



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

BETH RUBENSTEIN
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

MALAINA BOWKER
Deputy Director for
Community Development

TO: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

FROM: Beth Rubenstein, ^{BR} Assistant City Manager for Community
Development
Susan E. Clippinger, ^{BEC} Director, Traffic, Parking & Transportation

DATE: October 24, 2001

RE: Response to City Council Order #8 dated October 1, 2001: Report
on the current status of the Urban Ring

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

The Urban Ring is a phased project to improve public transportation in a 15 mile corridor around downtown Boston extending from Logan Airport through Chelsea, Everett, Somerville, Cambridge, Brookline and Boston. Improvements will be undertaken in phases over the next 20 years.

The MBTA completed the Major Investment Study (MIS) for the Urban Ring in July 2001. This study examines a wide range of alternatives for improving public transportation service in the corridor for both residents and businesses. The result is a recommendation for a three-phase approach for improving public transportation in the corridor. This strategy takes into account the high cost and long lead-time requirements associated with the eventual rail line.

Phase One

Over the next five years Phase One will be implemented to improve bus service in and to the Urban Ring Corridor. The bus improvements will consist of new Crosstown (CT) routes as well as the addition of new Express Commuter (EC) routes. All of these routes will operate over existing roads. The proposed Phase One bus routes serving Cambridge are illustrated on the attached map.

The crosstown routes will operate with limited stop service connecting rapid transit stations to major activity centers. The following crosstown routes will serve Cambridge:

- CT-1: Central Sq. to Andrew Station via Massachusetts Ave. (existing)
- CT-2: Sullivan Sq. to the Longwood Medical Area (LMA) via Union Sq. in Somerville and Kendall Sq. (existing)
- CT-6: Chelsea to Kendall Sq. via Bunker Hill Community College and Lechmere Sq.

- CT-7: Kendall Sq. to Franklin Park / Grove Hall via Kenmore Sq., Ruggles Station and Dudley Sq.
- CT-8: Sullivan Sq. to the LMA via Union Sq., University Park, Lower Cambridgeport and BU
- CT-9: Kenmore Sq. to Harvard Sq. via Boston University and Allston Landing

In addition, the following new express commuter routes will serve Cambridge. Operation of these routes will be similar to the existing MBTA express bus service.

- EC-1: Woburn Industrial Center to University Park via Sullivan Sq. and Lechmere Sq.
- EC-2: Riverside to Lechmere Sq. via Newton Corner, Allston Landing, Central Sq., and Kendall Sq.

Since Phase One does not require any construction, implementation can take place without any additional environmental studies. While Phase One is being implemented over the next five years, the MBTA will undertake the environmental clearance and design process for Phase Two. Implementation of Phase Two will take place during the five-year period between 2005 and 2010.

Phase Two

Phase Two builds upon the Crosstown and Express Commuter bus routes of Phase One by creating seven Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes throughout the Corridor. Some of the BRT routes in Phase Two are new and others are modified or upgraded versions of the Phase One bus routes. The Phase Two BRT routes will utilize 60' articulated (hinged) low-floor, low-emission vehicles, equipped with Intelligent Transportation Systems such as Global Positioning Systems. The BRT vehicles will operate over routes using a combination of buses in mixed traffic, bus lanes, and exclusive busways. The proposed MBTA Silver Line in South Boston is an example of a BRT system.

Of the seven BRT routes proposed, the following four will serve Cambridge:

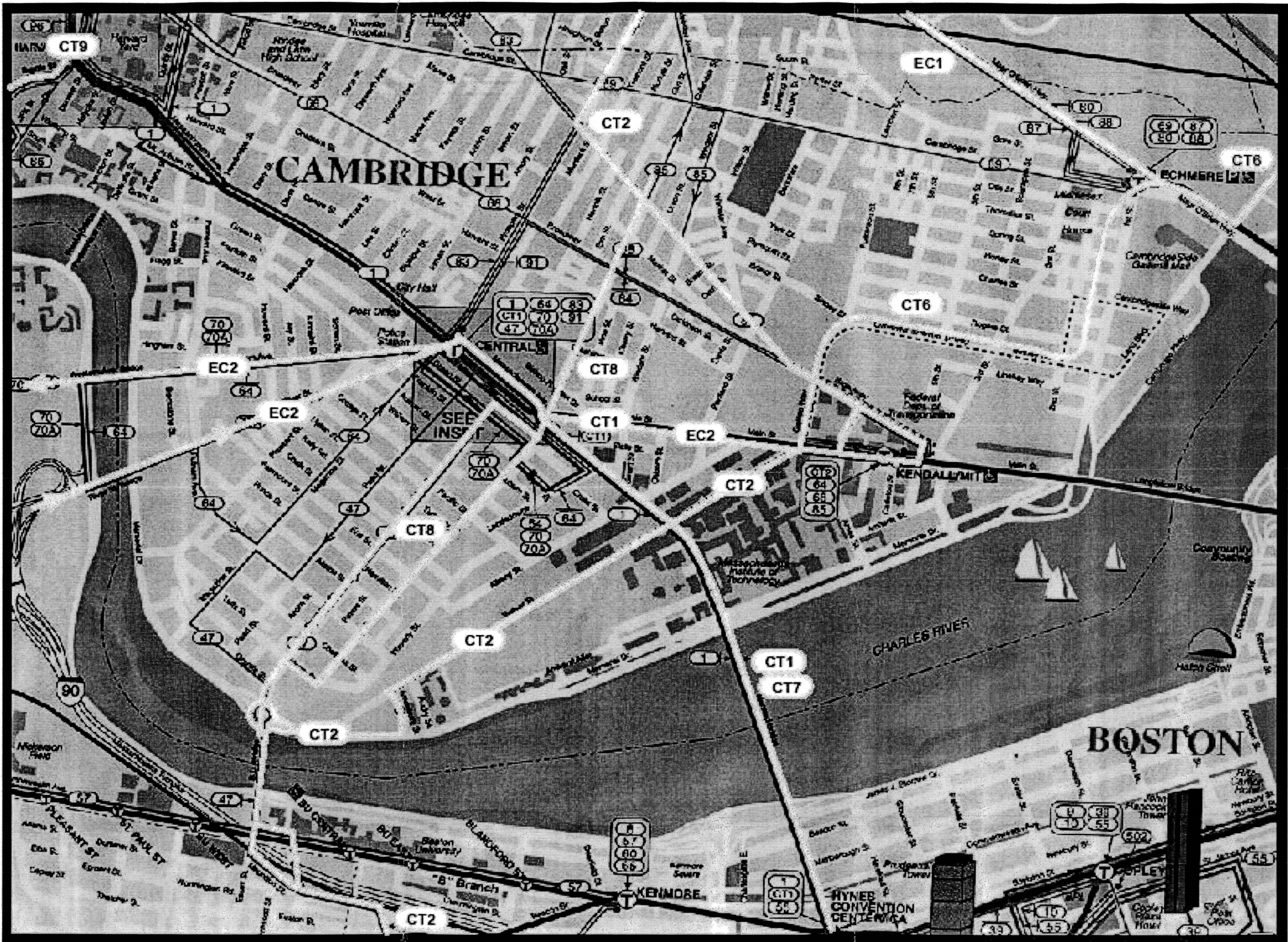
- BRT-1: Logan Airport to Kendall Sq. via Wellington Station (Medford), Assembly Sq., Sullivan Sq. and Lechmere Station
- BRT-3: Wellington to Kendall Sq. via Union Sq. (Somerville)
- BRT-4: Riverside to Kendall Sq. via the MassPike and new bus ramps connecting to the Grand Junction Railroad ROW
- BRT-5: Lechmere Station to the LMA via BU and Park Dr.

The BRT-4&5 routes would require the modification of the Grand Junction Railroad bridge over the Charles River to include a busway connection from the Massachusetts Turnpike to the Grand Junction RR right-of-way. The environmental impact study will further explore the feasibility of this connection and, as an alternative, explore an alignment using existing streets and operating in mixed traffic. City staff will be meeting shortly with the MBTA to develop a strategy for ensuring that no other motorized vehicles, including trucks, would be able to access the busway along the Grand Junction Corridor should this alignment be chosen. Also, the City is actively pursuing the possibility of creating a pedestrian and bicycle path along the entire Grand Junction Corridor. Funds have been budgeted this year to conduct a study to analyze the feasibility of creating a pedestrian/bicycle path that can coexist with current and future transit operations in the corridor.

Phase Three

While Phase Two is being implemented, the MBTA will undertake the environmental review process for Phase Three, Rail Transit Service. This phase adds a new Urban Ring rail system between the Orange Line at Assembly Square in Somerville and the former Orange Line terminus at Dudley Square and is scheduled for construction sometime after 2010, contingent upon the availability of funds.

There are three options still under consideration for Phase Three. The major differences among them are which technology to use (Orange or Green Line type) and where to cross the Charles River (direct service to Kenmore Square or via lower Cambridgeport and BU). The final decision on these issues is likely five to ten years away.



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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

October 29, 2001

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item Number 01-241, regarding a report on the status of the Urban Ring, received from Assistant City Manager for Community Development Beth Rubenstein.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment



3775

Consent Agenda #4

**Awaiting Report Item Number
01-241**, regarding a report on the
status of the Urban Ring.

In City Council October 29, 2001

Referred to the
Transportation,
Traffic and Parking
Committee.

10-31-01
Copy
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me