



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

MICHAEL ROSENBERG,
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

MARY FLYNN,
Deputy Director for
Community Development

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Michael Rosenberg, Assistant City Manager for Community Development

Re: Council Order #39, dated 1/10/94 Re: Status of the Construction of a
Pedestrian footbridge over the railroad
tracks in North Cambridge as described
in the Council Order of 10/18/76.

Date: January 27, 1994

Over the past three decades as several relatively dense housing developments have been built along the Fitchburg Division railroad right-of-way in North Cambridge, larger and larger numbers of people have been crossing and walking along the tracks to reach the Fresh Pond Shopping Center and other destinations such as Danehy Park and the Fitzgerald School. This has created a very hazardous situation resulting in several fatalities.

Status of the 1976 Order for a Pedestrian Footbridge

The City of Cambridge has examined the possibility of improving this situation over the years. On October 18, 1976, the City Council passed an order (see attached) to have the City Manager budget for the construction of a pedestrian footbridge in this area. The pedestrian bridge over the tracks was not built at that time for a number of reasons, the two most important being that there was no agreement among the interested parties as to how the bridge costs might be shared; and, the railroad was not responsive to the idea of allowing a pedestrian bridge over their right-of-way. It was also clear that such a footbridge would serve just one of the many pathways that are in use in this area. The project was put aside after two years of efforts to resolve these issues.

In 1987, the City again examined this issue, and asked the firm of Camp Dresser & McKee, working on Danehy Park at the time, to give an estimate for the cost and design (see attached concept sketch) of such a footbridge. The cost estimate was \$1.5 million, and the design, conforming to handicapped accessibility requirements, resulted in a ramp system of almost 600' (to clear the necessary 22' above the tracks at the required slope of a maximum 1" of rise for every 12" of run would make a ramp of at least 264' up, across a 60' bridge, and 264' down). These two factors led to the decision to wait until the park was in use, and the new Alewife Bridge was constructed. It was also clear at that time that there were a number of pathways crossing the tracks, and that a single footbridge would not serve all of the desired crossing points.

The Railroad Safety Task Force

In response to a request last spring from the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee, the Community Development Department initiated a study that will;

- * Document all aspects of the problem,
- * Determine major desire lines for pedestrian movements,
- * Define the regulatory process controlling activities in and adjacent to the

- railroad corridor,
- * Investigate possible solutions (both short and long term),
 - * Estimate order of magnitude costs and implementation constraints, and
 - * Recommend the most feasible course of action and suggest possible options for funding.

In order to provide direction for the study, the Community Development Department, with the help of the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee, organized the Railroad Safety Task Force. This project advisory committee includes representatives of both City and State agencies as well as residents of the neighborhood affected. A membership list is attached. The group has met several time to discuss the problem and make suggestions for possible solutions.

City Manager Request to the MBTA for Slower Speeds

Since any solution requiring construction would probably take a long time to implement, the committee requested that some short term solutions such as slowing down the trains, sounding whistles, and providing warning signals for the existing pedestrian crossings be implemented immediately. As a result the City Manager sent a letter to the MBTA General Manager making such a request (see attached letter of October 1, 1993). The response from the MBTA (see attached letter of November 2, 1993) stated that because of train scheduling and liability problems only the whistle blowing option was feasible to implement, and only if the neighbors would not object to the noise.

In the meantime a subcommittee of the Task Force (including three neighborhood representatives) participated in a process that selected the firm of Wallace, Floyd, Associates Inc. to conduct the actual study. With the help of the committee, a questionnaire was prepared and distributed to residents along the corridor. The results are now being analyzed by the consultant. As soon as the study consultant was selected, an evening neighborhood wide meeting was held to obtain concerns and suggestions from nearby residents.

The first phase of the study is to gather data, both about community concerns and use and railroad use. The product of this phase, a technical memorandum summarizing the collected data, has just been reviewed in draft form by the Task Force. The results will be used by the committee to help determine the short and long term strategies to investigate in the next phase. Possible solutions might include: overpasses, underpasses, at-grade crossings, depressing the rail line, alternate or other means of transportation, community education programs, signing, fencing, warning systems, and a reduction in train speed.

The product of this second phase will be a technical memorandum summarizing the analysis, including a matrix and maps necessary to describe the alternatives. This memorandum will be reviewed by the committee and presented to the neighborhood at another evening public meeting.

Based on this input, the consultant will prepare a draft final report recommending a course of action including a funding strategy and mechanism for continued maintenance. After review by the committee, a final report will be produced and presented to the neighborhood at a third evening public meeting. The report will then be forwarded to the City Manager for review.

The entire study should be completed by April 15, 1994.



City of Cambridge

Councillor Graham

IN CITY¹⁷ COUNCIL
October 18, 1976

ORDERED:

That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to include in the budget for FY 77-78 a sum sufficient for the construction of a pedestrian foot bridge from the Jefferson Park Housing Development to the land owned by the Metropolitan District Commission by the Fresh Pond Shopping Center, and be it further

ORDERED:

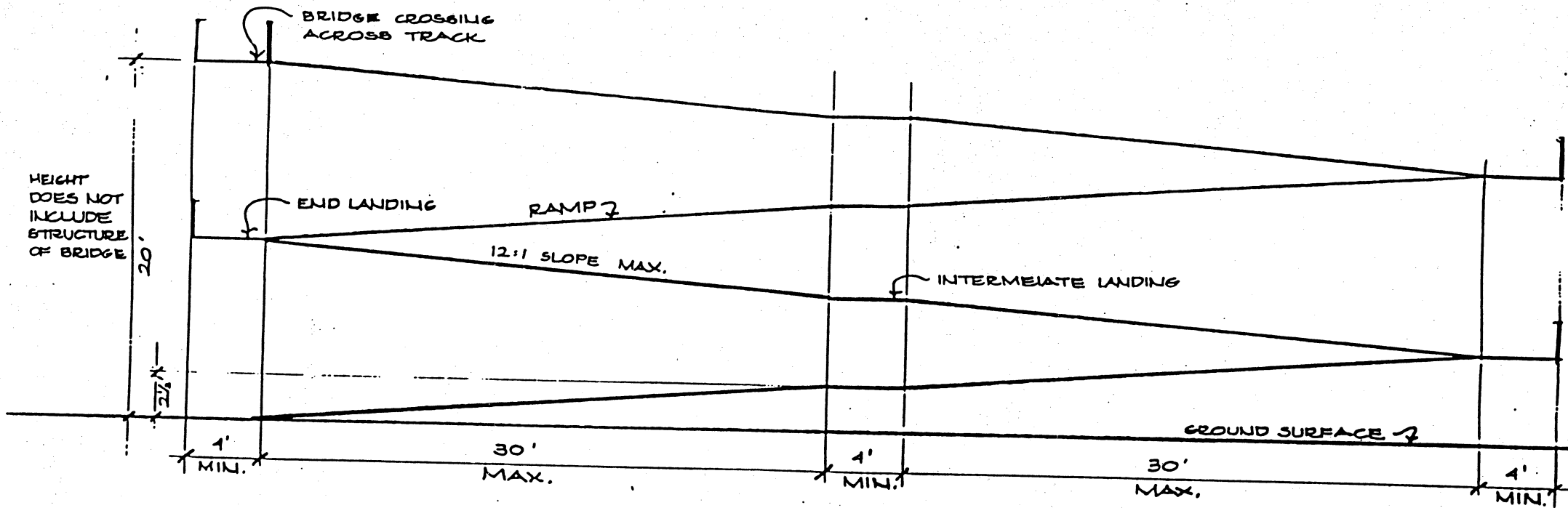
That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Commissioner of the Metropolitan District Commission as soon as possible in order to arrange for this construction at the earliest possible date.

In City Council October 18, 1976
Adopted by the affirmative vote of 9 members.
Attest: Paul E. Healy, City Clerk

A true copy,

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Paul E. Healy".



HANDICAPPED ACCESS:

RAMP LENGTH (8 RAMP, 30' LONG)	240'
INTERMEDIATE LANDINGS (1 @ 4')	16'
END LANDINGS (4 @ 8')	32'
<u>SUB-TOTAL: EACH ACCESS</u>	<u>288'</u>
SUB-TOTAL: UP AND DOWN	576'
LENGTH OF CROSSING	80'
<u>TOTAL LENGTH OF OVERPASS</u>	<u>656'</u>

STAIR ACCESS

*STEPS UP:	35±
*STEPS DOWN:	35±
LANDINGS @	1'
80' CROSSING	

*(ASSUMES 7" RISERS)

PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS - CONCEPTUAL ELEVATION

**Railroad Safety Task Force
Task Force Member List
Sept. 9, 1993**

NPISD-SRR-LIST.RP5

Donna Bronk
Manager - Fresh Pond Apartments
364 Rindge Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02140

Patricia Casola
364 Rindge Ave. #17B
Cambridge, MA 02140

Deneen Crosby
Wallace, Floyd, Associates, Inc.
Russia Wharf
286 Congress Street
Boston, MA 02210

Lisa Deller
21 Walden Square
Cambridge, MA 02140

Mike Inemer
Cambridge Housing Authority
One Jackson Place
Cambridge, MA 02140

Kukiah Abdul-Malik
Room 405 Sen. Barrett
Statehouse
Boston, MA 02153

Detective Fran Mulhern
MBTA Police
275 Dorchester Ave.
Boston, MA 02127

Chris Weller
Cambridge Housing Authority
270 Green Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

Jackie Adams
President - Jefferson Park Tenants
Council
86 Jackson Circle
Cambridge, MA 02140

Larry Burke
40 Jackson St.
Cambridge, MA 02140

Peter Cignetti
5 Theriault Court
Cambridge, MA 02140

Stuart Dash
Community Development Dept.
57 Inman St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dick Easler
Community Development Dept.
57 Inman St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Patrick Jordan
Marketing & Ridership Officer.
MBTA RR Operations
10 Park Plaza - 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02116

George McCray
2301 Mass. Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02140

Deepti Nijhawan
Cambridge Housing Authority
270 Green Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

Zita Wellington
402 Rindge Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02140

Michael Brandon
27 Seven Pines Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02140

Attn.: Lance Campbell
Speaker Charles Flaherty
Statehouse
Boston, MA 02133

Dick Clarey
15 Brookford St.
Cambridge, MA 02140

Ann Daughaday
City Engineer
Department of Public Works
147 Hampshire St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Linda Guerrier
364 Rindge Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02140

Attn.: George Laite
State Senator Havern
Statehouse - Rm. 513
Boston, MA 02133

Frank McCusker
1000 Jackson Place
Cambridge, MA 02140

Charles Steward
MBTA RR Operations
10 Park Plaza - 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02116



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL 349-4300

FAX 349-4307

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

ROBERT W. HEALY

City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI

Deputy City Manager

October 1, 1993

Mr. John J. Haley, Jr., General Manager
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Mr. Haley:

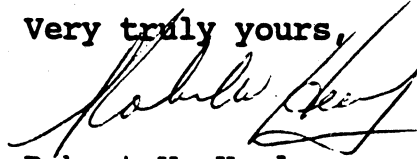
Last May, the City of Cambridge established a task force to look at the pedestrian safety problem along the Fitchberg Division Commuter Line in North Cambridge. This has become a serious problem considering that several fatalities and numerous near misses have occurred in this corridor over the last two decades. I would like to thank you for the cooperation that the MBTA has given to the City in this effort, with special recognition to Patrick Jordan who has been particularly helpful.

We have recently selected the firm of Wallace, Floyd, Associates Inc. in association with Gordon, Bua & Read, Inc. to undertake a Feasibility Analysis Study of Alternatives for Improved Pedestrian Safety in this corridor. We would welcome the full involvement of the MBTA in this effort which will take four to six months to complete. At that time and after reviewing the recommendations, I hope we can all agree on a suitable course of action and begin implementation as quickly as possible.

However, given the severity of the problem, I am requesting that the MBTA undertake some immediate short term actions that will improve safety. Ideally, the best action would be to formalize one or more at grade crossing, such as has been done along the Grand Junction Line in the eastern part of the city. If this proves infeasible at this time, we would at least like the MBTA to install warning/safety signs along the ROW, not just "no trespassing" signs. In addition, we would request that all trains sound their whistles and/or their bells as they pass through the area and most important, slow down. A 50 to 55 mile per hour speed is much too high for such a dense urban area especially one with such a history of pedestrian safety problems.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this request. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Mr. Richard A. Easler at the Cambridge Community Development, 57 Inman Street, Cambridge MA 02139 (349-4600).

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", written over the closing "yours,".

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

CC: Patrick Jordan, MBTA Commuter Rail
George Laite, Sen. Havern's Office
Lance Campbell, Sp. Flaherty's Office
Rukiah Abdul-Malik, Sen. Barrett's Office



**MASSACHUSETTS
BAY
TRANSPORTATION
AUTHORITY**

John J. Haley, Jr.
General Manager
Transportation Building
Ten Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02110

November 2, 1993

Mr. Robert Healy, City Manager
Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mr. Healy:

I support the efforts of the City of Cambridge with regard to pedestrian safety near the commuter rail line which runs through North Cambridge. Your selection of a consultant to study the situation is a step in the right direction. We will continue to support your efforts and remain involved by assigning Pat Jordan to assist you.

With regard to your request for additional grade crossings, we are under a directive by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to reduce grade crossings by 25%. Grade crossings generally do not improve safety. They provide access for pedestrians to cross in areas where trains travel at high speeds, thus increasing the possibility of an accident.

We acknowledge the importance of a comprehensive Safety/Signage program, and are presently assessing the needs throughout the system. We expect new signage to be in place early in 1994.

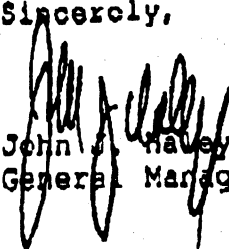
Decreasing the speed of this train as you requested would have an adverse impact on present and future ridership on this line. A slowdown, therefore, is not possible.

We would be happy to initiate whistle blowing at Rindge Avenue. Please keep in mind, however, that historically when whistle blowing takes place, the City, as well as the MBTA, is often inundated with complaints about noise. You might want to consider this proposal further and inform us of your decision.

As I am sure you are aware, we have invited the members of the North Cambridge Railroad Committee for a trip on the commuter rail line on November 5. Staff members from Safety, Commuter Rail Transportation and Mechanical will be on hand to answer questions.

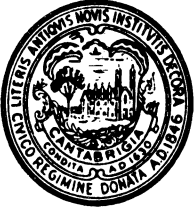
I look forward to a positive resolution of this matter. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



John J. Hauey, Jr.
General Manager

WBV:ksd



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL. 349-4300
FAX. 349-4307

February 7, 1994

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item No. 1, regarding the status of the construction of a pedestrian footbridge over the railroad tracks in North Cambridge; Awaiting Report Item No. 6, regarding reducing the speed limit of trains travelling between Porter Square and Alewife; and Awaiting Report Item No. 8, regarding gathering information for the Railroad Safety Committee, please find attached a report received from Michael Rosenberg, Assistant City Manager for Community Development.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mev
attachment

Response to Awaiting Report Item
Number One, regarding the status
of the construction of a pedestrian
footbridge over the railroad tracks
in North Cambridge;

Reponse to Awaiting Report Item Number
Six, regarding reducing the speed limit
or trains travelling between Porter
Square and Alewife; and

Reponse to Awaiting Report Item Number
Eight, regarding gathering information
of the Railroad Safety Committee.

*Rep # 1 - for original order
see 1994 City Manager Requests
3*

*Rep # 6 - for original order see
Order # 29 of 1/24/94*

*rep # 8 - for original order see
Order # 28 of 1/24/94*

In City Council,

February 7, 1994

Placed on file