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October 24, 1982

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

S.J. Tersigni, Commissioner
Department of Public Works
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
100 Nashua Street
Boston, MA. 02114

SUBJECT: Comments on Environmental Notification Form
Arlington - Cambridge - Belmont
Route 2 and Alewife Brook Parkway Improvements

I find a number of objections appropriate in regard to the project environmental notification form. All objections stem from the fact that the notification appears to be, at times, unaware that this project is being built in wetlands; at other times the effect of the proposed project are unduly minimized. This project is being constructed in an area, the majority of which is wetlands, by the department's own figures. The Little River - Yate's Pond - Alewife Brook area will be significantly impacted. That should be recognized.

Specific Objections:

1. Part I.C, narrative summary of the project:

a. Paragraph 3 reads "Present use of the project area is one of highway use and will not be changed in the future improvement. " This statement is false because it ignores the notification's own figures, in section II.B, that of the 19.7 acres in the project, 10 acres are wetland, and 3 acres are other open space. Less than one-third (6 acres) of the project is listed as developed. Private development is prohibited in key portions of this area under section 11.70 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance unless the planning board finds that there would be no adverse impact on flood retention or unless replacement flood water retention systems are provided. These areas are the habitat of numerous wildlife. It is one of the few parts of Cambridge with unspoiled characteristics.

b. Paragraph 4 seems to state that the highway proposed will be three lanes on each side plus a six foot wide divider on Route 2 and throughout the affected portion of Alewife Brook Parkway. If this is the case, this project involves considerably more than "widening" Alewife Brook Parkway. I shall treat this as an error. If not it constitutes a major change in the project from anything previously announced. Failure to announce conversion of Alewife Brook Parkway to a major highway in a more public manner would be a serious breach of faith.

2. Part I.D, construction impacts and long term impacts should also be indicated for the following categories: fisheries and wildlife; flood hazard areas; vegetation, trees; water supply and use; aesthetics; wind and shadow.

3. Part III, assessment of potential adverse environmental impacts.

a. Question A. Open Space and Recreation. The wetlands are clearly open space. They are also recreational areas, constituting one of the rare natural places left in Cambridge, the fourth most densely populated city in the country.

b. Question C, Ecological Effects.

(1) Fisheries and wildlife should be checked "yes". Those ramps will constitute a major impingement and change to the wetlands area, as could widening of the highways.

(2) Effect on vegetation. The notification form is extremely vague. The trees to be destroyed should be clearly identified. Of particular importance are trees in the wetlands, including a major willow near the highway.

(3) Flood Hazard Areas, Inland Wetlands. No private developer would be permitted to develop in this area without proving that there would occur no adverse impact on flood retention or unless replacement systems were provided. Of particular concern is the effect on nearby residential housing also in the floodplain. Understatement of the problem with no apparent intent to correct the problem is not adequate.

c. Question F. Water Quality and Quantity. Significant changes in drainage patterns should be checked "Yes". Construction is occurring in a floodplain and wetlands. Of course there will be significant changes in drainage patterns.

d. Question J. Aesthetics. Change in the visual character should be marked "yes". Only 6 acres of the 19.6 acres affected are at all developed. Nevertheless, we are told that the present use is "highway facilities". The ramps will have significant visual impact on the wetlands (total wetlands: 10 acres), especially when viewed from the ground. So will widening of the highway.

Visual access to scenic areas should be marked "yes". The MDC parkland or other open space will enjoy the same visual access as presently. "NONSENSE". Ramps running through wetlands cannot possibly be the same visual access. It is difficult to conceive that the writer actually walked at ground level.

e. Question K. Wind and shadow. Impacts on adjacent properties should be marked "yes". Once again, as in so many other questions, the writer appears to be unaware of the wetlands which constitute a majority of the area in question.

4. The maps attached to the form are unacceptable themselves. Only one of the three even shows Yate's Pond, an important part of the area. All maps provide an inadequate description of what is planned.

5. Notification appears to be inadequate. It was provided to the Cambridge Conservation Commission and to the Cambridge Community Development Department. No notification was provided to the Cambridge City Clerk or Cambridge City Council. Failure to notify the City Council through the City Clerk appears unacceptable.

Sincerely,

 Robert J. Tremouille

APPENDIX A
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ENVIRONMENTAL NOTIFICATION FORM

I. SUMMARY

A. Project Identification Route 2 and Alewife Brook Parkway

1. Project Name Improvements

2. Project Proponent Massachusetts Department of Public Works
Address 100 Nashua Street, Boston, Mass. 02114

B. Project Description: (City/Town(s)) Arlington-Belmont-Cambridge

1. Location within city/town or street address See project summary

2. Est. Commencement Date: 1985 Est. Completion Date: 1987
Approx. Cost \$ \$30,000,000 Current Status of Project Design: 10 % Complete

C. Narrative Summary of Project

Describe project and give a description of the general project boundaries and the present use of the project area. (If necessary, use back of this page to complete summary).

The project will consist of updating and improving a portion of Route 2 from Lake Street in Arlington to Alewife Brook Parkway in Cambridge. It will also include that part of the Parkway from just north of its intersection with Route 2 to Concord Avenue in Cambridge. Ramps from Route 2 to Concord Avenue in Cambridge. Ramps from Route 2 to the MBTA station and garage and Rindge Avenue Extension will also be included. Total length of the project will be about two miles.

Purpose of the project will be to improve traffic circulation and access to the MBTA station and garage and Rindge Avenue Extension and to reduce anticipated congestion in the area as well as replacement of two unsafe bridges.

Present use of the project area is one of highway use and will not be changed in the future improvement. *

Two additional lanes will be added to Route 2, plus access to private development (Mugar property only). A median will also be added to part of Alewife Brook Parkway. Present cross section consists of two 12' lanes, plus a shoulder in each direction separated by a 6' median. The proposed cross section will include an additional 12' lane in each direction to make a total of three lanes in each direction. They will be separated by a 6' median containing a Jersey Barrier. Additionally, a 3 lane frontage road of 36' width will provide the access to the Mugar property. This service road concept was approved in EOE certificate #4167, posted in the Monitor, May 10, 1982.

Copies of this may be obtained from:

Name: Michael Premarase

Address: 100 Nashua Street, Boston, Mass. 02114

Firm/Agency:

Massachusetts Dept. of Public Works

Phone No. 727-4740

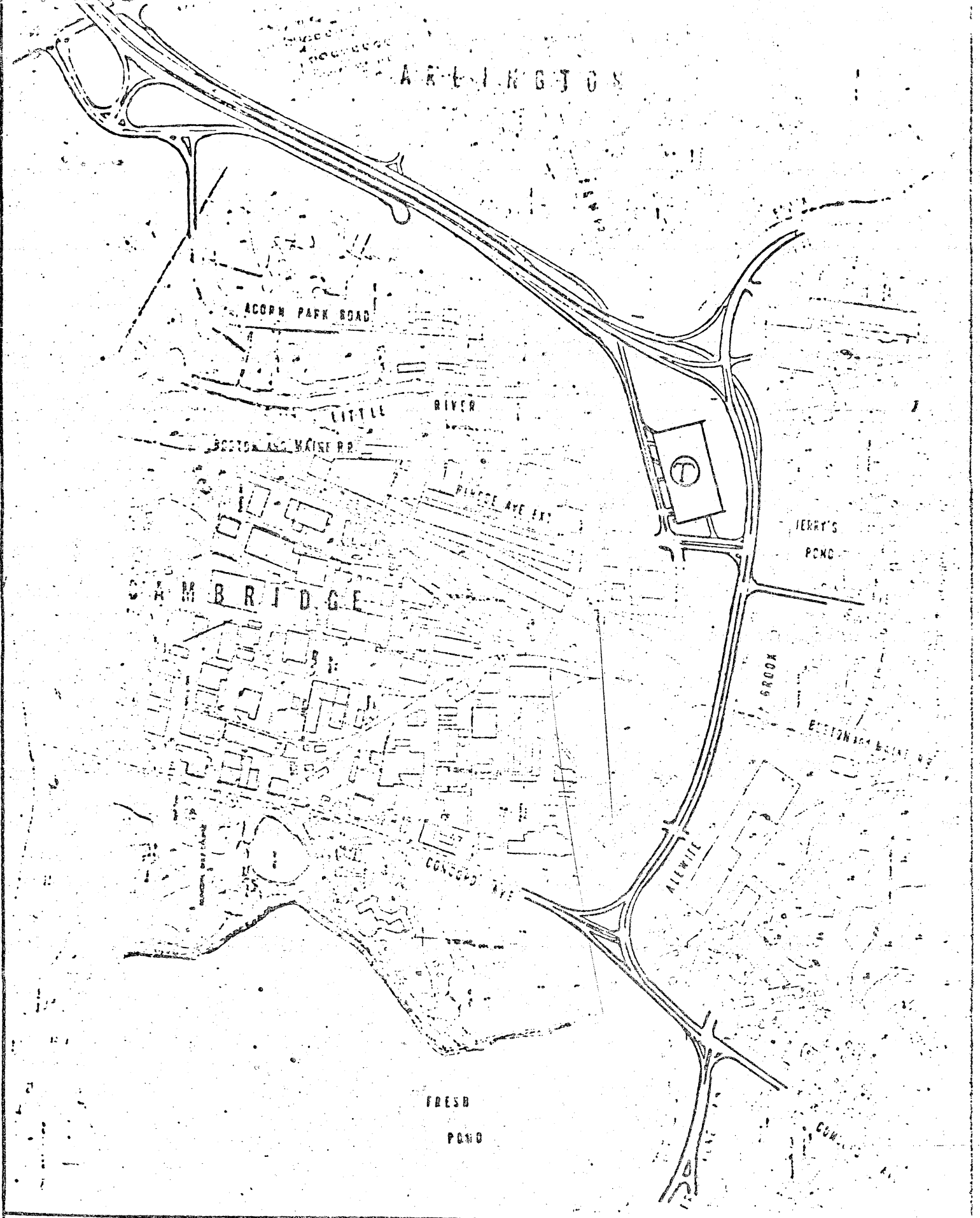


FIG 3

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT

14.

S-652

Comm. from Robert J. LaTremouille Re: Office of Environmental Affairs notification form on Route 2 and Alewife Brook Pkwy. improvements.

In City Council,

October 25, 1982

10/25/82

To City Mgrs
for Report

copy sent to the City Manager
10/26/82 mh