

STARTS &amp; STOPS

The Boston Globe

# The sky is falling at Back Bay

## Pieces of ceiling drop as T probes mystery liquid

By Mac Daniel, Globe Staff | March 13, 2005

Not as sexy as the Big Dig, wrote **Peter of Needham**, "but [last Thursday] night, around 5:55 p.m., a piece of the ceiling above the platform near Track 2 at Back Bay Station fell onto the platform."

He saw it all from the opposite side: What appeared to be a piece of cement weighing maybe 2 to 3 pounds fell from the 10-foot-high ceiling, about 75 yards from the stairway to the station.

"And fortunately in the evening all trains on Track 2 are inbound, so no passengers were waiting within 100 feet," he wrote.

**David from Sharon** provided detail about a possible culprit, "a disgusting brown liquid" dripping out of a baseball-sized hole onto the heads of riders on the down escalator.

"This condition has persisted for at least three years," he wrote. "Every six months or so, someone patches up the hole without fixing the leaking of the mysterious brown liquid."

"And within a few weeks, the liquid eats its way through the patch and begins dripping on the heads of the escalator riders again. What is the liquid? Why has this condition persisted for over three years? If no one fixes it soon, can I fix it myself?"

Just what the liquid is will remain a mystery after the T's short answer to our query, with a pledge to fix it up.

**MBTA spokesman Joe Pesaturo** said workers will check out the situation sometime this weekend, examining the pipes behind the hole.

As for the collapsed ceiling, it was not cement, said Pesaturo. It was apparently fireproofing material, the same stuff that fell from the ceiling of the Big Dig a few weeks ago.

### The wall

**Allston residents** are angry that a **Massachusetts Turnpike project** will not create the sound wall they want.

Worst of all, they say, they are being allowed no say in the process.

The Turnpike Authority is planning to resurface the Pike extension and create some new westbound breakdown lanes when the weather warms up.

As part of that project, it is adding a breakdown lane and barrier wall along Lincoln Street in Allston, according to **Harry of Allston**.

"The wall is planned to be only 8 feet high and will not extend the full length of Lincoln Street," he wrote. "What is worse . . . is that there has been no community involvement in the process."

The community, which straddles the Pike, wants a sound wall. And despite a planned presentation by the Pike to community members on March 16, Harry said Allston deserves more.

Thus far, the Turnpike Authority is holding fast, largely because of the high cost of sound walls.

"Although the screening fence that is being put up in Allston will provide some noise reduction, it is not a sound barrier," wrote **Pike spokesman Doug Hanchett**.

"It is part of the important safety improvements we're making on the Boston Extension, where we're introducing breakdown lanes to areas of the westbound side of the roadway that has never had them before," he added.

Without the screening fence, Hanchett said, heavy snow and ice from Turnpike plows would be thrown onto the sidewalk on Lincoln Street.

The screening fence, which needs to be sufficiently sturdy to handle the force and weight of the snow, will prevent that from happening.

### **Reality bites**

Late last week, **Governor Mitt Romney** ended a statewide tour in South Boston touting his and the Commonwealth's first and only **20-year transportation plan**, a \$31 billion to-do list.

It incorporates all modes of transit -- even bicycles -- into a blueprint that is the most comprehensive ever.

But there is one problem: reality.

To get built, all the road, bridge, and rail projects would need money either from Beacon Hill or Capitol Hill.

Plus, considering the common delays associated with any construction in Massachusetts and the fickle political landscape, this plan could quickly become a dusty doorstop the second Romney leaves office.

### **Can't get there . . .**

**One lane of Storrow Drive east approaching the Leverett Circle** will be closed for the next six months, starting at 5 a.m. tomorrow.

**The Mass. Pike east between Exit 22 (Prudential/Copley) and South Boston** will be closed from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. tomorrow through Friday morning and from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. Friday through next Sunday morning. Direct access to the Ted Williams Tunnel from I-93 north, Frontage Road, and South Boston will remain open.

**The Frontage Road Northbound onramp to the Mass. Pike west at the Broadway Bridge** will be closed from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. tomorrow through Friday morning and from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. Friday through next Sunday morning.

**The ramps at Exit 20 (Logan/Pike) from I-93 north to the Pike** will be closed from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. Monday through Friday morning and from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. Friday through next Sunday morning. The left-hand ramp from Exit 20 to Frontage Road north and South Station will remain open.

**The Mass Pike west in South Boston** will be closed from 12:01 to 5 a.m. Tuesday through Friday and from 12:01 to 7 a.m. Saturday and next Sunday. The onramp to the westbound Pike from D Street will be closed at the same time.

**The onramp from Congress Street to I-93 north in South Boston, and Exit 24 (I-93 north) off the westbound Pike** will be closed from 11:30 p.m. to 5 a.m. tomorrow through Friday morning and from 1 to 7 a.m. Saturday.

**I-93 south around Sullivan Square** will be closed from 12:01 to 5 a.m. Tuesday through Thursday. **The onramps to I-93 south from Mystic Avenue and Storrow Drive** will also be closed.

**I-93 south over the Charles River** will be closed from 11:30 p.m. to 5 a.m. Monday through Friday morning and from 1 to 6:30 a.m. Saturday. The onramps to I-93 south from Storrow Drive, the Tobin Bridge, and City Square will be closed at the same time.

**The Storrow Drive onramp to I-93 south** will be closed from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. tomorrow through Friday morning and from 11 p.m. Friday to 7 a.m. Saturday.

**I-93 north at Exit 20 (Logan/Pike)** will be closed from 11:30 p.m. to 5 a.m. tomorrow through Friday morning and from 1 to 6:30 a.m. Saturday. The ramps at Exit 20 to the Pike, and the onramp from the Massachusetts Avenue Connector and Broadway to I-93 north will also be closed.

**The Haymarket onramp to I-93 south and the Callahan Tunnel** will be closed from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. tomorrow through Friday morning and from 11 p.m. Friday to 7 a.m. Saturday.

**The Essex Street onramp to I-93 south** will be closed from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. tomorrow through Friday morning and from 11 p.m. Friday to 7 a.m. Saturday.

**The Haymarket onramp to I-93 north** will be closed from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. tomorrow through Friday morning and from 11 p.m. Friday to 7 a.m. Saturday.

**The Sumner Tunnel onramp to Storrow Drive** will be closed from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. tomorrow through Friday. Sumner Tunnel access to I-93 north will remain open.

**The Atlantic Avenue onramp to I-93 north** will be closed from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. Tuesday through Friday and from 1 to 6:30 a.m. Saturday.

**The Sumner Tunnel onramp to I-93 north** will be closed from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. tomorrow through Friday morning and from 10 p.m. Friday to 7 a.m. Saturday.

**The Sumner Tunnel onramp to Government Center and Haymarket** will be closed from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. tomorrow through Thursday morning.

**The ramps from the Tobin Bridge and Rutherford Avenue/City Square to I-93 south and Storrow Drive** will be closed from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. Thursday through next Saturday morning.

**The Mystic Avenue onramp to I-93 south in Somerville** will be closed from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. tomorrow through Thursday morning.

**The ramp to the Tobin Bridge from the Leverett Circle Connector** will be closed from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. tomorrow through Saturday. The Leverett Connector to I-93 north will remain open.

**The Congress Street onramp to I-93 south and the Pike westbound** will be closed from 10 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. tomorrow through Saturday morning.

*Complain to us at [starts@globe.com](mailto:starts@globe.com). Don't forget to send us your hometown. Outside the paper, the column can be found at [www.boston.com/news/local/startsandstops/](http://www.boston.com/news/local/startsandstops/). Our mailing address is Starts & Stops, PO Box 55819, Boston, MA 02205-5819. ■*