



City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division

Guide to the Transit Department records

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Title:	Transit Department records
Collection No.:	8300.001
Dates:	1891-1949
Quantity:	10.0 Cubic feet (57 volumes and 6 photographs)

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Historical Note

A commission to promote rapid transit for the City of Boston and its suburbs was created by Chapter 365 of the Acts of 1891. The Commission consisted of the Mayor and City Engineer, ex officio; three persons appointed by the Mayor under an order of the City Council for a Rapid Transit Commission, passed 28 Feb 1891; and three persons, not residents of the City of Boston, appointed by the Governor, with the consent of the Executive Council. The expenses of the Commission were paid one-half by the Commonwealth and one-half by the City of Boston. The Commission made a report to the Legislature, 5 Apr 1892, and a supplementary and final report, 16 May 1892.

Based on the findings of the Rapid Transit Commission, the Massachusetts Legislature authorized the creation of the Boston Transit Commission in July of 1894. The five commissioners of the Boston Transit Commission were originally appointed for the term of five years from the first of July, 1894. The term of the Commission was extended several times over the next 24 years.

Initially, the Commission had charge of the construction of the Tremont Street subway, the Charlestown Bridge,

the tunnel to East Boston and the Washington Street tunnel. Under the provisions of Chapter 520 of the Acts of 1906, the Commission began construction in 1909 of a tunnel under Beacon Hill from the new Cambridge Bridge to the Park Street station of the Tremont Street subway, as a connection with the Cambridge Main Street subway built by the Boston Elevated Railway. Under the provisions of Chapter 741 of the Acts of 1911, the Commission was further charged with the construction of the East Boston Tunnel Extension, Boylston Street subway and the Dorchester tunnel for train service. The official existence of the Boston Transit Commission terminated on 1 Jul 1918.

The ordinance of 1918, chapter 3, approved by the Mayor on 2 Jul 1918, established the Transit Department under the charge of a board of three commissioners appointed by the Mayor, for the term on one year each. The board exercised the power and performed the duties formerly of the Boston Transit Commission as defined by chapter 185 of the Special Acts of 1918. The Acts of 1947, chapter 544 created the Metropolitan Transit Authority. In July of 1949, the Massachusetts General Court and the Governor approved chapter 572 of the Acts of 1949, entitled "An Act Amending and Revising the Act Creating the Metropolitan Transit Authority". Section 3 of this law inserted in St. 1947, c. 544, a new section 8A providing for the abolition of the Board of Commissioners of the Boston Transit Department, and the transfer of that department and of Boston's subways, tunnels and rapid transit lines to the Metropolitan Transit Authority. Section 8A became effective when it was accepted by the City Council and approved by the Mayor on 25 Jul 1949.

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Scope and Content

The Transit Department collection consists of records created by the Rapid Transit Commission, Boston Transit Commission and the Boston Transit Department. The collection dates from 1891-1949 and includes minutes, journals, photographs, publications and annual reports.

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Series I: Rapid Transit Commission, 1891-1892 (3 Volumes)

Minutes, 1891 June 20-1892 May 20

Volume	
I-1	1891 June 20-1892 May 20
	Journal, 1891-1892
Volume	
I-2	1891-1892
	Report, 1892
Volume	
I-3	Report of the Rapid Transit Commission to the Massachusetts Legislature, 1892

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Series II: Boston Transit Commission, 1894-1918 (41 volumes, 6 photographs)

Minutes, 1894 August 1-1918 June 27

Volume	
II-1	1894 August 1-1895 November 14

II-2	1895 November 16-1896 October 19
II-3	1896 October 19-1897 August 10
II-4	1897 August 13-1899 January 31
II-5	1899 February 2-1902 March 13
II-6	1902 March 18-1904 July 19
II-7	1904 July 19-1905 December 28
II-8	1906 January 2-1907 August 29
II-9	1907 August 29-1909 September 30
II-10	1909 October 5-1912 July 23
II-11	1912 August 1-1913 December 2
II-12	1913 December 2-1915 February 18
II-13	1915 February 18-1916 June 8
II-14	1916 June 8-1918 June 27

Annual Reports, 1895-1918

Volume

II-15	1895
II-16	1896
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II-30	1911
II-31	1912
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II-33	1914
II-34	1915
II-35	1916
II-36	1917
II-37	1918

Photographs, 1906

Photograph

1	Washington Street Tunnel Section 4 - Easterly side, looking north., 1906 February 4
2	Washington Street Tunnel Section 4 - Looking north from near Temple Place., 1906 February 4

- 3 Washington Street Tunnel Section 5 - Looking north showing portion of platform of Milk Street Station over the track for northbound cars., undated
- 4 East Boston Tunnel - Looking east in Atlantic Avenue Station., 1906 February 25
- 5 East Boston Tunnel - Atlantic Avenue Station looking from story above the street, showing covered bridge leading to the State Street Station for elevated trains in Atlantic Avenue., 1906 January 5
- 6 East Boston Tunnel - Machinery loft for elevators in Atlantic Avenue Station., 1906 February 25

Publications, 1911, 1916

- Volume II-38 Contract between the City of Boston Acting by the Boston Transit Commission and the Boston Elevated Railway Company Under Provisions of Chapter 741 of the Acts of 1911, 1911 (1 volume)
- II-39 Boston Transit Commission Legislation/ Court Decisions/ Contract for the Use of the Subway/ Contract for the Use of the New Tunnel and Subway/ Lease of the East Boston Tunnel, 1911
- II-40 Leases of Dorchester Tunnel, Boylston Street Subway, East Boston Tunnel Extension, Cambridge Connection/ Extension of Leases with Tremont Street Subway, East Boston Tunnel, Washington Street Tunnel, 1911
- II-41 Boston Transit Commission Legislation/ Court Decisions/ Contracts and Leases for the Use of the Subways and Tunnels, 1916

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**Series III: Board of Commissioners of the Transit Department, 1918-1949 (13 Volumes)
Minutes, 1918 July 1-1949 August 2**

- Volume III-1 1918 July 1-1922 March 24
- III-2 1922 March 30-1924 January 31
- III-3 1924 February 4-1925 November 3
- III-4 1925 November 5-1927 October 31
- III-5 1927 November 2-1930 August 4
- III-6 1930 August 4-1931 October 1
- III-7 1931 October 5-1933 October 17
- III-8 1933 October 17-1937 February 23
- III-9 1937 February 23-1940 April 9
- III-10 1940 April 12-1945 September 28
- III-11 1945 October 1-1949 August 2

Annual report, 1919

Annual reports for the Transit Department can also be found in the City Documents Collection.

- Volume III-12 1919

Contract, 1925

- III-13 Dorchester Rapid Transit Section 3, 1925

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