



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

LOUIS A. DePASQUALE
City Manager

LISA C. PETERSON
Deputy City Manager

July 27, 2018

Stephanie Pollack, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160
Boston, MA 02116

Luis Manuel Ramirez, General Manager
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4510
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Secretary Pollack and General Manager Ramirez:

The City of Cambridge is working as quickly as possible to establish a quiet zone at the highway-rail grade crossing where the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's Fitchburg Main Line intersects Sherman Street in North Cambridge. On Tuesday, July 24th, we held a community meeting to discuss the improvements we plan to implement to create this quiet zone, and explain the upcoming timeline. The meeting was very well attended, and the local residents made several requests, some of which pertain to the MBTA. Since no representatives from the MBTA or MassDOT were in attendance, we are writing to urge you to consider implementing these requests.

As we have previously requested, the residents strongly asked that the MBTA, as the owner of the railroad line, establish a 15 mile per hour speed restriction in this area and deploy a flagger at the crossing, so that the train horns can stop sounding in the interim while the quiet zone is being established. In addition, the residents have noted that some trains sound their horns for a relatively short duration and others sound their horns for a much longer duration, and that there is variability in the loudness of the horns. We are therefore requesting that all train operators minimize the loudness and duration of the horns to the extent possible, while still remaining within the federal requirements for sounding the horn at a highway-rail grade crossing. This will help to reduce the impact and disruption of the horns, in the interim until the speeds are temporarily reduced and/or the quiet zone is established.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to meeting with you in the near future to discuss immediate and longer-term next steps to resolve this issue.

Sincerely,

Louis A. DePasquale
City Manager

Joseph E. Barr
Director of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation

cc: Cambridge City Council (via email); Cambridge State and Federal Legislative Delegations (via email);
David Scorey, General Manager, Keolis Commuter Services; Nancy Glowka, City Solicitor (via email)

