Boston's New Urban Ring:
An Antidote to Urban Fragmentation

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THE PROBLEM OF FRAGMENTATION

The premise of this paper is that recognizable spatial order and hierarchy are necessary if we are to attain meaningful social, political, and cultural diversity in our cities; and in the space between them and the suburbs. We should not expect that simply because buildings look different from one another, and because the landscape between them seems fragmented and uncontrolled, that we are representing cultural heterogeneity or political pluralism. We are not. Our contemporary urban and suburban landscapes are frequently a homogeneous assemblage of meaningless commercial difference. It is not only that they are spatially fragmented—most of us are well aware of "suburban sprawl" but that the spatial disconnection between communities reinforces their political fragmentation and isolation as well. Without a physical landscape of shared interests and experiences, it is more difficult to find political common ground between different interests and groups. As what were once shared political interests become "privatized", our awareness of the polity as a whole diminishes. If we want to resist this fragmentation and if we want a heterogeneous landscape capable of representing real differences in culture, politics, and social order; it is my position that we need, paradoxically, a strong, centered, spatial order that can lend singular hierarchy to the shared, public life that we purport to value; and occasionally to raise its stature above that of private enterprise. The subject of this paper is a proposal to transform the metropolitan area centered on Boston, MA into just such a meaningfully heterogeneous landscape by means of a cohesive urban design strategy called the New Urban Ring.

The New Urban Ring is a proposal to assemble a ring of spaces (composed largely of under-used parts of the city such as railroad right-of-ways, turnpike air-rights, neighborhood streets, bridges, tunnels, bikeways, and even parts of the airport) around the central core of Boston—and to transform this sequence of spaces into one of the most functionally and symbolically important in the region. The New Urban Ring would serve the following purposes: 1) to provide a circumferential transportation system to link the existing radial subway and transit lines between the city center and Route
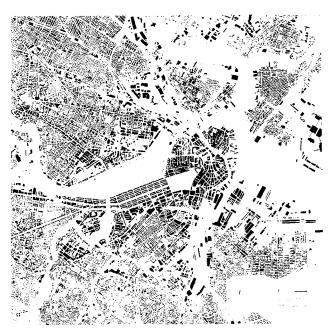

Figure 1 Ground Drawing of the Boston Region
George Thrush Design
(Drawing by Salvatore Raffone)

128; amid the neighborhoods, nearby suburbs, and under-developed industrial land; 2) to provide a continuous boulevard for pedestrians, cyclists, and other passengers to move through, rather than between neighborhoods; 3) to act as a catalyst for urban development in the area between the city and the suburbs, and thereby allow the urbanity of the city to grow to metropolitan dimensions, rather than allow it to continue to whither in the face of competition from edge cities and suburban sprawl; and 4) perhaps most important of all, to provide a place for renewed civic representation; for public buildings, spaces, and monuments to accrue meaning and express difference by virtue of their relationship to one another. The New Urban Ring is in some important ways a proposal to resist the commercial forces that make our society and its built environment increasingly homogeneous.

If we desire that meaningful difference in our society be

The New Urban Ring showing Existing Neighborhoods
George Thrush Design
(Drawing by *Salvatore Raffone)*

reflected in the built environment, we must find a way to make difference recognizable. The New Urban Ring is a proposal to establish a a shared realm; a datum around Boston that conforms to and reinforces the city's urban morphology. In relation to this "common ground [1], differences in ethnicity, race, politics, style, and ideas will be more recognizable, and therefore more meaningful.

HOMOGENEITY AND HETEROGENEITY

Many architectural, social, and political critics, including Richard Sennett, Mike Davis, and Mickey Kaus [2], among many others, have discussed the ways in which we avoid the social, cultural and political pluralism promised by American cities, and create artificially homogeneous communities instead. They make distinctions between public and private life (Sennett), actual and pseudo-public places (Davis), and "social" versus "civic" government spending (Kaus). Sennett and Davis speak to the fact that architecture and urban design are often complicit in this descent into individual isolationism, and the loss of public life that frequently accompanies it. Kaus attempts to re-define government expenditures in terms of shared, rather than individual, good. These critiques rely on making distinctions between economic identity on the one hand, and political or civic identity on the other.

When we look around us at even the most successful of today's urban developments we see commercial culture as the only source of our collective identity. From the waterfront developments of The Rouse Corporation, to Disney, and a host of other increasingly "mall-like" new urban districts, we see the retail economy as the only aspect of life that we all experience together—where the shops, wares,

food, habits, and activities of the participants all seem remarkably alike. This phenomenon is the source of a very real fear about the increasing homogeneity in our society. It is often taken to be the most pressing problem in our rapidly changing culture. We buy the same products; watch the same TV shows; eat the same fast foods; experience the same landscape– indeed, the latent heterogeneity of American society seems to be evaporating despite the fact that the country is composed of more different kinds of people than ever. Meaningful differences between people and places seem to be disappearing in the face of the atomizing impact of rampant commercialism and burgeoning communication technologies.

To be fair, these changes are in the very nature of capitalism. The very things that make it a responsive economic system– product standardization for efficient production, prompt world-wide distribution to markets, and the ongoing commodification of alternatives– are the things that tend to trouble us most. Capitalism *does* tend to make us more homogeneous in terms of how we define our identity in economic terms. But by fretting about the results of our chosen economic system, (which consumers show no sign whatever of wanting to change), many critics miss the opportunity to resist the increasing cultural and spatial homogeneity of our society through non-economic, or civic means.

The idea behind the New Urban Ring suggests that this kind of commercial homogeneity is in many ways unavoidable. The problem is the lack of a countervailing force. The problem is a lack of meaningful difference, and an impoverished shared, or civic life. This lack of civic commonality threatens us much more than the the fact that we will soon all buy everything we own from "The GAP," "Wal-Mart," and "McDonald's." Because while it is disturbing that we all may one day distinguish one another by whether or not our jeans are "stone-washed", or by whether we prefer "Pepsi," or "Coke," it is more disturbing that we may take this to be the total measure of our social worth. Mickey Kaus, the author of a strategy for the renewal of American Liberalism titled, provocatively, *The* End *of Equality,* advocates many political measures that might replace what he calls "money liberalism" (or government efforts to try to balance private economic fortunes) with "civic liberalism" (a more direct strategy of renewing civic life and civic obligations)', but they are all means by which we might resist the superficial differences of capitalism with some elements of a more substantive commonality associated with a more cohesive society. A more cohesive society that might see benefits to the community as clearly as we now see benefits to ourselves as individuals.

A ROLE FOR ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN

There are many ways to imagine a more cohesive society. In his book, Kaus proposes a number of changes in government policy and personal behavior. But there is also a role for

architecture and urban design. Unlike politics, social programs, or other ideological constructs, the design of the built environment can affect us physically and spiritually, as well as intellectually and economically. It can transform our experiences, and can act on people of widely differing backgrounds at the same time. Unlike most political ideas or programs, public space acts on us as a group, in addition to affecting us as individuals.

Architecture and urban design can lend hierarchy to space and experience. We know this from our experience of buildings, of course, where major spaces are clearly distinguished from minor, or lesser ones. We also know it in traditional urban design, where a major building or plaza is distinguished from its less important neighbors by use of scale, size, and character. But with the New Urban Ring this notion of using composition to lend hierarchy to urban spaces is taken to a larger scale. The New Urban Ring is not only about transforming the spatial relationships within a particular district or neighborhood, but rather about linking those districts into a network which as a whole serves to transform the public character of the region.

This idea of conceiving of the region, or the public realm , as a whole is critical here. The commercial landscape continually reduces both the environment and the citizen. It makes even an historic district nothing more than a backdrop for a storefront, and it makes the citizen nothing but a consumer. But architecture and urban design have the power to change that. They can transform the scale of groups of individuals into the scale of a larger whole. This understanding of the region as a whole is essential if we are to see fates of all citizens as interdependent. No progressive policy aimed at the "common good" can succeed if their is no understanding of what constitutes the "public realm". A simple example is the Boston Common, the city's primary shared public space. It belongs to everyone as both a right and a responsibility. It is the "common ground" of the center city. It stands as a spatial analogue to a politically shared fate.

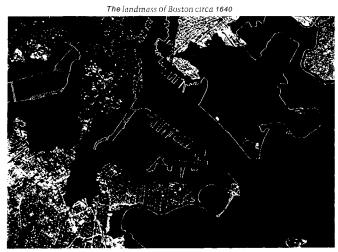## BOSTON'S SPATIAL AND POLITICAL HISTORY: A FRAGMENTED CITY WITH A STRONG CENTER

Boston is the center of an ideal region in which to discuss these issues. The region has long been subject to forces that pull it apart. It has a history of physical– as well as political, ethnic, racial, and religious—fragmentation. But the City of Boston also has a remarkable history of spatial clarity and hierarchy; as seen in the Boston Common, Faneuil Hall, The State House, the Esplanade, and the Emerald Necklace; and even Government Center and the New City Hall. There has always been an unclear relationship, however, between the city's center and its surrounding parts.

What began as a "hilly peninsula, almost completely surrounded by water"[4] has been transformed through landfill over the past three and one half centuries into a much larger, flatter, and more contiguous land mass. One can follow the

evolution from the original Shawmut peninsula; to the early town with its active waterfront; to the thickened "neck" connecting the peninsula back to Roxbury; to the enlargement of Charlestown and the beginnings of the long process to in-fill the Back Bay; to the enlargement of East Boston, the completion of the Back Bay, and the construction of Fan Pier; and finally, the completion of the in-fill at Fort Point Channel, Charlestown, and East Boston for what is now Logan Airport. But much of the city's original form came from civic divisions that remain to this day. Charlestown, Cambridge, Brookline and Boston Proper, South Boston, and East Boston, can all trace aspects of their distinctiveness today to the physical separation of their pasts. All of these places existed in Boston's earliest days, but they were more a series of islands than part of a cohesive city. And it was due to their separation that the system of spokes connecting them to the hub of the original Shawmut Peninsula was born. When there were large bodies of water separating these communities, ferries and bridges were the only way to connect them. Over time these initial radial routes from the center of Boston Proper became the primary roads in the adjoining communities as well.

As the city grew, however, the watery voids that separated the landmasses began to shrink. A prolonged series of landfill projects began to construct the Boston that we know today. But the system of radial arteries lived on. Moreover, they became more important than ever as orientation devices and as dividers of neighborhoods and communities, because even as the region became a more contiguous piece land, its neighborhoods remained quite distinct. They were created independently of one another during this evolution of landmass and shoreline, so they often shared little in the way of orientation, density, and urban morphology.

So, from a physical standpoint, Boston was conceived as a collection of parts; both with respect to the parts of the city

The landmass of Boston circa 1640

The Landmass of Boston circa 1640 as compared to the Present *from* Cityscapes of Boston: An American City Through Time Robert Campbell and Peter Vanderwarker, p. 1, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1992
(Composite Graphic by Alex Krieger)

that remain separated from the "hub" by water, such as Charlestown, East Boston, and to a lesser extent, South Boston; and with respect to its internal "islands" of Roxbury, Dorchester, Brookline, and Allston/Brighton. Landfill has subsequently made whole that which was separated at the start, though it has never fully succeeded in re-connecting the fabric of the region.

The physical distinctions that describe Boston's neighborhoods and nearby suburbs are reinforced by political, ethnic, racial, and cultural ones that mark the region's ideals and prejudices. The city has had a long history of conflict between local and regional interests. Perhaps the best known, and most easily recognized, was the friction between Catholics and Protestants that began with the arrival of large numbers of Catholic Irish in the 1850's. Their battles with the Protestants for political supremacy left the Catholic city at odds with the Protestant state. This relationship has evolved over time, but what is remarkable is the extent to which one can still describe the area's politics in these terms.

In the meantime, many other groups emerged and today Boston has a wide range of ethnic, racial, religious, and political orientations to its different neighborhoods. Around the New Urban Ring, South Boston and Charlestown, remain largely Irish, Catholic, and White; Roxbury is almost entirely Black; Cambridge, and Somerville are very mixed, with Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Italians, and Irish; East Cambridge has a large Brazilian and Portuguese community; East Boston is Italian, with many newer Asian and Hispanic immigrants; Brookline is home to a large Jewish population; Fenway is composed of Yuppies, students and Gays; and the South End is a diverse mix of artists, Yuppies, Gays, Blacks, and Hispanics. Each of these communities is largely autonomous. They are near to one another, and yet they remain discrete.
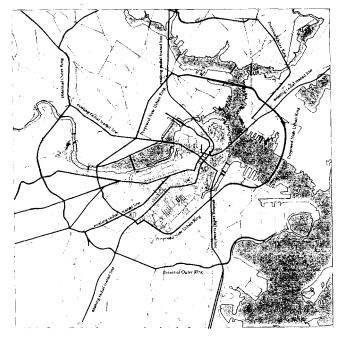
American cities are filled with ethnic and cultural enclaves like these, but Boston has been particularly resistant to planning and designing common ground between them because of the traditional conflict between the city and all of its neighbors restrained inter-municipal cooperation and regional planning. Due to its inherently fractured and separated physical character, the area known as "the Boston Region" —which is actually no larger than an average size metropolis—has never been planned like one. So in a place where cooperation between small political entities is essential, there have been profound political obstacles to coordinating the physical planning of the city as a whole.

REGIONALISM

In addition to this history and landscape of fragmentation, there is also a history of regionalism, which has spawned many proposal to repair the region's fragmented past. The proposals of visionaries like Frederick Law Olmsted, Charles Eliot, and Sylvester Baxter all sought to resist fragmentation and parochialism in the metropolitan area. Beginning in 1880, when Olmsted began his consulting for the City of

Boston[5], through the 1890's, Olmsted created what we know as the "Emerald Necklace", or a system of parks and boulevards that served not only to control flood waters and beautify undesirable land, but also to cut across neighborhood boundaries to connect parts of the city that had never been connected before. This was followed some time later by the creation of the Metropolitan District Commission which regionalized recreation and open space. The MDC continues to serve as the regional protector of the Charles River
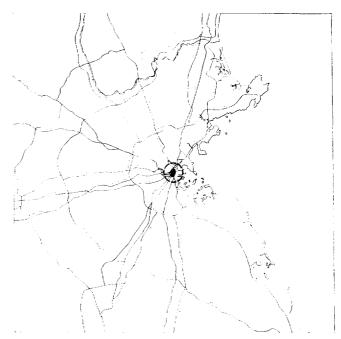

Proposed Inner and Outer Boulevards
Boston Society of Architects, 1907, Arthur Shurtleff
compared with
Author's Proposed New Urban Ring (inner) and Potential Outer
Ring, 1995, George Thrush Design

waterfront, regional recreation facilities, and public parks.

But the most important precursors to the regionalism of the New Urban Ring were Arthur Shurtleff and the Boston Society of Architects' (BSA) Committee on Municipal Improvements. The Committee's proposal for an Inner and Outer Boulevard was remarkably like today's proposed New Urban Ring . It consisted of circumferential boulevards (actually more arc-like than ring-like) that would cross municipal, class, and racial boundaries. Shurtleff's analytical drawings of both existing and proposed radial and circumferential routes throughout the region offers the evidence that such boulevards were necessary then, as well as today . To reinforce the similarity of conditions which support the need for the New Urban Ring (in any of its variants) today, one can refer to the images of the contemporary city with overlays of the BSA's 1907 plan, its 1994 plan, and the author's alignments of the New Urban Ring . While they are all different, each alignment takes advantage of the same latent morphology in the region, and each connects radial routes through circumferential connections. Each of these urban boulevards has the added regionalizing effect of crossing economic, ethnic, class, and racial boundaries.

The regionalization of the Boston area's transportation infrastructure made the entire region much more accessible . It became possible to commute between the city center and the more distant suburbs. In the 1950's the State built Route 128, a circumferential highway running through Boston's nearby suburbs. This new transportation infrastructure became the generator of an unprecedented amount of commercial development in those suburbs, later becoming known as "Amercia's Technology Highway". This was followed by a second ring highway, Route I-495, that allowed the region to expand further outward. This series of ring highways was to have culminated in the so-called "Inner-Belt" expressway; an elevated, inner-city by-pass that would have razed whole segments of Boston, Brookline, Cambridge and Somerville. The Inner-Belt, whose route is nearly identical to that of the New Urban Ring, was halted in 1971 by citizen opposition which marked the beginning of a watershed change in the relationship of regional transportation planning to the landscape of the cities it serves. In the 1980's and 1990's this new thinking in transportation planning brought us "inter-modal" stations, such as those at Quincy and Alewife, that offered automobile commuters the chance to exchange their cars for public transit while still well outside of the city. This resuscitated transportation network also took the concerns of inner-city pedestrians to heart for the first time since the advent of the large scale, post war, highway systems. Special attention was given to the quality of stations, and in the case of the Southwest Corridor Park, an entirely new pedestrian sequence was created alongside the new Orange Line.

But there remained an aspect of even these enlightened transportation planning efforts that continued to segregate the region. For even as the area's radial connections between inner city and suburb were being strengthened, the need for

Regional Road Network and Coastline
George Thrush Design
(Drawing by Salvatore Raffone)

circumferential connections through the often under-developed "middle-landscape" of nearby suburbs and disenfranchised urban neighborhoods was being ignored. The interests of the suburban commuters to downtown were being served at the expense of the even greater needs of the residents of these residents of the space "in-between". So it became clear that some sort of ring, or belt, or loop was needed; something that approximated the scale and connectivity of the Inner-Belt, but that served instead as more of a urban development generator; much as Route 128 had for the suburbs a generation earlier.

THE NEW URBAN RING: AN ANTIDOTE TO URBAN FRAGMENTATION

So the mission of the New Urban Ring is a complex one. It is to resist the latent parochialism of the Boston region from both a political and bureaucratic standpoint and to take advantage of the opportunities for regionalism. The intersection of these goals could create the physical landscape in which a new kind of politics, one that political writer E.J. Dionne calls the need for a strong political middle [6]; a political movement that could harness that great deal about which Americans do *not* disagree. This will not be easy. As Dionne notes, "conservatives and liberals are suspicious of an ethic of the 'public good' for very different reasons. Conservatives who dislike government see the revival of a civic politics as a way of invoking old language to justify modem big government. Liberals, fearful of too much talk about virtue and community, fear that civic talk will mean the creation of a homogeneous community. When liberals hear talk about 'the common good,' they often think of Jerry

Falwell."[7] Mickey Kaus is more specific in his description of exactly how we might physically achieve this "common good." His "civic liberalism" is a program for required national service, national health care, the draft, public day care, and civic celebrations; all as a means of encouraging the racial and class mixing that traditional "money liberalism" has failed so miserably to produce.[8] But the program and alignment for Boston's New Urban Ring is designed specifically to make a place for Kaus and Dionne's vision of a renewed public sphere.

The proposed alignment for the New urban Ring would connect several existing, or potential "civic centers". It would link Dudley Square in Roxbury to the art institutions and universities of the Back Bay Fens; to Audabon Circle and Boston University; across the Charles River to Cambridgeport; along a RR right-of-way to a new civic center at MIT and Massachusetts Avenue; up to Kendall Square and its biomedical and computer research areas; to Cambridge Street and the Portuguese community; to the artists cooperative in Somerville near Union Square, to Sullivan Square; down along the waterfront in Charlestown; across the harbor to East Boston's Central Square; over the toll plaza for the Callahan and Sumner Tunnels to the Airport transit station; through the new Third Harbor Tunnel into South Boston and the new Courthouse district; along the Haul Road to a new civic center for South Boston at Broadway, and over l-93 to Melnea Cass Boulevard and back to Roxbury. Along this route, one could travel from one civic center to another. It would offer a remarkably articulate sequence of the different kinds of public life in the region.

But the New Urban Ring would also serve as a catalyst for new development along, and adjacent, to it. There is ample evidence of private development following transportation infrastructure. In this region the extension of the Red Line, and the booming development that followed in North Cambridge and Somerville, is often cited as an example of this phenomenon. In this respect those area along the ring that remain extremely underdeveloped would grow. The clearest examples are the areas around the Boston Sand and Gravel Plant between Cambridge and Charlestown; the part of South Boston along the Haul Road, and the parts of the South End and Lower Roxbury that border Melnea Cass Boulevard.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGIES AND TYPOLOGIES

In order for all of these opportunities to find their way into the real experience of the city, however, different ring typologies would have to be developed to accommodate the widely varied spatial conditions found in the Boston area. There would be at least three basic cross-sectional typologies. One would be a single, complex boulevard, along the lines of Vienna's *Ringstrasse*, that would include dedicated lanes for rapid transit, ample pedestrian paths, and controlled vehicular lanes. This could be uses in places where there is little in the way of existing development, such as along RR right-of-ways or in other wide areas. The second would be a two or three road

system of parallel streets that would allow the separation of truck service and automobile traffic from the transit and pedestrian based central street. Such a system would create the possibility of two-sided building types like supermarkets which could sit directly on the street front on the central boulevard, while retaining ample parking access from one of the secondary circumferential streets. This could be used where large existing streets are available, or could be transformed. Finally, in some of the tighter existing conditions, the Ring might continue with only allies of trees and building set-back and height regulations to help transform existing streets into parts of the New Urban Ring. In cases like these, the transportation component itself might be underground. But what is important is that the specific character of the Ring itself could vary widely depending on conditions. What is important is that it retain its continuity, and most importantly, it spatial hierarchy within the surrounding landscape. The Ring must be perceivable as a primary space.

In the most dense existing urban conditions, the Ring might have to be apprehended as an episodic series of nodes, rather than as a continuous spatial corridor. In this configuration, the character and definition of the nodes, presumably at key transportation transfer points, would be especially important. In either case however, the Ring could perform a critical role in the spatial orientation of both visitors and residents alike, helping to form a mental map of one's surroundings; something which has always been notoriously difficult in Boston— even for long time residents. By making constant reference to a single center (the downtown core, or center of the Ring), both the physical and political structure of the city are reinforced.
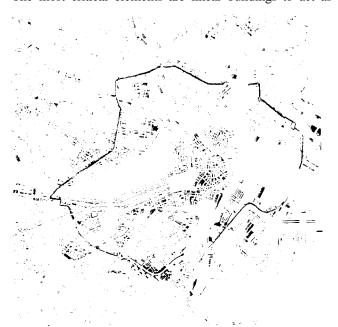
Building regulations would, of course, depend on the selection of either the continuous or episodic structure for the Ring (and there is no reason why both could not be employed along different portions of the Ring). For the continuous, street level condition, building set-backs, height limitations, and colonnade dimensions would be part of the visual guidelines used to inform development along the alignment. This type of urban design strategy would work best with a surface transportation system, such as a trolley or dedicated bus line, because its visibility along the route would be important for maintaining the Ring's "continuity". While the episodic, node-based Ring would rely more on landmarks, towers, and other identifiable elements visible from a great distance, and as such would be able to work with a subway type transportation system, because the stations would occur at the specified nodes and their route beyond the nodes would be of less importance.

A CASE STUDY: MELNEA CASS BOULEVARD

If it is true that the fragmentation that occurs between Boston's prosperous downtown and its affluent suburbs is both physical and cultural; and that the introduction of a measure of civic homogeneity could actually bring about more meaningful political cohesion in our society; then the

true test of the New Urban Ring is its ability to reconstitute some part of a fragmented community into something that is at once more internally cohesive, and a stronger part of a greater whole. The proposal shown here is an urban design plan for Melnea Cass Boulevard . Melnea Cass Boulevard is a particularly opportune section of Boston in which to examine the potential influence of the New Urban Ring idea. It is already something more than a mere local street as it was constructed on the alignment of what was intended to be the raised cross-town "the Inner Belt" expressway. When the highway's construction was halted in 1971, the destructive swath of preparatory demolition had already occurred; and Melnea Cass Boulevard was left as a wide, tree-lined surface route through one of the city's most disenfranchised districts. Sitting between the neighborhoods of Roxbury and the South End, Melnea Cass already has the elements of continuity and imageability that will be essential in the creation of the New Urban Ring. It has intimations of the scale necessary to transform the city. But it lacks many things as well. It lacks manufacturing, retail, housing, and civic space of the sort that makes neighborhoods part of the city.

The Proposal shown here is an example of how the physical needs of the community, the urban design character of the New Urban Ring, and the possibility for meaningful difference within the region can be accomplished in a specific place. This is not an example of "planning" alone, nor is the content of the buildings shown developed enough to be called "architecture"; rather it is an attempt to bridge the gap between the scope, power and influence of large scale planning, and the representational power of architecture and urban design.

The buildings and spaces represented here are quite simple. The most critical elements are linear buildings to act as
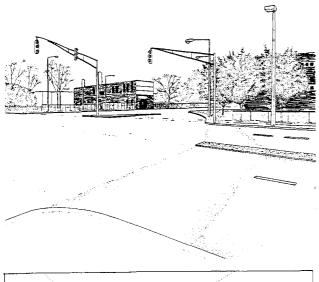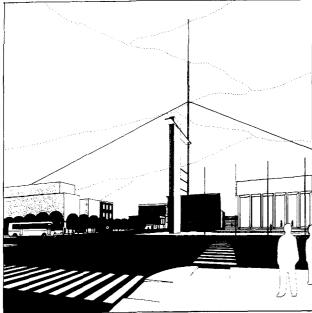

Melnea Cass Boulevard Urban Design Proposal
George Thrush Design
(Drawing by Salvatore Raffone)

containers and definers of the "ring" boulevard. They serve a variety of functions: apartment blocks with retail at the bottom; the office portions of manufacturing, light industrial, and large retail operations; schools, recreation centers, and office space. Next, there are the transportation nodes along the New Urban Ring. Each is marked by a kiosk and tower, which would be lit at night so as to further orient citizens from large distances. There is also a major civic building located at the "gateway to Roxbury" at the comer of Washington Street and Melnea Cass Boulevard, across the street from an existing park, and connected to a new transit station. The experience of the continuity of the New Urban Ring can be seen in the accompanying views. At the proposal's southern end, there is a large parking structure to help transfer automobile traffic onto the New Urban Ring's transit system. But this "kit of parts" is designed to be woven into the adjoining neighborhoods of a variety of types, so that the physical gaps that currently separate so many of Boston's neighborhoods and nearby suburbs can be repaired over time.

REGIONAL MASTER PLAN: THE KEY

This proposal for Melnea Cass Boulevard is but one of many such proposals that could be spawned by the New Urban Ring. The idea has tremendous power because it need not, (and indeed could not and should not), be implemented all at one time. Instead it is can serve as the backbone of a regional "master plan" that would encourage development in the Boston region that would be integrated, progressive, and morphologically appropriate, without being unnecessarily nostalgic in the process. Using the New Urban Ring as a regional "master plan" would do more for maintaining the oft-cited and presumably much-loved "character" of Boston than
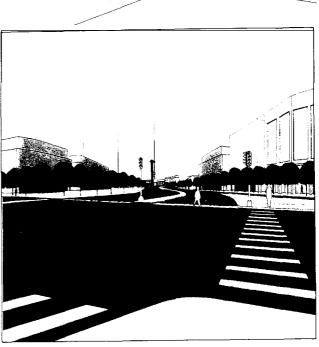

Melnea Cass Boulevard Urban Design Proposal
on Regional Figure / Ground Drawing
George Thrush Design
(Drawing by Salvatore Raffone)

"Gateway to Roxbury"
Washington Street and Melnea Cass Boulevard
Existing and Proposed Views
George Thrush Design
(Drawing by Salvatore Raffone)

"View from Ruggles T-Station"
Ruggles and Tremont Streets
Existing and Proposed Views
George Thrush Design
(Drawing by Salvatore Raffoone)

any collection of historical stylistic guidelines. Such a plan could have a major impact on many important projects that are being considered right now. The location of a "megaplex,"[9] either as a whole, or more preferably, as a series of parts connected by the New Urban Ring is one example, but there are several others. The New Urban Ring is a way of thinking about the region's future. It is a way of coordinating concerns that are often thought to be discrete and separate, and of addressing them with a broad vision. When we talk about our fragmented society, our lack of shared interests, and the apparently growing inability of politics to address these needs, we must not forget that as architects and urban designers, we can play a great role in resisting these destructive forces. The New Urban Ring is an effort to do just that.
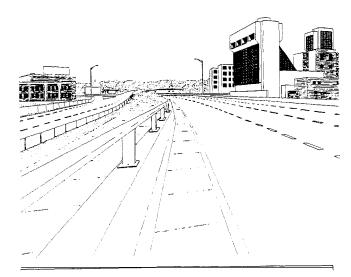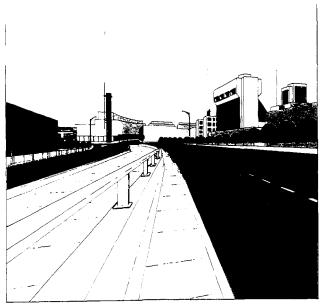
NOTES

[1] This notion of "common ground" is the political and social one articulated in J. Anthony Lukas' book, *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families,* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985

[2] *The Fall of Public Man.* Sennett, Richard. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1974; *City of Quartz.* Davis, Mike. London: Verso, an Imprint of New Left Books, 1990; *The End of Equality.* Kaus, Mickey. New York: Basic Books, 1992

[3] Kaus describes the failure of what he calls *money liberalism,* or the traditional liberal agenda that "seeks to prevent income differences from corroding social equality by the simple expedient of reducing the incomes differences – or, more accurately, *suppressing* the income differences continually generated in a capitalist economy". In its place, he offers *civic liberalism,* which "pursues social equality directly, through government

"Arrival from Southeast Expressway"
Melnea Cass Boulevard
Existing and Proposed Views
George Thrush Design
(Drawing by Salvatore Raffone)

action, rather than by manipulating the unequal distribution of income generated in the capitalist marketplace". This distinction between money liberalism and civic liberalism holds tremendous opportunities for programming a re-designed landscape for America's cities. *The End of Equality,* p.18

[4] *Boston: A Topographical History.* Whitehill, Walter Muir. Cambridge, MA: Belknapi Harvard University Press, 1968, p.1

[5] *Planning the City Upon the Hill,* p. 90-93. Kennedy, Lawrence W. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1992

[6] *Why Americans Hate Politics.* Dionne, E. J. New York: Touchstone , 1991. Chapter 13,pp.329-355

[7] *Why Americans Hate Politics,* p.333

[8] *The End of Equality,* Chapter 2, pp. 7-16

[9] a combination of a large convention facility and a domed football stadium currently under review by the Massachusetts State Legislature

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