



Charles D. Baker, Governor
Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor
Stephanie Pollack, MassDOT Secretary & CEO
Luis Manuel Ramirez, General Manager & CEO

massDOT
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

November 16, 2018

Patrice Garvin
Town Administrator
Belmont Town Hall
455 Concord Avenue
Belmont, MA 02478

Dear Ms. Garvin:

The MBTA is aware that the town of Belmont is considering the creation of a pedestrian tunnel beneath the MBTA's tracks to connect the High School with the neighborhoods north of the tracks. The MBTA strongly supports the creation of this underpass. This underpass will also work phenomenally well to connect the long considered community pass on the non-MBTA owned property adjacent to the MBTA's very active commuter rail line.

The MBTA has previously voiced dire concerns with the idea of the bike path changing sides of the rail line at Brighton Street. The addition of this underpass makes the logical and very safe connection between the bike path and the high school / sports fields. If the community path never comes to fruition the underpass remains an important safety feature that provides great convenience to school children and the entire neighborhood by safely connecting homes with destinations. I have attached a sketch on the following page to help describe our concern at Brighton St.

The MBTA will want to participate in the planning for and review of plans and specifications for the underpass. Our maintenance forces will need to continue to access our tracks and the important infrastructure located behind the High School. We currently obtain our access via Alexander Avenue off of Channing Road. We expect that will also be where the underpass portal will generally be. We need to protect maintenance vehicle access on or adjacent to the walkway heading for the underpass.

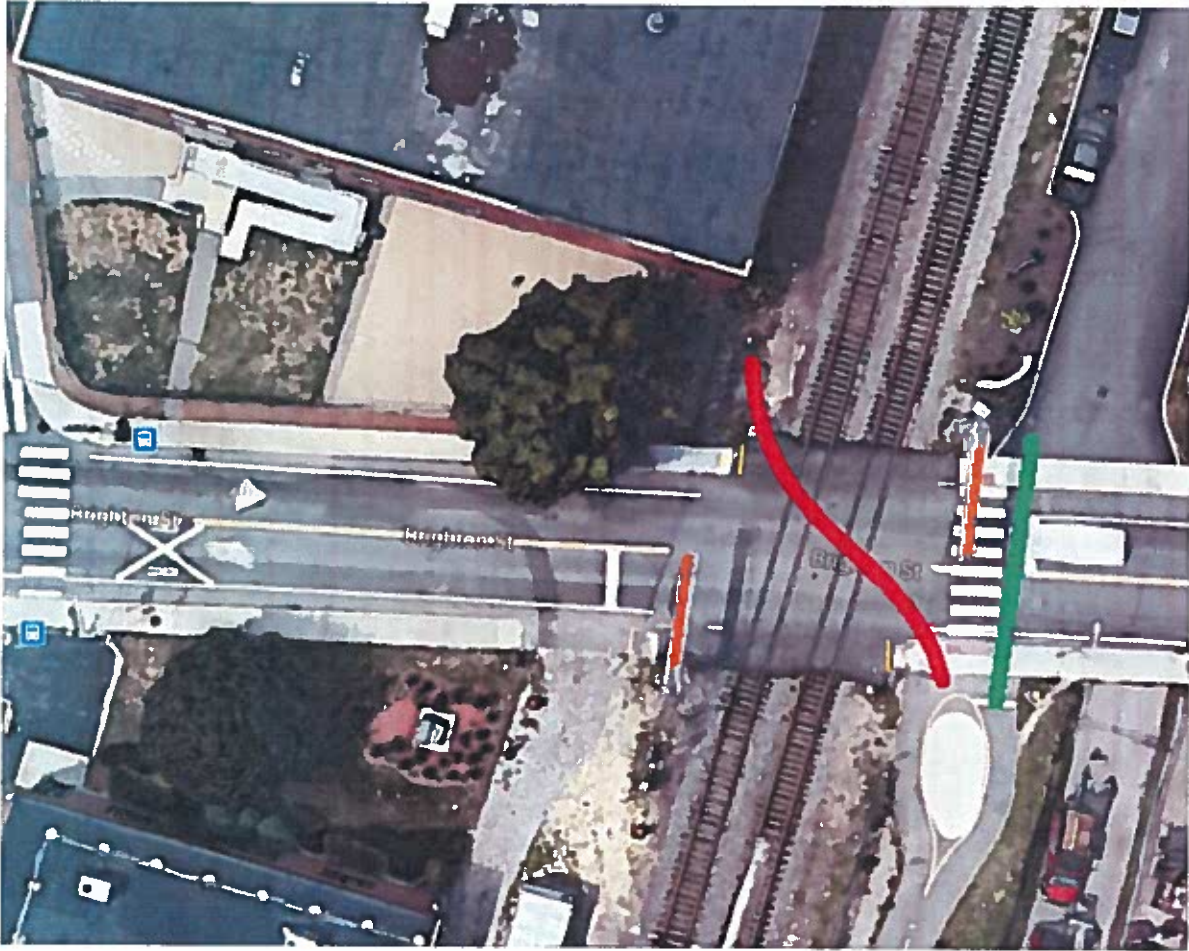
The MBTA will commit its complete attention to helping the Town's effort to create the underpass as expedient as possible so that the safety and convenience benefits can be realized without undue delay. This underpass has so many benefits that most assuredly joins the ranks as a priority project that will have the MBTA's close attention until it is complete.

Thank you for letting us comment on the underpass and the associated community path.

Please contact me with any questions or comments. I can be reached at 617.222.4771 or via email at jray@mbta.com

Sincerely,

John D. Ray
Assistant General Manager –
Commuter Rail and Ferry Operations



The **ORANGE** lines indicate the relative location of the main gates and warning system in place at Brighton St crossing.

The **RED** line is the path of travel suggested and then dismissed as unsafe.

With the underpass providing the connection to the high school the community path can remain to the north of the rail line avoiding an at grade connection with the tracks as suggested by the **GREEN** line on the photo

It quickly becomes apparent that a child or other person either distracted or unaware of the tracks could venture out into the path of a train without encountering a crossing gate. While the bell would be ringing and the flashers flashing, a cell phone or headphones could create a distraction or interfere sufficiently to contribute to an otherwise needless accident. This accident scenario would be avoided by keeping the bike path on the north side of the track and using an underpass to connect to the high school.