

**1.252J/11.540J Urban Transportation Planning**  
**Assignment #3: South Boston Waterfront District Assignment**  
**Due date: 10/27/06**

The South Boston Waterfront District is seen as a major opportunity for "smart growth." But different constituencies define "smart" in many different ways.

- Some argue that this area should contain a mix of office, residential, hotel and cultural attractions, with very high densities.
- Some argue that very high density will attract more cars.
- Some say without more rail transit, high density can't be supported.
- Some say without high density, transit won't work.
- Some say the Silver Line can't work unless it's rail.
- Some say the South Boston Transitway needs a grade separation at D Street in order to be reliable and provide adequate capacity.
- Some say the grade separation isn't necessary, and there are better places to spend transit funds.

You are an analyst reporting to the General Manager of the MBTA. The MBTA must make a decision on whether or not to invest \$50 million in a grade separation at D Street, and has the option of weighing in as an advocate for land use policy, or abstaining from that debate.

Go visit the site. Take the Red Line to South Station, and walk across the Fort Point Channel along Summer Street to D Street. Proceed east on D Street (you can see the completed Silver Line construction, on your left as you walk down D Street) to Northern Avenue. Then walk towards downtown on Northern Avenue to get a feel for the area, and ride the Silver Line back to South Station from Courthouse station.

Read the report prepared by Professor Wilson at MIT which looks primarily at the question of vehicle technology, but also raises some operational and capacity issues.

Write a 3-5 page paper to the General Manager with your recommendations. You can recommend action or more study, but base your recommendation on an understanding of the planning process, the four-step process, criteria for priority and programming, and the role of transportation in economic development.

Student presentations will take place on Tuesday, 10/31/06.