

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
Tel. 876-6800

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
JOHN H. CORCOPAN
City Manager

May 21, 1973

Re: North Cambridge Temporary
Pedestrian Bridge

Mr. Richard Bourbeau
Staff Engineering Officer
329th Engineering Group/94th Army Reserve Corps
United States Army Reserve Center
666 Summer Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02210

Dear Mr. Bourbeau:

As you know from conversations with my staff, I am seeking to implement the Cambridge Council's request for prompt construction of a pedestrian overpass across the Boston and Maine railroad tracks in North Cambridge. The City Council has taken this action as the result of the death of Michael Doiron, age 13, who was struck by a train on May 8, 1973 near his home in Jefferson Park.

I am enclosing an article from the Cambridge Chronicle reporting this fatal accident. During the past several years, there have been many near-disasters in this area, due to the insufficiency of safe pedestrian crossings for North Cambridge residents needing or wanting to reach activity centers immediately south of the tracks. This is particularly true of the more than 1000 families living in Jefferson Park and Rindge Towers, where the only practical pedestrian access to the nearby Fresh Pond Shopping Center is via a short-cut across the railroad right-of-way.

Several months ago, a decision by the Metropolitan District Commission to build a skating rink requested by Cambridge in the vicinity of the Fresh Pond Shopping Center created an even greater safety hazard than previously existed. Although the projected redevelopment of the former Cambridge City dump will eventually provide access to the rink from Sherman Street, it is clear that until that time many, perhaps most North Cambridge young people would reach the rink by crossing the railroad tracks somewhere in the vicinity of Jefferson Park or Rindge Towers.

Consequently, we decided to look for funds to build a pedestrian bridge connecting Rindge Avenue with New Street, using public easements across the Jefferson Park, Field Machinery, Rindge Towers and Fresh Pond Shopping Center properties as necessary. Our Department of Planning and Development worked with the Department of Traffic and Parking to secure Federal and State funding for the \$250,000 bridge through the Federal Highway Administration's TOPICS program. Although our application was approved by the State Department of Public Works, we learned on May 11, 1973 that the bridge was found ineligible for TOPICS funding by the Federal authorities.

To: Mr. Richard Bourbeau (cont.)

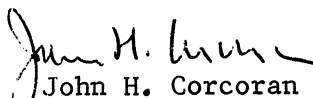
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We have requested a review of this determination of ineligibility, but we must assume that at best it would be two years from now before the bridge could be funded, designed, constructed and put into operation. In view of the recent tragic death and at the urging of citizens from Jefferson Park and from our City Demonstration Agency, I have, therefore, decided to ask the United States Army for emergency help with the construction of a temporary bridge. Through conversations with Lt. Colonel Robert E. Harrington of Fort Devens, and with Captain Magno of his staff, we have learned that the needed temporary bridge might be built by either a Fort Devens engineering unit, the Massachusetts National Guard, or the 329th Engineering Group of the 94th Army Reserve Corps, provided that Cambridge can secure necessary legal agreements, materials, etc. It has been suggested that we apply for help from all three organizations, but that the Army Reserve Corps is the most likely to find itself able to give us early help.

As I understand it, the 329th Engineering Group is prepared to send an engineering team to inspect the site and review the project with us in one to two weeks after receiving this request. Please contact me or Mr. Robert A. Bowyer, Director, Department of Planning and Development, as to arrangements in this connection. Mr. Bowyer has placed Mr. Richard A. Lockhart, Chief Planner/Development, in charge of this project, and has assigned Mr. Edward A. Handy, Cambridge Transportation Coordinator, to work with him as needed. Additional help will be provided by Mr. George Teso, Director, Department of Traffic and Parking, as well as by Mr. James Rice, Acting City Engineer, Mr. Edward D. McCarthy, Acting City Solicitor, and Mr. Conrad Fagone, Public Works Commissioner. I am confident that this task force of department leaders can provide your organization with all necessary cooperation and support.

A proposal for the permanent bridge is attached, together with a map showing its approximate location. The design and location of a temporary bridge might, of course, be somewhat different.

Very truly yours,


John H. Corcoran
City Manager

JHC/b

cc: Hon. Barbara Ackermann, Mayor
Councilor Thomas W. Danehy
Robert A. Bowyer, Director, Planning and Development
Conrad Fagone, Public Works
Edward A. Handy, Transportation Coordinator
Richard A. Lockhart, Chief Planner/Development
Edward D. McCarthy, Acting City Solicitor
George Teso, Director, Traffic and Parking

Youth's death prompts call for new footbridge

The death of Michael Doiron, 13, of Jefferson Park, who was struck by a train at the Sherman st. railroad crossing last week, brought a city council demand Monday night for prompt construction of a footbridge over the tracks.

The council voted, on motion of Councillor Thomas W. Danehy, that a pedestrian overpass, scheduled to be built by the city in connection with construction of the new MDC skating rink near New st., should be built immediately at a location acceptable to residents of Jefferson Park.

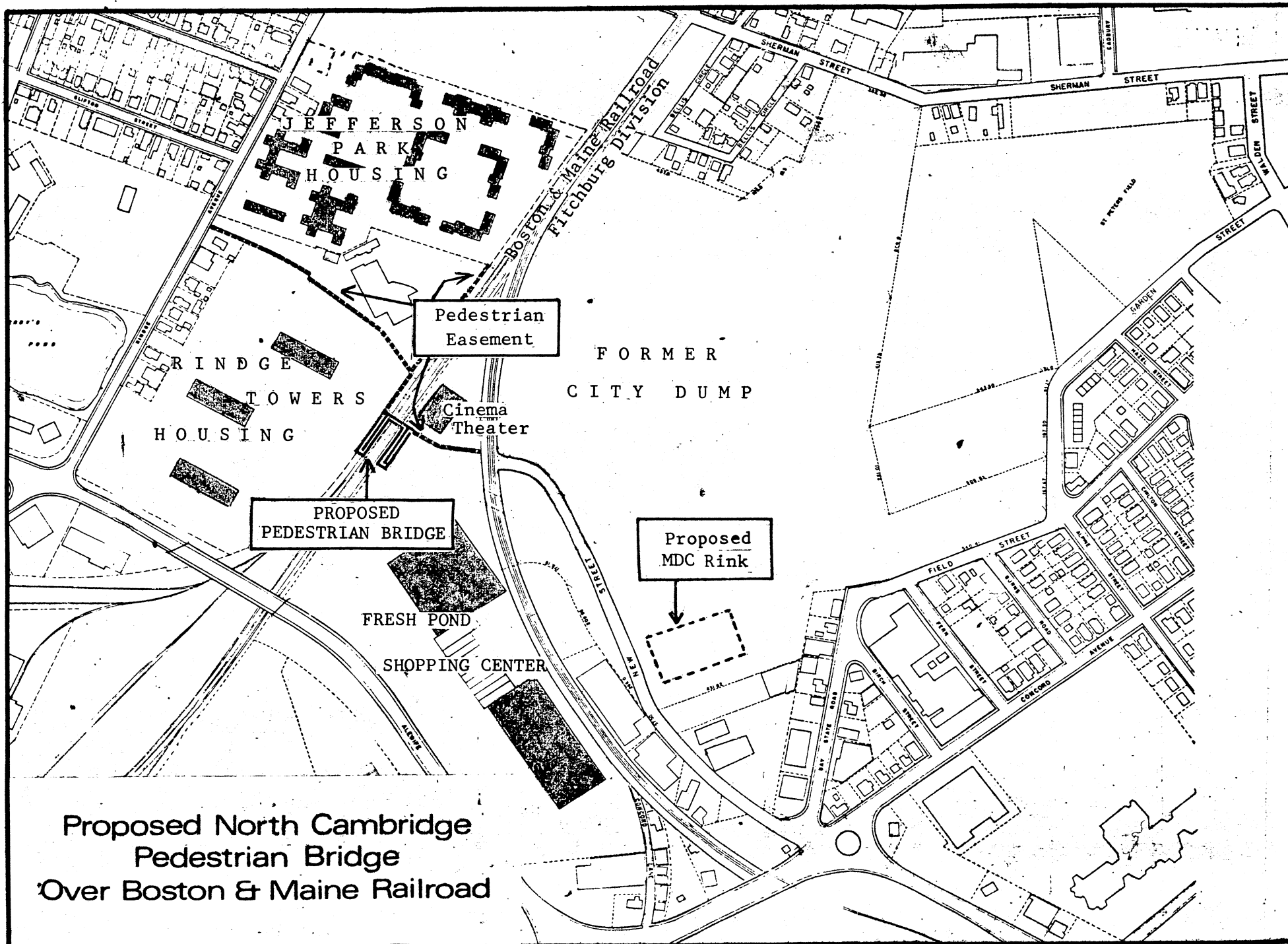
Tenants at Jefferson Park, including Mrs. Judy Francis, said the city planning department has recommended an overpass near Max Wasserman's Rindge Towers, and argued that a better location which would serve more children would be in the rear of Jefferson Park.

Mrs. Francis said she would also like to have Boston and Maine trains slow down to 15 miles an hour between Porter Square and Alewife Brook, and to have sidewalks built on each side of the tracks for the safety of people walking along the tracks to get either

to the skating rink or the Fresh Pond Shopping Center.

She and Janet Rose suggested that if properly approached, either the Army or the National Guard might be willing to build a temporary footbridge over the tracks until a permanent one can be built.

Councillor Sandra Graham's suggestion that Jefferson Park residents be involved in the planning was approved. Mayor Barbara Ackermann said the council would hold a meeting next Monday at 6 p.m. to discuss possible Army involvement and other details.



Proposed North Cambridge
Pedestrian Bridge
Over Boston & Maine Railroad

DIMENSIONS FOR PROPOSED NORTH CAMBRIDGE PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS

Height above rails	- - - - -	22 feet
Height above north side of railroad right-of-way		approx. 20 feet
Height above south side of railroad right-of-way		approx. 25 feet
Maximum desirable ramp gradient	- - -	12 per cent
Ramp lengths	- - - - -	250 to 300 feet
Minimum desirable ramp and overpass width	-	7 to 10 feet
Length of overpass, excluding ramps	- -	approx. 75 feet

NOTE: Overpass should be enclosed (top as well as sides) with link fencing or other similar material

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