

Councilor Duehay

RESOLUTION ON REPAIR OF ALEWIFE BROOK PARKWAY BRIDGES AND OTHER PARKWAY IMPROVEMENTS

WHEREAS the Alewife Brook Parkway bridges crossing Boston and Maine Railroad rights-of-way near Fresh Pond Shopping Center are deteriorated and have been closed by the Metropolitan District Commission to vehicles weighing more than eight tons; and

WHEREAS this eight-ton limit prevents fire apparatus, buses and many trucks from crossing the bridges, thereby hampering fire prevention, causing economic hardship to Cambridge businesses, and disruption of Cambridge residential areas through which trucks and buses must be detoured; and

WHEREAS at the City Council Transportation and Parking Committee's public hearing of March 21, 1974, the State Department of Public Works indicated that it has funds to repair the bridges upon request from the Metropolitan District Commission, thus permitting vehicles of over twenty tons to use the Parkway; and

WHEREAS the repair work can be done in approximately one year, while construction of new bridges under the long-range plan for the Alewife Brook area will not be completed for at least five years; and

WHEREAS it was indicated at the City Council Transportation and Parking Committee's March 21st public hearing that there is also a need for early provision of a pedestrian crossing light in the vicinity of Fresh Pond Reservation, and that such a crossing light is now being planned jointly by the Metropolitan District Commission and the Cambridge Department of Traffic and Parking for installation on Fresh Pond Parkway at the Lexington Avenue intersection; and

WHEREAS the March 21st public hearing also indicated a need for a guard rail along the westerly side of Fresh Pond Parkway in the vicinity of Kingsley Park; and

WHEREAS the State Department of Public Works has developed a preliminary plan for Alewife Brook area highway improvements which has been sent to each City Councilor and was presented at the City Council Transportation and Parking Committee's public hearing of March 21, 1974; and

WHEREAS the construction of replacement bridges over the two railroad lines, as well as the construction of a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Fitchburg Division line in the vic-

inity of Jefferson Park and Rindge Towers apartments, are called for by the State DPW's preliminary plan for highway improvements in the Alewife Brook area but cannot be built until all planning and engineering work is completed;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Cambridge City Council urgently requests the Metropolitan District Commission to proceed immediately with the repair of the Alewife Brook Parkway railroad bridges, and that the MDC arrange a meeting with the State Department of Public Works and the City of Cambridge at the highest levels for this purpose;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Cambridge City Council requests the Metropolitan District Commission to proceed with the provision of a pedestrian crossing light at Fresh Pond Parkway and Lexington Avenue in continuing close cooperation with the Cambridge Department of Traffic and Parking, and that the crossing light be engineered to permit authorized staff of the Cambridge School Department to hold the walk-light in the "on" position when school classes are crossing the Parkway;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Cambridge City Council requests the Metropolitan District Commission to install a guard rail along the westerly side of Fresh Pond Parkway from Huron Avenue south to Lexington Avenue, and to provide appropriate sidewalk improvements behind the guard rail;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Cambridge City Council hereby endorses the general concepts in the State Department of Public Works preliminary plan for Alewife Brook area highway improvements as presented at the Council Committee's March 21st public hearing;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Cambridge City Council requests the City Manager to work closely with both the State Department of Public Works and the Metropolitan District Commission, as well as with citizen groups, neighboring municipalities; and all interested parties in a vigorous, participatory planning process aimed at bringing about, within five years; completion of the long-range plan for Alewife Brook area highway improvements, which are to include the replacement bridges over the B & M rights-of-way and a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Fitchburg Division tracks in the vicinity of the Jefferson Park and Rindge Towers apartments;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council requests the City Manager to transmit this resolution to Commissioner John Sears of the Metropolitan District Commission and Commissioner Bruce Campbell of the State Department of Public Works, and to take such other steps as he considers appropriate to implement this resolution.

City Council
Adopted by the affirmative vote
of 8 members
Paul E. Duehay
CITY CLERK

April 3, 1974

MEMORANDUM TO: Francis H. Duehay, Chairman
City Council Transportation and Parking Committee

FROM: Edward A. Handy
Transportation Coordinator

SUBJECT: Summary of City Council Transportation and Parking
Committee Public Hearing on Transportation Issues
and Planning in the Alewife/Fresh Pond Area

The following is a summary of major points made and follow-up actions needed with regard to subject public hearing of March 21, 1974 in the Tobin School auditorium. More detailed minutes are available.

Participants in the public hearing included: City Council - Mayor Sullivan; Chairman Duehay; Councilors Ackermann, Clinton, Russell and Wylie; State - Representative Charles F. Flaherty, Jr; DPW Commissioner Campbell, Associate Commissioner Wofford, and Assistant to the Commissioner Byron Gilchrist; MBTA Manager of Master Planning Graham; MAPC Deputy Director Miller, with planners Anthony DeSarcina and James Atkinson; MDC planner Stephen Kaiser; City Staff - DPW Commissioner Fagone; Deputy Fire Chief Cully; Traffic and Parking Director Teso; with Assistant Director Lauren Preston; Police Department Safety Officer James Synnott; Planning and Development Assistant Directors Handy and Wagner, Chief Planner/Transportation Richard Easler, Principal Planner Maurice Dullea; Citizen Groups - Cambridge Transportation Forum, Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, Cambridge Corporation, League of Women Voters, Mystic River Watershed Association, Neighborhood Nine Association, and others.

Major points made and follow-up actions needed include:

STATUS OF RED LINE EXTENSION

Wofford (DPW) said (1) Red Line will be extended via Porter and Davis Squares by deep bore tunnel; then to Alewife Brook, and on to Arlington Heights, with possible further extension to Route 128 following the preparation of an "Environmental Impact Statement" and its thorough review by Lexington and the State; (2) Major parking facility and related highway improvements at Alewife are integral part of the extension; (3) Special design treatment will be given to stations and all other public construction along the Red Line extension in an effort to create positive rather than negative environmental impacts by the extension. (4) "Fitchburg Division" commuter rail line to be improved, with direct connection to Red Line at Porter Square.

Graham (MBTA) said extension involves three more years of planning and engineering before construction can begin. Next steps are: (1) Special Harvard Square "E.I.S." study to select final alignment, station location, etc. for first leg of extension; (2) Up-date of BTPR's "E.I.S." for balance of extension to Arlington Heights; (3) "E.I.S." study of possible further extension to Route 128; (4) Station impact and development studies for Porter, Davis, Alewife, Arlington Center, and Arlington Heights stations.

Wofford and Graham said present cost estimates are: Harvard to Alewife - \$209 million; Alewife to Arlington Heights - \$84 million; Arlington Heights to Route 128 - \$78 million. Funding to Arlington Heights to be available as part of Governor's \$1.5 billion 10-year public transportation development program. Federal government pays 30% of cost under new formula. Bulk of Federal funding to come from \$666 million in Interstate Highway funds reallocated from cancelled freeway projects (Inner Belt, Southwest Expressway, etc.). (Note by Planning and Development Department: cost to Cambridge of \$1.5 billion program including bond interest estimated at approximately \$82,500/year over 40 year period).

Wofford, answering citizen questions, said (1) that the State intends (as in the BTPR Study) to work for active citizen and municipal participation in continued Red Line extension planning, principally through MAPC and a "Northwest Coordinator"; (2) that the Alewife transit station is necessarily a major transfer point from autos and buses to the Red Line -- and that the option to move this essential transfer function to Arlington Heights or Route 128 does not exist, as Arlington Heights is too far from a major highway, and the Route 128 station will be less accessible than Alewife to a major segment of the potential new riders.

Graham, answering Chairman Duehay and a member of the Cambridge Transportation Forum about alternative alignments to be studied in the Harvard Square part of the Red Line extension, said that all reasonable alternatives must be studied, and that the final selection at the conclusion of the study will be based on appropriate criteria including but not limited to citizen preferences and construction costs.

Follow-Up Action Cambridge must recommend to MBTA by April 15th the alternate alignments and related issues it wants included in the forthcoming 38-week "E.I.S." study of the Red Line extension's "first leg" (to Massachusetts Avenue at Chauncy Street).

BRIDGE PROBLEM ON PARKWAY

Kaiser (MDC) stated that the two Alewife Brook Parkway bridges over B & M Railroad rights-of-way have been closed to vehicles of more than 8 tons as a result of consultant findings on their poor structural condition. These bridges, built in 1929, were underdesigned and have only been lightly maintained in recent years due to long-standing plans for rebuilding them as

part of a Concord Turnpike extension to the Inner Belt (now cancelled). Reconstruction of both bridges is needed, but completion date is 5 to 10 years away. Temporary shoring up may be in order, but MDC has no funds for such work.

Teso (City) said that the 8-ton limit on the bridges is causing major problems for businesses along Rindge Avenue Extension. He has lifted the 2½ ton limit on Rindge Avenue, consequently, for short periods during the day (5 a.m. to 7 a.m.; 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.; 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m.; 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.). However, short-term and long-term solutions must be pursued vigorously for these two bridges, as well as for the decaying Walden Street and Huron Avenue bridges over B & M rights-of-way. Additionally, heavy Fire Department equipment and MBTA buses cannot use the bridges. Cambridge understands that \$1 million is needed to repair the two Alewife Brook Parkway bridges.

Kaiser (MDC) said that if the State DPW will provide the \$1 million, MDC will shore up the bridges to carry 20 to 25 ton vehicles until replacement bridges can be constructed.

Participants including Councilor Russell, Chairman Duehay, and Deputy Fire Chief Gully stated that the bridge problem must be addressed quickly and hard. City DPW Commissioner Fagone discussed problem he is having with maintenance of Huron Avenue bridge.

Commissioner Campbell said that DPW can work with MDC on moving ahead fast with the shoring up of the bridges.....and that construction of new bridges cannot be completed for 7 years under present "E.I.S." requirements, but might be cut to 5 years if the "E.I.S." study could be administratively determined unnecessary.

Follow-Up (1) On shoring up Alewife Brook Parkway bridges, Cambridge now understands that DPW is ready to go ahead immediately upon request from MDC to both design and construct, or to use MDC designs for construction. Councilor Duehay to ask that City Council ask Manager for prompt contact of MDC Commissioner in this connection. Question whether repairs are made by DPW or by MDC using DPW funds should be addressed quickly, with top-level Cambridge participation made available. (2) On permanent reconstruction of bridges, DPW has concluded that the involvement of "4(f)" land in the overall Alewife highway planning project requires an "E.I.S." study, but that it can be preformed in 6 to 9 months beginning in early summer. Cambridge to participate in preparing final work program for consultants to use in performing study. (Note: if design for shoring up of bridges can begin in near future, Cambridge understands the 8-ton limit can be raised to 20 tons in approximately one year).

ALEWIFE HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS PLANNING

Gilchrist (DPW) described the State's preliminary plan for Alewife Area highway improvements, including major features as follows: (1) Principal objective is increased safety; also better parkway amenities; no increase in automobile capacity is sought or can result; (2) Grade separations at Dewey and Almy Circle, and at Rindge Avenue; (3) Signalized intersections

at the two Concord Avenue circles, and at entrance to Fresh Pond shopping areas; (4) Special signal timing to get cars off Alewife Brook Parkway into MBTA station area in morning rush hour without back-up-onto Parkway; (5) Widening of Parkway lanes from 10 feet to 12 feet (within existing right-of-way) from Dewey and Almy Circle south to Concord Avenue; (6) Re-construction of railroad bridges as integral part of Parkway improvements.

Kaiser (MDC) discussed plans for providing a greatly improved pedestrian and bicycle path along the Fresh Pond/Alewife Brook Parkway system...and plans for slowing down traffic progressively as it moves south on Parkway. Pedestrian/bicycle paths to be approximately 6 to 8 feet wide.

Participants: Councilor Ackermann endorsed the DPW/MDC concepts of (1) multi-purpose planning (for automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle movements) and (2) the slowing down of auto movements before they reach the neighborhoods. Mr. Sawyer of Neighborhood Nine Association asked for details on access from the Parkway to the shopping areas, and Mr. Gilchrist explained that left turn storage lanes at the signal would be provided... thus getting cars out of the moving lanes while waiting to turn.

Follow-Up Further discussion with MDC about its plans for bicycle paths indicates that current thinking calls for combined pedestrian/bicycle paths on each side of the Alewife Brook Parkway -- rather than for a diversion up New Street. The Cambridge concept of an MDC pedestrian/bicycle path up New Street, bridging the B & M tracks between the Rindge Towers and Jefferson Park apartment complexes and proceeding north through Russell Field to re-join the Parkway in the vicinity of the Dewey and Almy Circle... is endorsed by MDC staff but cannot, as they see it, legally be undertaken other than by the State DPW or Cambridge. At this time, Cambridge must write DPW to ask for assistance in exploring the possible use of recent Federal legislation that provides funds for construction of bikeways paralleling urban systems highways. Additionally, following the April 4th DPW meeting with Alewife Area businessmen on the highway planning project, Cambridge must (per recent agreement with DPW) send Commissioner Campbell a letter covering all planning work it would like to have included in the forthcoming 6 to 9 month "E.I.S." study.

ALEWIFE STATION IMPACT STUDY

Miller and DeSarcina (MAPC) described forthcoming "station impact" study at Alewife Brook. Cost estimated at \$200,000, of which Federal Government would pay 80% and State 20%. Cambridge to have opportunity to do a substantial part of the work under contract to MAPC. This is essentially a land development study within the immediate impact area of the Alewife transit station.

Follow-Up Assistant Director Wagner of Planning and Development Department working with MAPC in the setting up of this study, in hope of starting during summer, 1974.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING PROBLEM ON FRESH POND PARKWAY

Teso (Cambridge) and Kaiser (MDC) presented plans for a pedestrian crossing light on Fresh Pond Parkway at Fresh Pond Parkway. This would be an

MDC project costing approximately \$15,000.

Participants: Councilor Wylie asked for a pedestrian overpass, pointing out that large classes of school children crossing to the Fresh Pond Reservation could not get across during the "walk" cycle of the proposed light. DPW and MDC stated that the expense would be too great for the limited usage. Councilor Wylie also asked for a guard rail separating the Parkway pavement from the sidewalk along the Fresh Pond Reservation boundary between Kingsley Park and Huron Avenue. Further, he asked for and received assurance that the State has no intention of widening Fresh Pond Parkway (i.e. south of the Lake View Avenue intersection, where the DPW/MDC highway planning project ends). Lastly, Councilor Wylie expressed deep concern about MBTA's projected large parking garage (2000 car maximum) at Alewife. Associate Commissioner Wofford stated that Cambridge must be prepared to accept this garage as an indispensable element in the regional public transportation system Cambridge itself has worked effectively to bring about...as an alternative to further massive freeway construction inside Route 128. He added that the 2000-car maximum is a cut-back from the original plan for a 5000-car facility. Mayor Sullivan and others pointed out that a 2000-car garage is considerably smaller than a number of garages already built and operating successfully in Massachusetts. A further point was made that Cambridge need not fear a later addition to the garage, as the capacity of the highway system being planned by DPW and MDC limits the practical capacity of the garage to 2000 spaces.

Follow-Up (1) The Cambridge Department of Planning and Development, together with the Department of Traffic and Parking, must work closely with MAPC in setting up a work-element in the forthcoming Alewife Station Impact Study to deal with all aspects of the MBTA garage....traffic impact in both directions during peak hour movements to and from the station....problem of possible back-ups near garage during peak hours.... need for reserving adequate garage spaces for off-peak Red Line riders.... orientation and design of garage from standpoint of visual impact, and of joint-development potential....need to provide for excellent "kiss and ride" and bus access to station, in order to reduce demand for all-day parking in garage. (2) The two departments must also develop an intensified, special participatory planning mechanism for the Station Impact Study, with particular emphasis on the garage elements. (3) Cambridge must follow-up on Councilor Wylie's request for a Fresh Pond Parkway guard rail, and must ask MDC to provide a pedestrian walk-light control that may be manually held in the "walk" position until a class of school children has crossed the Parkway...but only by authorized persons. A letter to MDC must go out making these requests, as well as request that the pedestrian crossing signal be installed at the earliest possible date.

BUS SERVICE ISSUES

Dullea (Cambridge) discussed the bus service problem resulting from the 8-ton limit on the Alewife Brook Parkway railroad bridges....and then presented five proposals for bus route changes affecting the Alewife Brook/

Fresh Pond area and other sections of the City. Particular concern over lack of service along Huron Avenue west of Aberdeen Avenue was voiced by the manager and residents of Huron Towers Apartments. One of the five proposed bus route changes would provide the requested service. The same citizens also requested better street lighting, sidewalks, and policing of automobiles exceeding the speed limit along Huron Avenue in the vicinity of Huron Towers.

Follow-Up Henrietta Davis of the Planning and Development Department is preparing recommendations to the Assistant City Manager on processing of the proposed bus route changes. If proposals are to be implemented at end of June (the quarterly change-over to new schedules), MBTA must receive the City's recommendation by May 1st. Problem is how to arrange for sufficiently broad citizen review during April.

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cc: City Council Committee on Transportation and Parking
City Manager
Assistant City Manager
Director of Traffic and Parking
Participating State and City Officials



City of Cambridge

IN CITY COUNCIL

(C. Duehay) Resolution Re: Repair of Bridges
and Alewife Brook Parkway - Memorandum
from Mr. Handy, Transportation Coordinator.

140A.

In City Council

April 8, 1974