



# City of Cambridge

## Executive Department

**LOUIS A. DePASQUALE**  
City Manager

**LISA C. PETERSON**  
Deputy City Manager

December 13, 2018

Robert Lauby  
Associate Administrator for Safety  
Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Mail Stop 25  
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: Public Authority Application – Quiet Zone at Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Number 052313H Using Alternative Safety Measures**

Dear Associate Administrator Lauby,

The City of Cambridge is pleased to submit this public authority application under 49 CFR Chapter II Part 222 Subpart C Section 222.39(b)(1), requesting review and approval of an Alternative Safety Measure (ASM) for use at US DOT National Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Inventory Number 052313H, where Sherman Street crosses the Fitchburg Main Line of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) North Side Commuter Rail in Cambridge, MA.

On September 15, 2018, the City of Cambridge established a new quiet zone at this highway-rail grade crossing, using Supplementary Safety Measures (SSMs) that involved the construction of new 60' long medians, the relocation of two driveways, and the installation of necessary signs and markings. We used the standard SSMs to expedite the establishment of the quiet zone, but the changes required to establish the quiet zone created circulation problems for certain existing and relocated driveways. As a result, we are seeking your review and approval for an ASM that would allow us to shorten the recently-constructed medians to improve circulation at these nearby driveways, while maintaining a Risk Index that is below the Risk Index with Horns. Specifically, we are seeking approval to make the following changes to the medians, while retaining the designation of a quiet zone:

- Removing 35' of the non-traversable median on the south side of the grade crossing, maintaining a 25' non-traversable median and
- Removing 8' of the non-traversable median on the north side of the grade crossing, maintaining a 52' non-traversable median.



The changes on the south side of the crossing will allow us to reconstruct an existing curb cut to provide a 24' wide driveway located a minimum of 25' south of the railroad crossing gates, improving access to an existing parking lot that serves a nearby school and a local restaurant. This will improve the safety of the parking lot operations and reduce traffic impacts on nearby residential streets. The changes on the north side of the crossing will improve access to an existing curb cut on the west side of Sherman Street that serves a residential and industrial development.

The City has not had a formal diagnostic team meeting for this crossing, but we have consulted individually with representatives from the MBTA and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and have met onsite multiple times with staff from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Based on these discussions, we feel confident that the state and federal agencies are supportive of these changes, given the need to balance between additional levels of safety and the impact on the local community.

As described in the attached technical memorandum, the City's Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department has calculated the new Risk Index with this ASM in place, which is 69,094, as compared to the Risk Index with Horns, which is 85,116. This memo contains additional details on the current and proposed treatments at this crossing and should provide you with the information required to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed changes. Based on this analysis, we believe that this change meets the requirements for an ASM, and are therefore requesting your approval to make this change, subject to review by you and other Federal Railroad Administration staff. As required under Section 222.39(b)(1)(vi), the City of Cambridge is committed to implementing the proposed improvements, should we receive your approval for this ASM.

As required under Section 222.39(b)(3), this public authority application is being sent to the following parties for comment during the required 60-day comment period:

**Railroad Owner:**

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority  
Jeffrey Gonneville, Acting General Manager  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4510  
Boston, MA 02116

**Copy to:**

Ryan Coholan, Chief Railroad Officer

**Railroad Operators:**

Keolis Commuter Services  
David Scorey, General Manager  
470 Atlantic Avenue  
Boston, MA 02210

Pan Am Railways  
David Fink, President  
1700 Iron Horse Park  
North Billerica, MA 01862

**Law Enforcement Authority Responsible for Vehicular Traffic:**

Cambridge Police Department  
Branville G. Bard, Commissioner  
125 Sixth Street  
Cambridge, MA 02142

**State Agency Responsible for Highway and Road Safety:**

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

Copy to:  
Jonathan Gulliver, Highway Administrator

**State Agency Responsible for Grade Crossing Safety:**

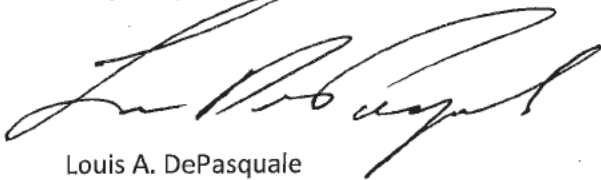
Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities  
Angela M. O'Connor, Chairman  
One South Station, Fifth Floor  
Boston, MA 02110

Copy to:  
Brian Christy, Director, Transportation Oversight Division

Thank you very much for the FRA's ongoing efforts on behalf of the residents of the City of Cambridge, to manage the impact of this highway-rail grade crossing on the public health and quality of life of our community. We look forward to continuing to work with you on improving the safety of train operations in Cambridge.

Should you have any questions on this application or wish to discuss this matter in greater detail, please don't hesitate to contact Joseph Barr, Director of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation, at 617-349-4743 or [jbarr@cambridgema.gov](mailto:jbarr@cambridgema.gov).

Very Truly Yours,



Louis A. DePasquale  
City Manager

cc: Joseph E. Barr, Director of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation  
Nancy E. Glowa, City Solicitor  
Norma Jean Griffith, Federal Railroad Administration  
Lou Fangella, Federal Railroad Administration