



The United States Conference of Mayors

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U.S. Mayors Tour Boston's Big Dig

Mayor Thomas M. Menino Hosts a Private Tour of the Nation's Largest Public Works Project

June 28, 2004, Boston, MA – Today, several of the nation's mayors toured the Boston Central Artery/Tunnel Project, known as the "Big Dig," as part of the US Conference of Mayors' Annual Meeting.

The tour included a detailed briefing about the project's history and engineering achievements, a drive through the state-of-the art bridges and tunnels, and a rare look into the Operations Control Center. Additionally, the mayors witnessed the ongoing dismantlement of the aging elevated roadway, locally known as the "green monster."

"The City of Boston is proud to share this engineering marvel, now in its final stages, with the nation's mayors, said Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino. "The Big Dig has not only dramatically increased the mobility of local traffic, it has improved the quality of life for area residents by reducing carbon monoxide levels and creating hundreds of acres of open land for the city to enjoy."

The Big Dig is the largest and most complex urban transportation project ever undertaken in the United States. It is the result of more than 30 years of planning and 12 years of construction to replace the elevated section of Interstate 93 Central Artery through downtown Boston with a much wider underground highway and to extend the Interstate 90 turnpike to Logan Airport via a third harbor tunnel. Among the only other transportation projects on this large a scale were the Panama Canal and the Channel Tunnel.

The Big Dig consists of 161 lane-miles of interstate highway—over half of it underground. Its civil engineering accomplishments include the world's widest cable-stayed bridge, the deepest underwater connection in North America, state-of-the-art freeway segments built only inches above 19th century public transit railways, and an unprecedented ground-freezing program to stabilize Boston's historic soils during construction.

The US Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor.

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