



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUSAN B. SCHLESINGER
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

BETH RUBENSTEIN
Deputy Director for
Community Development

TO: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

FROM: ^{BR} Beth Rubenstein, Acting Assistant City Manager for Community Development
Sue Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking & Transportation ^{AC}

DATE: January 5, 1999

RE: Response to City Council Order #6 of November 23, 1998: Report on any work done to create additional commuter rail stops in Cambridge

In response to the above referenced order, we report the following:

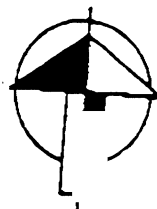
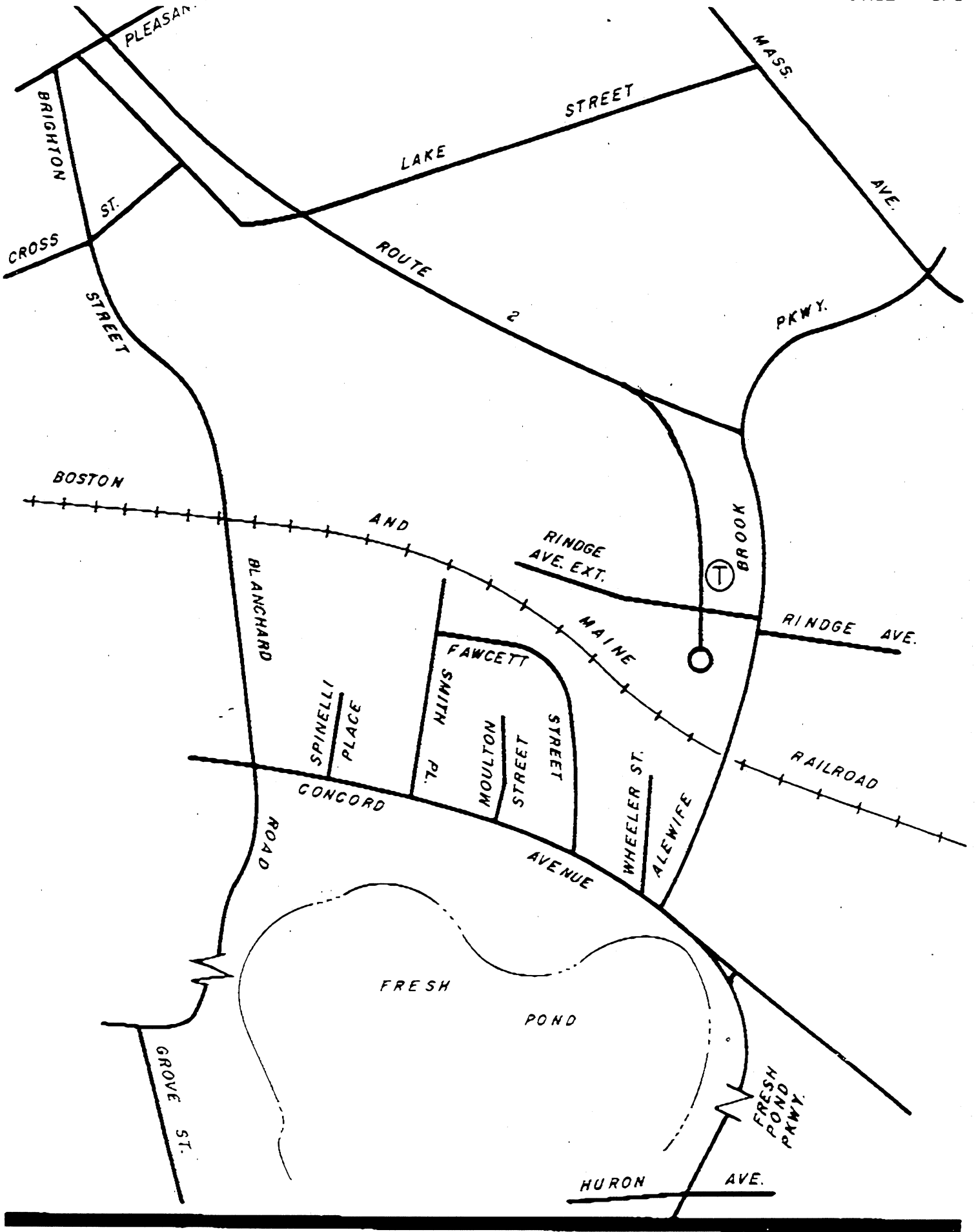
The Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line runs through Cambridge, with a stop at Porter Square, and then proceeds to Belmont Center. In the 1980s some preliminary work was undertaken to evaluate the addition of a new commuter rail station in the Alewife area on the Fitchburg Line. However, this proposal was rejected by the MBTA for the following reasons:

1. The only people who would be likely to use the station on a regular basis would be those working in the Alewife area since a connection with the Red Line and buses is available at Porter Square.
2. The cost of building a station would be at least \$2.5 to 3 million plus the cost of a walkway over the railroad tracks. While no detailed estimate has been developed, the additional ridership attracted by building a station at Alewife was not considered by the MBTA to be significant to justify the construction, operating and maintenance costs, especially considering the Red Line connection to Alewife from the existing commuter rail station at Porter Square.
3. The extra time required to slow down the trains, pick up and discharge passengers, and then accelerate would add travel time for riders continuing to Porter Square and North Station. The MBTA felt this could actually reduce overall patronage.

Staff has recently contacted both James Brennon, MBTA Director of Railroad Operations, and Clay Schofield, MBTA Deputy Director of Planning, about any more recent work that has been undertaken in regards to creating additional commuter rail stops in Cambridge. Both have indicated that the MBTA still feels that the increase in travel time for most passengers, the limited potential for new

riders, and the significant cost clearly outweigh the potential benefits of providing any additional commuter rail stops in Cambridge. The MBTA estimates that introducing a new stop results in a daily loss of at least 200 riders who are unwilling to accept an increase in travel time caused by adding another stop. This means that a station at Alewife must attract more than 200 new riders to show any benefit, which according to the MBTA analysis is not likely to be achieved. MBTA officials further stated that from their prospective a station at Alewife would only make sense if construction was funded locally, even if the loss of ridership could be off-set by new riders to the Alewife stop.

The city is prepared to work with both private developers and the MBTA to study in detail the pros and cons of building a commuter rail stop and potentially identify funding options for the construction of a station, should a change in the predicted number of riders take place as a result of significant new development near Alewife or for other reasons.



ALEWIFE AREA

APPROX. SCALE: 1"=1000'



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

January 11, 1999

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 22, regarding a report on any work that has been done to create additional commuter rail stops, received from Acting Assistant City Manager for Community Development Beth Rubenstein and Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department Susan Clippinger.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment

Consent Agenda #30

S-6

Relative to AR 22 regarding a
report on any work that has been done
to create additional commuter rail
stops.

In City Council January 11, 1999

PLACED ON FILE