

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

William F. Weld
Governor

Argeo Paul Cellucci
Lieutenant Governor

James J. Kerasiotes
Secretary and MBTA Chairman

John J. Haley, Jr.
General Manager

June 9, 1994

Mr. Robert W. Healy
City Manager
City of Cambridge
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mr. Healy:

Thank you for your concerns regarding the malfunctions of the Sherman Street grade crossing.

We have researched our records for reported grade crossing malfunctions at the Sherman Street grade crossing warning system over the past five months and have found only three incidents had been reported to the Commuter Rail Maintenance Control Center in Somerville, MA.

On April 3, 1994, the gates and lights at Sherman Street were operating continuously due to vandals placing metal debris across the tracks in the immediate area.

On January 22, 1994 the gates and lights at Sherman Street were operating continuously due to a faulty track insulating component which was promptly repaired.

On May 25, 1994 the gates and lights at Sherman Street were operating continuously due to a fast moving rainstorm which caused temporary flooding of the crossing surface. Adjustments were promptly made to compensate for the conditions and provide adequate performance of the affected track circuit.

Amtrak signal maintenance forces under contract to the MBTA perform a variety of monthly, quarterly and yearly tests and adjustments on grade crossing warning system components to ensure the reliability and integrity of these systems. Amtrak currently maintains 148 grade crossings with active warning devices on behalf of the MBTA. The MBTA, through periodic inspections, assures that all systems are in compliance with applicable state and federal regulations, in addition to contractual requirements.

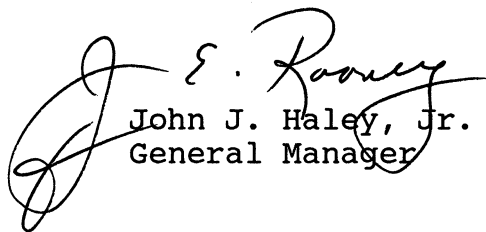
Many of the reported false activations of grade crossings are related to acts of vandalism to the track structure. Other causes of false activation are attributed to extreme weather conditions such as lightning, heavy rain or snow. The crossing circuitry is not totally immune to these types of adverse conditions, which result in a "fail safe" activation of the warning equipment. When

Sherman Street Grade Crossing
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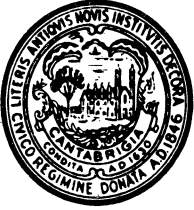
the maintenance control center gets a report of a crossing malfunction trains are immediately notified to stop and protect the grade crossing until maintenance personnel have corrected the problem. The maintenance personnel are immediately dispatched to the location that has the reported malfunction. After repairs are made, the trains are allowed to proceed at normal speed.

We would ask that the local police department report all malfunctions of grade crossings to the MBTA at 617-722-3628. This will allow us to respond to malfunctions rapidly.

Sincerely,



John J. Haley, Jr.
General Manager



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

June 27, 1994

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 21, regarding the malfunctions of the Sherman Street grade crossing, received from John J. Haley, Jr., General Manager of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.

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

Consent Agenda # 3

5-338

Response to Awaiting Report Item Number
Twenty-One regarding the malfunctions of
the Sherman Street grade crossing.

*for original order see
1994 City Manager's
Requests # 174.*

In City Council,

June 27, 1994

*Referred back to
City Manager on motion
of Councillor Triantafyllou
6/29/94 copy sent to City
mgr (du)*