basis.

"While the ideas were developed two years ago," said Rev. Charles Harper of Newton's Eliot Congregational Church, "we launched the program in January of this year. We are not in a position now where we can blow our trumpet, we are still in the organizational stage."

Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries, thus far, had rehabilitated one South End building at 34 Concord sq. which primarily will serve as headquarters for C.M.M. Rev. Harper said he and his wife and three-year-old daughter will live there and work at the headquarters for C.M.M. The structure has one other apartment, a three-room flat to rent at about $75 a month, he said.

"We are in the process of passing papers on two more buildings. That should give us six apartments," he said.

"What we are trying to do is to find ways in which the resources of the suburbs can combine with the intercity in a cooperative effort to get at the problems of the core city. We are operating under the assumption that there are resources in both places. The core city problems, in the final analysis, are regional and metropolitan problems.

"And," he added, "we don't see ourselves even getting close to solving the problems, but more or less of setting some kind of pattern of cooperation."

The clergyman noted that seminars for clergy on the role of the church and clergy in an urban society were held at Northeastern University.

At present there are two 16-week educational programs going on. One is dealing with social welfare specifically.

Each participant will prepare a paper outlining a program by which his particular congregation and community can be "sensitized" to the issues of poverty and can move from a study phase to an action phase. The seminar definitely will be oriented toward action, he said.

C.M.M. formed the corporate realty firm, Concord Sq. Trust, for ownership of properties it purchases for rehabilitation. Trustees, all laymen, are Russell Broad, First Boston Corp., and Robert Leventhal, both of Newton; Arthur Wilcox, Boston, Harold Mock, Wellesley, and Earl P. Stevenson, Newton, former president of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. Stevenson also is chairman of C.M.M. and the treasurer is Donald Price.

Stevenson is chairman. He was one of the originators of the program through the Elliot Church, of which he is a member. Also credited with getting the program underway is Rev. Harold Fray, minister of the church.

C.M.M. is run by a council comprising two representatives from each participating congregation and an executive committee. Stevenson also serves as council chairman. The council as a governing body meets monthly.

Thus far the participating churches, through sale of notes to members, and by conventional bank loans, have raised $36,500 working capital for housing purposes, according to Rev. Harper.

He said the group also would be interested in sponsoring new non-profit housing, but was told by officials of the Boston Redevelopment Authority that it would be much more feasible to concentrate on rehabilitation.

"Renewal Director Edward J. Logue's position," he explained, "is that there are sufficient numbers of local groups to do the new housing and that a real need exists for work in rehabilitation."

How many apartments would the suburban group be interested in renovating?

"We haven't really set any concrete goals," said Rev. Mr. Harper, "although we sometimes have talked in terms of doing about 100 apartments.

"One problem is finding properties for sale at prices low enough to do rehabilitation. If this becomes impossible, we will move in other areas, but right now our commitment is in the South End."

While this is only a beginning, he said, he sees it as "a move away from some of our village provincialism into an understanding of our metropolitan existence."

"In the long run, this may be the most important thing we do."

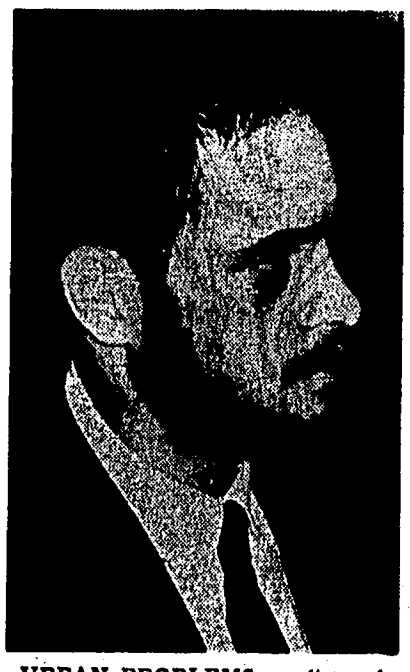
The suburban churches, he noted, have a lot of young people from which to recruit volunteers. They also contain a high professional membership, such as architects, legal experts and contractors, who also might be tapped for volunteer service.

Congregations in C.M.M. include, besides the Eliot Church, others in Newton such as Grace Episcopal, Sacred Heart, St. Bernard's, Temple Shalom, First Unitarian Society, First Church in Newton and the Second Church in Newton.

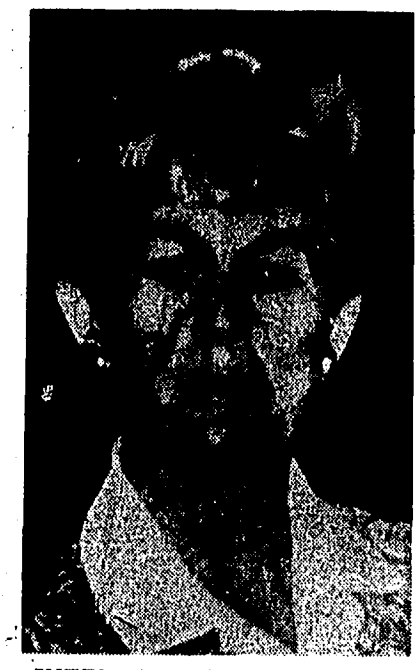
South End churches taking part include Union Methodist and St. Stephen's Episcopal. Other Boston churches are Old South and City Missionary Society.

Suburban churches include Burlington Congregational, First Congregational, Wellesley Hills; First Parish, Lincoln; Phillips Congregational, Watertown; Pleasant St. Congregational, Arlington; St. Brigid's, Lexington; Hancock

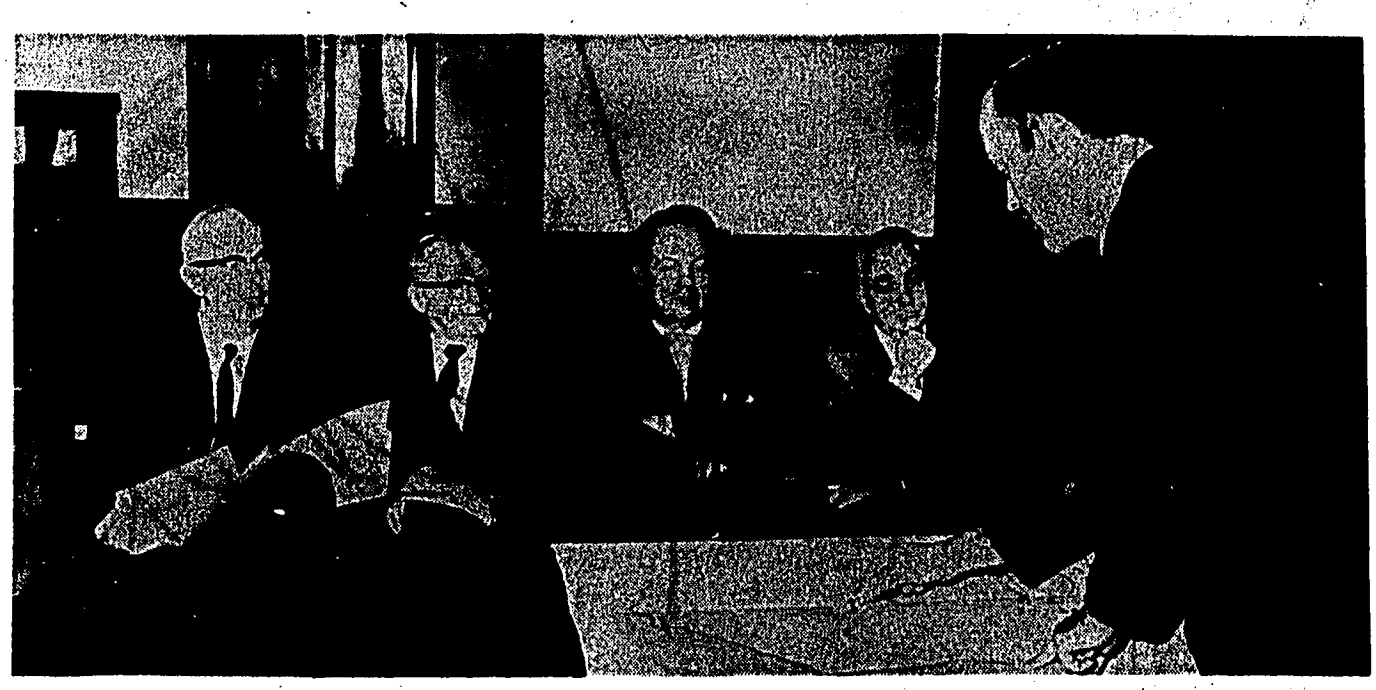
In Monday morning's Globe — A common fear.



URBAN PROBLEMS are listened to by Thomas Ward, First Parish Church, Lincoln.



INTERESTED in South End problems, Mrs. Patricia Daley, of Sacred Heart parish in Newton.



HOW SUBURBIA CAN HELP is explained by Gordon Gottsche, Boston Redevelopment Authority relocation officer, speaking to Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries, which is seeking to provide low and medium income level apartments.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.