



TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

3:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Transportation and Public Utilities Committee will hold a public hearing to discuss how the city factors potential street congestion into street re-design, monitors and adjusts for street congestion (especially in newly reconfigured areas such as North Mass Ave., Garden Street, and Inman Square/Cambridge Street) and understand its impacts on residents, businesses, and public safety. In addition, the Committee will review and learn how the city is planning for potential impacts on Cambridge s

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Joan Pickett	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Transportation and Public Utilities Committee was held on Wednesday, April 10, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 3:00p.m. by the Chair, Councillor Pickett. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of the Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

- Councillor Azeem – Present/Remote
- Councillor Pickett – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote
- Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Wilson – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 5. Quorum established.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett offered opening remarks (Attachment A) and noted that the Call of the meeting was to discuss how the City factors potential street congestion into street re-design, monitors and adjusts for street congestion (especially in newly reconfigured areas such as North Mass Ave., Garden Street, and Inman Square/Cambridge Street) and understand its impacts on residents, businesses, and public safety. In addition, the Committee will review and learn how the City is planning for potential impacts on Cambridge streets of DCR’s plan to reduce Memorial Drive from four lanes to two lanes between JFK Street and the Eliot Bridge. Present at the meeting was Deputy City Manager Owen O’Riordan, Traffic, Parking, and Transportation (TPT) Commissioner, Brooke McKenna, Assistant Commissioner for Street Management/Director of Traffic and Parking, Jeffrey Parenti, Director of Environmental and

Transportation Planning for the Community Development Department (CDD), Susanne Rasmussen, and PTDM Officer for CDD, Stepanie Groll. Also present was Fire Department Chief Thomas Cahill, Police Commissioner Christine Elow, Superintendent Pauline Wells, Deputy Superintendent Buckowe Yam, and Lieutenant Phillip McDavitt. Mayor Simmons was also in attendance.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett opened Public Comment.

Itamar Turner-Trauring, 139 Oxford Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments relative to dedicated bike and bus lanes.

Christopher Cassa, 103 Gore Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments regarding Memorial Drive and traffic congestion.

John Pitkin, 18 Fayette Street, Cambridge, MA, provided comments on traffic congestion, parking studies, and the 2023 resident survey.

Janie Katz-Christy, 166A Elm Street, Cambridge, MA, shared the importance of not letting Memorial Drive become a highway, noting that it is a valuable resource for the environment and community.

Naomi Dunson, 39 Dana Street, Cambridge, MA, shared frustrations, and concerns regarding traffic congestion on Streets off Memorial Drive.

Clyve Lawrence, 26 Plympton Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments regarding Memorial Drive and traffic congestion.

Marie Saccoccio, 55 Otis Street, Cambridge, MA, commented on how Memorial Drive is important to have access to for those living in East Cambridge.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Brooke McKenna, who along with staff from Traffic and Parking and CDD, gave a presentation titled “Transportation and Public Utilities Committee Hearing”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered an overview of congestion, the City’s policy on transportation, project evaluation examples, what can be done to reduce congestion, and a review of Memorial Drive Phase III.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Chief Cahill for comments relative to traffic congestion and the impact it may or may not have on their response times to emergency calls. Chief Cahill shared that the Fire Department will take extra precautions during high traffic congestion times and will take alternate routes when necessary.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Mayor Simmons who asked Chief Cahill to provide more information on Insurance Service Office (ISO) ratings that the Cambridge Fire Department

(CFD) receives. Chief Cahill was available to respond and provide an overview of the classifications that the ISO consists of and highlighted that CFD has a Class 1 rating, noting that there are only six fire departments in the state who have a Class 1 rating. Mayor Simmons pointed out the importance of CFD maintaining their Class 1 rating to keep insurance rates down for property owners. Mayor Simmons shared that it is important to look at the unintended consequences while reaching environmental improvement goals. Chief Cahill added that whenever there is a new traffic pattern or bike lane implementation, there are always conversations and consultations with CFD and City Departments, and that CFD must be able to adapt to those changes.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Commissioner Elow who noted that infrastructure changes have not impacted the Cambridge Police Department's (CPD) calls for service because there are multiple units assigned to each neighborhood ready to respond to calls within their sector. Commissioner Elow echoed comments made by the Fire Chief regarding the many conversations within City Departments when there are going to be structure changes. Commissioner Elow also provided information on police enforcement in bike and bus lanes and motor vehicles that are double parked. Commissioner Elow recognized Phil McDavitt who provided an overview of CPD's Traffic Unit role when traffic changes are implemented.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Councillor Azeem who asked Chief Cahill if he likes the dedicated bus lanes. Chief Cahill shared that he is a fan of the bus lane because it allows drivers to have a place to pull over when emergency vehicles are in route to a call.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Councillor Toner who asked if traffic congestions are creating slower response times from both CFD and CPD and if there are concerns for future response times as Cambridge continues to move forward with infrastructure changes. Commissioner Elow shared that it is not affecting CPD's response time due to having cruisers in different sectors within the different neighborhoods. Chief Cahill shared that there are fire houses strategically placed throughout Cambridge and if CFD sees an increase in response time they are searching for alternate ways to get to places. Chief Cahill shared that he cannot definitively say that they are responding slower, but with congestion in certain areas of the city it will impact responses and the Fire Department has workarounds for when that does happen. Both the Fire Chief and Police Commissioner agreed that it is important to have these discussions now on future changes to be aware of what the potential impacts and challenges may look like to get ahead of them.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who asked Commissioner Elow how hard it is to enforce motor vehicles that are double parked or parked illegally in a way that contributes to traffic congestion. Commissioner Elow shared that this had been a recent topic of discussion, and that Officers are enforcing illegally parked motor vehicles by issuing tickets. Commissioner Elow shared that a goal within the Department is to also get more Police Officers on bikes to help with parking enforcement.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Councillor Wilson who shared she appreciated the conversation and pointed out how everything is interconnected and how unintended consequences are affecting everyone in the community. Councillor Wilson highlighted the

importance of continuing to have conversations as the City moves forward, and to be thoughtful and holistic towards change.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett thanked Chief Cahill and Commissioner Elow and her team for attending the meeting and having these important conversations directly with Fire and Police leadership to ensure their input as the streets continue to be redesigned.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Councillor Toner who asked how the City is collecting data when it comes to counting how many motor vehicles or buses are driving through certain areas of the city. Jeff Parenti responded and shared that there are 18 vision cameras installed city wide which are used to collect data as well as manual counts. Jeff Parenti also shared that some of that data is available to the public on the Open Data Portal. Susanne Rasmussen provided additional information on resources that can be used to collect data on modes of transportation. Councillor Toner asked if the Traffic Department has access to software that can be used to help project what traffic flow would look like if changes were made. Commissioner McKenna responded and noted that the Sidewalk Data Set is currently a system that TPT uses for more project-based circumstances, which is based off using cell phone data to anticipate traffic flow. Councillor Toner shared concerns about the current bus service through the MBTA and asked if TPT had any information on how often buses are on their routes. Commissioner McKenna noted the importance of standing behind the MBTA through all their improvement projects. Susanne Rasmussen provided additional comments that support the changes being made within the MBTA and shared how bus services will improve with time. Councillor Toner shared concerns about street infrastructure changes occurring at the same time in different areas of the city and how that will affect traffic congestion. Commissioner McKenna responded and shared that the hope is that more people will be out of single occupancy vehicles, which would create more space and parking, and hopefully less congestion.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who asked if there has been discussion about implementing more Bus Signal Priority in additional areas of the city to improve bus service. Brooke McKenna responded and shared that to have a dedicated bus signal, there needs to be enough lane capacity to have a dedicated bus lane. Jeff Parenti offered additional comments and shared that the MBTA is installing equipment in the Concord Avenue corridor to transition to Bus Signal Priority and noted that it has proven to improve travel time for buses.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett made a motion to extend the meeting by fifteen minutes.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Yes – 5. Motion passed.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Councillor Wilson who asked if the cloud-based data analysis INRIX (packet page 23) is being used to help change traffic signals to be adjusted to

make sure traffic is moving the way that it should. Jeff Parenti responded and pointed out that INRIX does not monitor traffic signals, and that the monitoring is done by City Engineers. Jeff Parenti provided a brief overview of how that data is collected. Councillor Wilson asked if TPT was aware of road rage incidents occurring in Cambridge. Commissioner McKenna pointed out that that would be more of a question for the Police Department. Councillor Wilson asked if there has been a reduction in motor vehicles being registered in Cambridge. Susanne Rasmussen explained that because of more housing units being built, the motor vehicle count has gone up, but the percentage of motor vehicle ownership per housing unit has also gone down. Councillor Wilson commented on an area on Memorial Drive where one lane is allowed parking, which forces drivers to go down to a single lane, which causes congestion, and asked if there has been any discussion on that area and the traffic. Jeff Parenti responded and shared that DCR will eliminate that parking as part of their project and believes residents in that area have been notified about the change. Councillor Wilson asked if there are opportunities for drivers to use the dedicated bus lanes to help eliminate traffic congestion during nonpeak hours. Brooke McKenna shared that it is an option in certain areas of the city on a case-by-case basis and provided examples of how those decisions are made.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett had a follow up question relative to the monitoring of traffic congestion around the city, and whether it was real time monitoring or only done during certain times. Jeff Parenti responded and provided examples of traffic monitoring and suggestions on what the best approach may be to address traffic patterns and congestion. Councillor Pickett asked if artificial intelligence is a technology that the City has considered using to improve traffic light signals. Brooke McKenna pointed out that if the City wants to continue to prioritize pedestrian safety, that technology would not be effective. Councillor Pickett noted the importance of using the technology that is available to make sure streets run as smoothly as possible. Councillor Pickett offered comments on the pace of change that is occurring with the redesigning of city streets versus the amount of motor vehicles that are in the city, and questioned if the City is removing travel lanes and redesigning faster than reducing the amount motor vehicles that are being registered in the city or driving through the city. Susanne Rasmussen responded and shared that the increase in the number of motor vehicles registered in Cambridge has not had a significant impact on the volume of streets during regular peak hours, due to vehicle owners using other modes of transportation during the week. Brooke McKenna provided additional comments and highlighted how change is hard and that the city is currently during a transition that is challenging for everyone. Councillor Pickett noted the importance of taking into consideration how residents and business owners are impacted and feeling during these changes and to help them when possible.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett offered closing remarks and thanked everyone for attending the meeting today and shared she looks forward to future conversations.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho – Wheeler – Absent

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:15p.m.

Attachment A – Councillor Pickett opening remarks.

Attachment B – Communications received from the public.

Clerk’s Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for these meetings can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/729?view_id=1&redirect=true

A communication was received from Elise Harmon-Freeman, Communications Manager, transmitting a presentation relative to traffic congestion and transportation.

A communication was received from Councillor Pickett, transmitting a report from the U.S. Department of Transportation relative to traffic congestion.

Attachment A – Councillor Pickett Opening Remarks

I'm going to make a few opening remarks to frame the discussion as I'm sure some of you are curious why we are holding a meeting on traffic congestion. Traffic congestion is one of the most frequent quality of life complaints I hear from residents. What I hear from businesses is that they are having problems with timely deliveries. So, I'm always asked, as I'm sure my colleagues are, what are we doing about traffic congestion? And I don't have a ready answer.

In having this discussion today, I think it is important to acknowledge the current state and understand how we manage the current challenges as we move towards a different future state. Not everyone can or will ride a bike, our public transit system needs significant improvement which will take years, people like to visit Cambridge and some drive through it to get to someplace else. Cambridge is not an island. We have more delivery trucks on our streets. Ride sharing vehicles. And we need to ensure that our fire, police and ambulances can make their way around the city.

As we continue the implementation of the cycling safety ordinance which in some cases removes an entire travel lane, I thought it would be helpful for us and the public to hear from traffic and parking and community development how they plan for, monitor, and mitigate congestion in our streets. Then we will hear from Commissioner Elow, and Chief Cahill about what if any impacts congestion and street narrowing has had on their operations.

Perez, Lori

From: Allison Stieber <allistieb@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2024 1:23 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Comment, Transportation and Public Utilities Committee public hearing
Attachments: GLOBE LETTER.jpg

Importance: High

To the Cambridge City Council:

I've attached a photocopy of my letter that was published in the Boston Globe on April 2, 2024. The context was in response to a front-page article excoriating drivers for parking in bus lanes. The reporter's focus was Brighton, but she could just as easily have been writing about Cambridge or Somerville. I'm not condoning parking in dedicated bus or bike lanes, but I think it's important to recognize the frustrating situation that so much parking removal has created in commercial districts. I live in proximity to Inman Square and have often had to forego patronizing its businesses due to lack of parking. Though I'm a pedestrian at times, it's simply not feasible to always synchronize activities with periods of walking, whether due to inclement weather, to already being in the car en route to or from a more remote destination, or on a day when an arthritic knee is causing pain. There is one minor error in the letter, that being that there are scattered spots designated for two-hour parking rather than 15 minutes as I stated. But the gist of the problem is the same: the small lot on Springfield Street, with approximately one-third now devoted to a BlueBike facility, and another large section, to outdoor dining for Ole restaurant, together with the few remaining curbside spaces on Cambridge Street, are insufficient to mitigate the amount of parking that has been lost. There are no other public lots in the vicinity.

I attended the first hour of the council meeting via Zoom on Monday evening and was struck, as I've been when viewing similar meetings, by the steady stream of cyclists presenting their scripted pleas for "not delaying safety," with many including a snide swipe at businesses for "caring more about their bottom line than lives" and even accusing council members who have wisely proposed delay as complicit in perpetuating "dangerous conditions." I wish you could have seen what I observed at around 5:45 p.m. this (Tuesday) evening, as I proceeded on Magazine Street toward Central Square. It would have made a compelling video, but being behind the wheel of my car, I couldn't obtain one. There were at least fifteen cyclists, scooterists, and skateboarders, coming toward each other at a right angle at the Magazine-Mass Ave intersection, threading their way among pedestrians in the crosswalks and one another—many clearly flouting the red light. Not one dismounted and walked their bike or scooter through the crosswalk, despite the dense pedestrian presence. I saw a similar circus-like scene, in the crosswalk area of MIT on Mass Ave, a few months ago, with cyclists coming within mere inches of pedestrians in the crosswalks as they attempted to weave through them.

To me, the most objectionable aspect of the wide-ranging "improvements" in road infrastructure is the blatant disregard that so many cyclists and other two-wheeled road users have for both their own safety and that of others while simultaneously trying to "guilt" city government into providing them with ever-more road amenities—and they've done so very successfully, so far. However, the much-touted safety benefits of bike lanes aren't going to be realized as long as the current scenario of near-zero enforcement of law-breaking road users (cars, trucks, and buses included) persists. It's extremely important to implement some kind of tracking system of cyclist-pedestrian and cyclist-cyclist accidents in order to understand whether the road "improvements" are in name only. But it's impossible to do this absent any requirement that cyclists/scooterists display visible ID on their vehicles. It would probably take a fatality or a grave injury in order for the involved parties to summon the police—and it's unclear whether CPD is actually recording whatever incidents may have come to their attention.

In closing, I hope that the CCC doesn't continue to bend to the loudest, most vocal voices of those proclaiming themselves "the overwhelming majority." Please consider all of your constituents and do a better job at balancing their valid, often-competing needs.

Allison Stieber
14 Wyatt Street, Somerville

Perez, Lori

From: ELIZABETH saccoccio <bsaccoccio@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2024 2:18 PM
To: Joan Pickett; Paul Toner; City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: CSO - Transportation - Congestion

Transportation Committee:

Consideration for reevaluation of bike lane implementation on Cambridge Street. There are 3 fire stations located on Cambridge Street, major hospitals, and churches. This is not only a matter for businesses but also a major safety issues. Then there are additional services off Cambridge Street such as the Police Station. Cars need to pull over safely when emergency vehicles are answering calls. This is the law. Businesses and shops are small and offer no parking.

A few months ago, there was a major fire on Gore Street. It took one resident two hours to move from Spaulding Hospital to her home.

Every night I witness the backup on Cambridge Street from my house - this extends to Third Street. If you are talking bicycle safety - the bicyclists weave in and out of the street to avoid stopping at red lights. This has already been validated with city data. The intersections are dangerous for pedestrians. The installation of bike lanes will not remedy the dangerous position bicyclists place themselves in at intercections.

Sincerely,

Betty Lee Saccoccio
55 Otis Street
Cambridge, MA 02141

Perez, Lori

From: Pickett, Joan
Sent: Tuesday, April 9, 2024 5:32 PM
To: Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Azeem, Burhan
Cc: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: FW: The Growing Problems of Traffic Congestion in Cambridge

Joan Pickett
She/Her/Hers
Cambridge City Councillor
jpickett@cambridgema.gov
617-349-7238

Erika Pereira
Council Aide
epereira@Cambridgema.gov
617-349-9429

-----Original Message-----

From: Vickey Bestor <vickeybestor@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 9, 2024 5:22 PM
To: Pickett, Joan <jpickett@cambridgema.gov>; City Clerk <cityclerk@Cambridgema.gov>; City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>
Subject: The Growing Problems of Traffic Congestion in Cambridge

To: Joan Pickett, Chair Transportation and Public Utilities Committee
From: Vickey Bestor, 149 Upland Road
Re: My personal experience with congestion in Cambridge

I am a two decade Cambridge resident living near Porter Square. In the last two years since the installation of the CSO bike lanes traffic congestion has increased so dramatically in our area that I now try not to go out between the hours of 3 and 7 pm.

I am fortunate to be able to choose when I drive and run my errands, but most people are not so lucky, and for them the congestion has doubled their commute times. This part of Cambridge is a major cross town route for traffic from Porter, Harvard, and Kendall Squares to the Western Suburbs via Route 2. It used to be that Garden Street shared the burden of outward commuters with Concord, Huron and Mass Ave, but now that Garden has become one-way inbound, congestion doubled or tripled on those more major streets and also has pushed traffic onto small neighborhood side streets like Walker, Chauncey, Raymond, Washington, endangering children playing on small side streets, increasing pollution, and negatively impacting the environment.

Friends who live outside Cambridge now tell me they don't even try to shop in Cambridge because of the congestion and loss of parking. Instead, they go to Arlington, which has enhanced the experience for shoppers along Mass Ave, to Watertown where Arsenal Mall has expanded shopping, restaurant and hotel options becoming a magnet for visitors, and to other cities and neighborhoods that do not have slow congested streets and that offer parking options for patrons.

Increased congestion demonstrates clearly that the CSO has failed to produce one of its stated goals, improving the environment. Growing congestion is producing greater greenhouse gasses citywide, increasing the number of fender-benders and more major accidents, and becoming an increased hazard for pedestrians, seniors and the mobility impaired. Our quality of live in Cambridge has not improved, it has become more difficult to live here for the 85% of citizens who cannot or do not ride a bike. We must also expand auxiliary parking before any new components of the CSO are implemented. Mitigating parking problems, reducing congestion and pollution, and making Cambridge more accessible to all should be the unanimous goal of Cambridge City Council.

Thank you for hearing my concerns.

Sincerely,

Vickey Bestor
149 Upland Road

From: [Pickett, Joan](#)
To: [Toner, Paul](#); [Wilson, Ayesha](#); [Azeem, Burhan](#); [Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan](#); [City Council](#); [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Fwd: Mass Ave Congestion
Date: Wednesday, April 10, 2024 10:54:18 AM

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From: btantony <btantony@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2024 10:39 AM
To: Pickett, Joan <jpickett@cambridgema.gov>
Subject: Mass Ave Congestion

Subject: Mass Ave Congestion from Harvard to Porter

Dear Transportation Committee,

I think everyone is probably aware that there is congestion from Harvard to Porter Square and beyond. But last week, I encountered congestion along the Harvard to Porter strip that I have never seen before. I just happened on three occasions this past week to go out around 4:30 - 5:00 pm to travel from Harvard Sq to Porter. I live on "little Mass. Ave." and drive between Harvard and Porter stopping numerous times along the way to patronize businesses along the way to Porter and some points beyond.

This past week, on the three occasions during which I was traveling, the traffic from Harvard to Porter was two lanes of bumper to bumper traffic. The word "crawl" is an exaggeration. There were two lanes of red tail lights as far as one could see up Mass Ave. My destinations were a couple of stores along that part of Mass Ave as well as Porter Sq. After about 10 to 15 minutes of going about a block from my home, I gave up and turned right to circle back to my home on "little" Mass Ave. I did not complete my shopping errands and took note that I should not try to shop local late in the day. I work from home and running out earlier is usually not an option. Instead I will stock up at the Alewife stores on the weekend and cut back on local trips. Thus depriving my favorite local merchants of my patronage. This same scenario happened three nights a row.

I believe the small businesses along that stretch were relieved to learn they were not going to lose as much parking as they anticipated once the new separated lanes are put into place and Mass Ave becomes a single lane for vehicles on each side of the

thoroughfare.. But it occurred to me this week that if Mass Ave becomes single lane from Harvard, the congestion will become nightmarish. People will simply stay away from the congestion or just give up and keep moving or turn around if they can. Others will just try to find refuge on Oxford St. toward Porter but that will quickly become a major point of congestion. I have no idea what will happen but residents and commuters will not be patronizing those local merchants along the way.

Parking spaces are only part of the problem. Single lanes will result in congestion that will be a major disincentive to supporting local businesses. I have spoken to some of the small businesses that I frequent and they seemed relieved with the plan they had seen with respect to parking. But I don't know if any of these merchants are also looking at what bumper to bumper congestion will do to discourage customers, regardless of parking. If it takes thirty minutes to run a simple errand to one store, most consumers would just fold that trip into a larger shopping trip at another time to a mall destination where alternative merchants, less congestion and parking are available.

I urge each of you to take stock of what you are about to inflict on Cambridge residents and small businesses. I am a senior citizen with a partially disabled partner. We do not ride bikes or scooters! . We do drive one car and put about 2500 miles per year on it. We have lived in Cambridge for over 40 years.

Thanks for considering my views,

Barbara Anthony

Sent from my iPhone

Barbara Anthony, Esq.

Senior Fellow in Healthcare, Pioneer Institute
Former Senior Fellow & Associate, Center for Business & Government, Harvard Kennedy School
Former MA Undersecretary, Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation

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Email: btantony@aol.com;

Barbarabanthony@gmail.com

Banthony@pioneerinstitute.org

From: rosemous@rcn.com
To: [Joan Pickett](#); [City Clerk](#); [City Council](#)
Cc: [rosemous](#)
Subject: Fwd: To the Transportation Committee: Ongoing Concerns about Congestion & Mobility <--> Senior issues in Cambridge
Date: Wednesday, April 10, 2024 3:19:33 AM
Attachments: ~WRD0001.jpg

Councilor Pickett et al:

I am a retired educator who five years ago moved back to Cambridge (the city of my youth & midlife where I lived, worked & studied), a city I once knew well. Almost immediately following our settling into a new place, I found myself involved in city politics because of issues that were seemingly continuously cropping up here in N. Cambridge: i.e., the removal of mature street trees in Porter SQ; the sewerage runoff from Alewife Brook; the implementation of the Cycling Safety Ordinance on the major corridor on which I presently live. I also recently joined Cambridge Neighbors: a self-help organization (that spans Cambridge, Somerville, Arlington, Watertown & Belmont) of elders seeking to support each other as we age. One of the issues that I would like to work on as a new member of this organization is to try to make policymaking more aging-friendly than it currently is in the progressive city in which I now live: as I know that in the future I will face more mobility-related concerns than I have even now. Thus, I will couch my reactions to congestion questions apparently now before the City Council's Transportation Committee in terms of how congestion affects mobility & other elder issues.

For example, as we live directly on the N. Mass. Ave. corridor between Dudley & Alewife, since 11/21 this half-mile strip has become more user-friendly for my avid cyclist of a husband as protected bike lanes (via Quick-Build) now reside where metered parking spaces previously were sited. At the same time, bus-only lanes have also been installed. Sounds good if you care about cyclist safety, transit access & climate change -- certainly worthy goals. However, the end result of a sizable reconfiguration of this major corridor has confined autos & trucks to single lanes adjacent to the barren median strip -- where they spew copious pollution as they back up in long stretches of traffic during multiple rush hours. Indeed, I believe that if the city had attempted to do any real advance planning or analysis (let alone substantive community outreach) prior to implementation of this dramatic change in our streetscape, we would have evidence that pollution has actually increased in the two lanes of vehicular traffic that remain: as they can be maddeningly impassible at rush hour with traffic at times stretching from Trolley SQ. to clear out to Alewife-Brook (& forget about making turns across N. Mass. Ave.)

Nevertheless, the curious outcome of the new configuration of our major corridor is that -- except for the 2 lanes of vehicles chugging along the barren median strip, the corridor as a whole is largely vacant way up at this northwest -- hardly urban -- edge of the city. Indeed, the large storefront across the street from where we live has remained empty since Season to Taste moved down the avenue closer to Harvard in the aftermath to the installation of Quick-Build. Since then, a cannabis dispensary has been attempting for some time to get community buy-in to their occupying the empty storefront -- which happens to be adjacent to a liquor store. Thus, if the pot shop succeeds in renting the storefront, these two entities will provide whatever 'commercial vitality' we can glimpse directly across the street from our windows each morning.

As to the real commercial center of N. Mass. Ave., Trolley SQ., a string of small ethnic eateries struggling to hang on there (as an absentee landlord has continued to raise their rents through the pandemic & beyond), have only recently -- I believe thanks to Councilor Toner -- seen a few parking spaces return (from their Quick-Build hiatus) to that short stretch of N. Mass. Ave. How much these few spaces will help support these small restaurants & other shops I do not know: as N. Mass. Ave. from Dudley-Alewife has seen a wholesale removal of metered parking along this corridor as Quick-Build transformed our streetscape suddenly in 11/21 (with a very few metered 'replacement' spots jammed onto side streets packed mostly with 2- & 3-family homes).

The point I am trying to make about Quick-Build up here is that a hardly urban 'edge' of the city had this quite drastic reconfiguration of its streets imposed suddenly with minimal community outreach & process. Indeed, the Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO) was couched basically in terms of cyclist 'safety' & climate change. Thus, other considerations were largely overlooked: i.e., that the Boston metro area has a failing, aged mass transit system -- which is hardly circumferential in its reach; or that much of the metro area surrounding this old city consists of the standard model of postwar sprawl, which cannot be readily undone. As to alternatives to automobiles, I personally have relied on walking & mass transit (i.e., I commuted to high school in NYC for 6 years nearly the length & breadth of Manhattan) to get around for much of my life, but those old 'reliables' have become more difficult for me in the aftermath to the pandemic (& as I age). Indeed, I now am definitely less peripatetic than I once was (my feet!) -- while I also now find myself dodging quite an array of small

vehicles (bikes, scooters, roller blades, skate boards, etc.) that seem to be proliferating everywhere with remarkable alacrity & speed! Meanwhile, my friends who live outside of Cambridge cannot visit (at least in groups) because there is nowhere to park here (except on Sundays).

Thus, as an older person with some mobility issues, overall I am confronting increased congestion while living at the edge of the city -- which makes transporting myself around metro Boston increasingly harder (medical appointments like the one I have tomorrow morning in the Longwood Medical Area are a particular problem). Moreover, having driven my entire adult life all over metro Boston, I find myself increasingly reluctant to drive: as the irregular (even nonsensical) layout of the streets in Cambridge (Garden St.!) makes me fearful that I will have an accident or even hit a pedestrian (or cyclist!). As to the MBTA -- which the dedicated bus lanes are supposed to make more usable & reliable -- I find the opposite to be the case now even after a lifetime spent traversing multiple cities on public transit.

Of course, there are many other problems that the congestion of metro Boston can render far more serious -- including the care issues that afflict not only the aging but young families juggling work, school, child care (& numerous other responsibilities). To provide an example of my own: a year before Quick-Build reconfigured our street, I experienced a serious fall: the aftermath of which triggered 6 weeks of in-home visits from 3 care providers. All three of these health care professionals went from home to home across metro Boston providing services. One of them was in her 9th month of pregnancy (in the middle of the pandemic) when I completed my course of treatment in the winter of 2021. Thus, as city officials are undertaking various initiatives geared to improving transportation options, I would like to ask specifically what this woman would have done to provide services to me (& her other patients) had Quick-Build been in place then? The answer I believe is that these 3 professionals would have not been able to come on a regular basis: I would thereby have ended up stuck in my apartment without the help that I needed to recover the mobility required to sustain daily life (or perhaps I would have ended up in a rehab facility?).

In any event, one problem with the plethora of different analyses and organizational entities that have cropped up in the aftermath to implementation of the CSO (piecemeal-style across the city) is the sizable coordination issues they have engendered. What is more, these analyses often are not sufficiently granular as to distinguish impacts on a particular area of this city -- e.g., Trolley SQ. VS. Central SQ. Indeed, as a New Yorker born & bred, I continue to be baffled by the references to cities such as NYC & Toronto when discussing the wider community impacts of bike lanes: i.e., having lived on the far northeast edge of Manhattan for 18 years, I can attest to how dramatically different in urban vitality my old neighborhood was (& still is) when compared to the almost nonsensical streetscape of that I confront every day here where I live at the barren northwest edge of Cambridge (the Linear Path is far from 'barren' but increasingly difficult to traverse mostly due to the seeming inability of riders of various small vehicles to alert pedestrians when they are coming from behind).

Another question to all of you: will research spawned in the wake of CSO implementation -- i.e., the economic impacts analysis, the parking study, & all the various committees (including Transportation) -- entail reconsideration of existing CSO installations such as N. Mass. Ave.? For example, on this corridor is there any chance that largely empty bus lanes & bike lanes might be merged? Or is the plethora of organizational activity now taking place in Cambridge all aimed at future implementation of the CSO exclusively? What is more, there are so many other issues that this city is facing. A single example: at the meeting I attended remotely this evening I learned about the proposed postponement for 5 years of new efforts to address sewerage runoff in Alewife Brook (apparently mainly affecting Arlington, but also involving adjacent cities). My question to Cambridge officials is to what extent was this critical infrastructure concern even considered at the time a mini-city seemingly sprang up between Fresh Pond & Rt. 2?

Meanwhile, I keep hoping that I will eventually see below my windows a green and more humane urban environment that makes efforts to accommodate all those who live or work in this community. At the same time, I know that it is no easy task to govern a city like this one taking into account the needs of all its diverse constituencies.

Thanks for your consideration of what I have written here! I wish that I could have made this entreaty shorter!

Linda Moussouris
2440 Mass. Ave. #30
Cambridge, MA 02140

*Please do not reply to this email. The mailbox is unattended.
To share your thoughts please visit my webpage.*



From: [marie elena saccoccio](#)
To: [City Council](#); [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Submission to Committee on Transportation for Consideration of Crucial and Unaddressed Issues
Date: Wednesday, April 10, 2024 11:25:53 AM

Joan Pickett, Chair
Denise Simmons, Hon. Mayor
Members of City Council:

I mostly address issues that pertain to East Cambridge but are likewise shared by Main Street and Broadway residential districts. Truly in Cambridge we have one of the densest lab districts in the nation if not the world. I note that other major cities have designated Evacuation Routes to abide by the federal mandate. This became a special priority after 9/11. I am inserting here a discussion conducted by Washington DC on Evacuation Routes vis a vis mandated bike lanes:

As far back as Alexandria upzoning I have requested our evacuation routes. Boston, Chelsea and even Everett have many street signs. Not only do we not have the signs, not sure we have a plan. This was brought to Paul Toner's attention and I think this was the final push. DC RESIDENTS FEAR ADDED PROBLEM WITH EVAC ROUTES AND DEDICATED BIKE LANES.

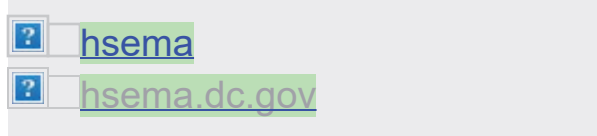
From: marie elena saccoccio <saccoccio@>

Just got this off our friends in DC. They are an incredible resource:

NEW Report– Evacuation Routes
- Christopher Hawthorne, Lee Mayer

Under law, the US Department of Transportation along with the Federal Highway Administration has designated Primary and Secondary roadways in every State and City as evacuation guides should residents experience a natural disaster and/ or terrorist attacks like 911. DDOT clears these roadways - bike lanes on these primary and secondary roadways are a threat to safety.

DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency. I've tried reaching out to the Director to ask about bike lanes on Conn Ave; a major citywide evacuation route. After emailing and then calling them every day for 4 days, the fellow answering the phone blew me off. Maybe someone else will have better luck. Here's a link to their website:



Where are our Evacuation Routes??

Marie Elena Saccoccio
55 Otis Street
Cambridge, MA 02141

From: [Vickey Bestor](#)
To: [Pickett, Joan](#); [City Clerk](#); [City Council](#)
Subject: The Growing Problems of Traffic Congestion in Cambridge
Date: Tuesday, April 9, 2024 5:21:54 PM

To: Joan Pickett, Chair Transportation and Public Utilities Committee
From: Vickey Bestor, 149 Upland Road
Re: My personal experience with congestion in Cambridge

I am a two decade Cambridge resident living near Porter Square. In the last two years since the installation of the CSO bike lanes traffic congestion has increased so dramatically in our area that I now try not to go out between the hours of 3 and 7 pm.

I am fortunate to be able to choose when I drive and run my errands, but most people are not so lucky, and for them the congestion has doubled their commute times. This part of Cambridge is a major cross town route for traffic from Porter, Harvard, and Kendall Squares to the Western Suburbs via Route 2. It used to be that Garden Street shared the burden of outward commuters with Concord, Huron and Mass Ave, but now that Garden has become one-way inbound, congestion doubled or tripled on those more major streets and also has pushed traffic onto small neighborhood side streets like Walker, Chauncey, Raymond, Washington, endangering children playing on small side streets, increasing pollution, and negatively impacting the environment.

Friends who live outside Cambridge now tell me they don't even try to shop in Cambridge because of the congestion and loss of parking. Instead, they go to Arlington, which has enhanced the experience for shoppers along Mass Ave, to Watertown where Arsenal Mall has expanded shopping, restaurant and hotel options becoming a magnet for visitors, and to other cities and neighborhoods that do not have slow congested streets and that offer parking options for patrons.

Increased congestion demonstrates clearly that the CSO has failed to produce one of its stated goals, improving the environment. Growing congestion is producing greater greenhouse gasses citywide, increasing the number of fender-benders and more major accidents, and becoming an increased hazard for pedestrians, seniors and the mobility impaired. Our quality of live in Cambridge has not improved, it has become more difficult to live here for the 85% of citizens who cannot or do not ride a bike. We must also expand auxiliary parking before any new components of the CSO are implemented. Mitigating parking problems, reducing congestion and pollution, and making Cambridge more accessible to all should be the unanimous goal of Cambridge City Council.

Thank you for hearing my concerns.

Sincerely,

Vickey Bestor
149 Upland Road

From: [Beth Gamse](#)
To: [Pickett, Joan](#); [City Clerk](#); [City Manager](#)
Cc: [Judith Singer](#)
Subject: Traffic and congestion topics for today's traffic-focused committee meeting
Date: Wednesday, April 10, 2024 2:06:39 PM

Dear City Councillors, City Manager, and City Clerk,

We write to express our concern about increased traffic congestion in our City. We are Cambridge residents, taxpayers, and avid pedestrians who walk in Cambridge daily, whether for exercise, pleasure, or shopping needs. We believe Cambridge streets should be accessible and user friendly for all of us. The unintended and often adverse effects of the City's installation of separated bike lanes, especially on smaller residential side streets like ours, represent a major concern for us, and the loss of parking has demonstrably and negatively affected many small businesses on the Mass Ave and other corridors.

We applaud the City for making the time to hear residents' concerns about traffic congestion in our neighborhood. The recent changes in traffic patterns have led to substantial increases in congestion; for us, the changes are most evident on Garden Street and Mass Ave, close to where we live on Walker Street. Traffic is backed up every weekday morning for nearly an hour as people head into/through Harvard Square, and traffic heading west/north on Mass Ave is backed up every afternoon for two-plus hours as people head out of Cambridge. Such congestion contributes to more greenhouse gas being released, more difficulty for pedestrians and cyclists to cross blocked streets, and more challenges to local businesses whether they await deliveries or hope those customers arriving by car can find a place to park. In addition, the congestion poses danger on streets where there is no place to pull over for police or emergency vehicles, delivery trucks, and ride share vehicles. The congestion is compounded when school busses pick up/drop off students, and when trash/recycling trucks are operating.

We are also quite concerned about the proposed changes to Memorial Drive, further reducing the access avenues to/from Harvard Square from points west--every street heading into Harvard Square has lost capacity to handle vehicular traffic, and this proposed change would lead to even greater traffic congestion on those same streets.

We strongly encourage you to listen to residents' concerns, and engage in the kind of urban planning that reasonably takes all constituents' perspectives into account.

Beth Gamse and Judy Singer

From: [Young Kim](#)
To: [Pickett, Joan](#); [Azeem, Burhan](#); [Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan](#); [Toner, Paul](#); [Wilson, Ayesha](#); [City Clerk](#)
Cc: [Simmons, Denise](#); [McGovern, Marc](#); [Nolan, Patricia](#); [Siddiqui, Sumbul](#); [City Manager](#); [O'Riordan, Owen](#); [Farooq, Iram](#); [Watkins, Kathy](#); [McKenna, Brooke](#); [Purchasing](#); [Bayer, Megan](#)
Subject: Transportation and Public Utilities Committee meeting on 4/10/2024
Date: Monday, April 8, 2024 10:49:34 AM
Attachments: [Reject PO #2 - proposed amendments to the Cycling Safety Ordinance to extend the deadline.pdf](#)

Dear Chairwoman Pickett and Transportation and Public Utilities Committee Members,

I have written numerous letters to the City Council, City Manager and other City staff (see below for the latest letter sent to Commissioner Brooke) on "how the city factors potential street congestion into street re-design, monitors and adjusts for street congestion (especially in newly reconfigured areas such as North Mass Ave., Garden Street, and Inman Square/Cambridge Street) and understand its impacts on residents, businesses, and public safety." The agenda states that "the Committee will review and learn how the city is planning for potential impacts on Cambridge."

As much as I would love to attend the meeting in person, I will be out of the country to attend a family event. Besides, the three-minute comment time will be way too short to state my concerns so I am submitting this letter instead for your consideration.

The street congestion issue is a part of a much larger traffic & transportation issues which is a regional, multimodal, environmental and economic issue that needs to be addressed with long term planning for the benefit of all stakeholders involved - commuters, drivers, bike and other modes of transportation users, local business, residents etc. Yet the City is addressing the street congestion issue only reactively as Policy Order #2 of 4/8/2024 Council Agenda (see attached letter to the City Council) demonstrated yet again, which I hope will be withdrawn or amended to address for all the CSO projects in CSO YR5 and beyond. If CSO is to be amended to extend deadlines, there should be a moratorium on all CSO projects so the congestion mitigation plans could be incorporated.

According to [Cycling Safety Ordinance webpage](#), "In 2020, the Council passed amendments to the Cycling Safety Ordinance, which set ambitious requirements for the installation of approximately 25 miles of separated bike lanes within five to seven years" with 4/30/2024 marking the end of CSO YR4.. With just one more year (or up to 3 years with extension) of CSO timeline left, **the city had not monitored and adjusted consistently "for street congestion"** in newly reconfigured areas. For example, after I reported traffic congestion at Mass Ave and Alewife Brook Parkway on 06/08/2022 after Mass Ave/Dudley Street to Alewife Project (Project), the City announced only this March that it will conduct traffic data collection at that intersection ([SeeClickFix Issue ID: 12524562](#)), Therefore, how could **City understand traffic congestion's impacts** on residents, businesses, and public safety? And **how could the city have factored in potential street congestion into street re-design** for separated bike lanes installed since the Project was completed in 2021?

Please recommend to the City Council to implement one potential solution to mitigate negative impact to local businesses due to loss of parking I reported on SeeClickFix, [Traffic Sign Complaint - Issue #16342113 - Cambridge, MA - SeeClickFix - Web and Mobile Government 3](#), which would turn loading zone into curbside pickup zone and let all local business patrons know that they can use the loading zone.

Please harness the brainpower of MIT students under a work-study program to devise on-demand bus priority lanes instead of the current dedicated bus lanes.

Please require the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department to develop a plan, without taking 2 years like the Economic Impact Study, and conduct comprehensive and systematic monitoring of traffic on all completed CSO segments to date.

Furthermore, the collected data must be analyzed and recommended remedies proposed by an independent consultant who did not provide design engineering services. To facilitate hiring such a consultant with the knowledge and tools for industry and government standards for such traffic analysis, I would like to suggest the City look into the feasibility of awarding such a contract to Volpe National Transportation Systems Center as an extension of their Economic Impact Study contract.

Thank you for your consideration,

Respectfully yours,

Young Kim

Norris Street

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Young Kim** <ycknorris@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, Mar 24, 2024 at 6:59 AM

Subject: Traffic Congestion at Mass Ave & Alewife Brook Pkwy Intersection

To: McKenna, Brooke <bmckenna@cambridgema.gov>, City Clerk

<cityclerk@cambridgema.gov>

Cc: Simmons, Denise <dsimmons@cambridgema.gov>, McGovern, Marc

<mmcgovern@cambridgema.gov>, Azeem, Burhan <bazeem@cambridgema.gov>, Nolan,

Patricia <pnolan@cambridgema.gov>, Pickett, Joan <jpickett@cambridgema.gov>, Siddiqui,

Sumbul <ssiddiqui@cambridgema.gov>, Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan

<jsobrinhowheeler@cambridgema.gov>, O'Riordan, Owen <ooriordan@cambridgema.gov>,

Farooq, Iram <ifarooq@cambridgema.gov>, Toner, Paul <ptoner@cambridgema.gov>, Watkins, Kathy <kwatkins@cambridgema.gov>, Saffari, Pardis <psaffari@cambridgema.gov>, Wilson, Ayesha <amwilson@cambridgema.gov>, City Manager <citymanager@cambridgema.gov>, Warnick, Jeremy <jwarnick@cambridgema.gov>

Dear Transportation Commissioner McKenna,

I am submitting a follow-up communication to the City Council I submitted 3/21/2024 (see below) to thank the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP+T) for finally scheduling "Updated traffic count for March. After receiving results traffic signal timing will be adjusted." ([SeeClickFix Issue ID: 12524562](#)). And I thank all the City staff who made this happen.

As much as I appreciate this action, this is yet another example of "solving today's problem" without examining the past or without considering the solution's effect on tomorrow, not to mention coordination with solutions to other "today's problems", such as the [Mass Ave Partial Construction](#) and Mass Ave Planning Study Working Group-Cambridge Common to Alewife Brook Parkway. Please don't just conduct traffic counts but instead conduct a comprehensive traffic study and analysis to determine the root cause of the congestion and develop a solution taking into account the needs of all the stakeholder, not just the cyclists.

Please excuse my skepticism as an engineer but I highly doubt this issue will be resolved by simply adjusting signal timing for the following reasons:

1. At 00:37:28 into the second community meeting on the MassAve Dudley Street to Alewife Brook Parkway project (Project), TP+T assured us the separated bike lanes and dedicated bus lanes [will add only one or two minute of delay](#) for drivers
2. TP+T never answered my repeated request for simulation results to back up the claim that squeezing two lanes of traffic into a single lane would only delay a driver one to two minutes
3. I provided data that showed when the southbound right lane was closed for maintenance, it took a lot longer than one to two minutes of delay
4. I also provided google maps estimated times at peak time to see the effect of separated bike lanes all to no avail
5. After more than 2 years since the initial Policy Order for Cycling Safety Ordinance Economic Impact study was introduced and at a cost of \$100,000 contract to Volpe for the Study, the Economic Impact Report did not include any specific steps to remedy this negative impact to residents, commuters and local businesses.

Usually I will get an email if a comment is added to a SeeClickFix issue I generated but I didn't receive one when the acknowledgment was added on [03/11/2024](#). Just to make sure all the people who added comments to this issue are notified, I added a brief comment to it.

Thank you for your consideration,
Respectfully yours,
Young Kim
Norris Street

On Thu, Mar 21, 2024 at 11:50 AM Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com> wrote:
Honorable Mayor, City Council, City Manager and City Clerk,

Councillor Toner, Chair of the Economic Development & University Relations Committee (Committee) informed me that the Committee Report on its meeting on the Economic Impact Report was placed on file without any discussions at the 3/18/2024 City Council meeting. I asked him, as the Chair, to request the City Manager (CM) to address the deficiencies in the Economic Impact Report as I have pointed out at the Council meeting.

His response “I am trying to solve the current problem and not relitigate the past errors” is a dose of reality check for me. If the Chair of the Committee thought I was trying to go “back and rewriting the policy order from almost two years ago” rather than working “in the here and now trying to make changes and correct issues in the present”, then surely many other Councillors must be thinking along the same line.

It is this shortsighted “solve the current problem”, at any cost by any means I might add, led to the following, just to name a few:

1. Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO) implementation without
 - Establishing a budget or management team to coordinate and oversee its implementation
 - CDD, TP&T and DPW all working independently
 - No single point of contact to address an issue.
 - Disjointed, confusing and even conflicting project web pages.
 - No system to track cost data.
 - Timeline only to be added by CSO amendment pushed through during the height of the COVID pandemic.
 - Long-term transportation plan recognizing the regional nature of transportation issue,
 - Conducting baseline "study to collect relevant economic data" to measure "business impacts" (PO O-5 on 2/28/2022).
 - Establishing “the standard public process... prior to implementing new sections of bike lanes” (PO O-5 on 2/28/2022).
 - Establishing “general evaluation process" to take "place post-installation now and for a full year once the bike network is completed” (PO O-5 on 2/28/2022).
2. Affordable Housing Overlay Ordinance and AHO Corridor and Square Amendment without similar long-term consideration.
3. Removing Accessory Parking Requirements from the Zoning Ordinance in spite of prior failed attempts at reducing car ownership ([Cambridge wanted a big drop in car ownership by 2020. That hasn't exactly happened - The Boston Globe](#)).
4. Solving “current problem” without applying lessons learned from the past solutions and without mitigating negative impact of previous solutions.
 - SeeClickFix Issue ID: 12524562 on the traffic congestion at the Mass Ave and Alewife Brook Parkway reported on 06/08/2022 has finally been acknowledged on [03/11/2024](#) with a comment “Updated traffic count scheduled for March. After receiving results traffic signal timing will be adjusted.” This is welcome news after more than 2 years in limbo.
 - SeeClickFix Issue ID: 13788072 reported on 12/06/2022 regarding confusing Loading Zone signs on North Cambridge that are inconsistent with other signs

throughout the City. This issue was initially reported as Issue ID: 12964758, Traffic Sign Complaint, but was CLOSED by Traffic - PB (Engineering) without giving the public the option to change its status. Issue ID 13788072 was closed on [02/07/2024](#) without addressing the issue of loading zone applying to both commercial and non-commercial vehicles which is different from the state regulations and very few people looking for a parking space near local shop they are visiting or even parking law enforcement officers are aware of. If the Loading Zone sign makes it clear it is for all vehicles, it will bring immediate positive boost to local businesses who are hurting from the lost parking spaces due to CSO implementation

I am writing to urge you to stop this short sighted practice and bring about a more forward-looking, fully planned approach incorporating lessons learned from yesterday's solutions and looking forward to problems to solve tomorrow. CM will shortly be issuing the fourth CSO annual report covering the period of May 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024 (SBL YR4). So please, as a first step in reforming City Council practices, request the CM to include, but not limited to, the following to assure transparency and accountability of City's work:

1. Full disclosure of timeline of projects started in Separated Bike Lane (SBL) YR4 and projects planned for SBL YR5, YR6 and projected extensions, if any. [Requirements + Timelines - City of Cambridge, MA \(cambridgema.gov\)](#) still shows MassAve4 which has been replaced by Mass Ave Partial Construction Project. Timeline should reflect this expanded MassAve4 project and all web pages should be updated to reflect this change consistently throughout the City website.
2. Economic and traffic baseline data collected before SBL Project planning or installations began in SBL YR4
3. Economic and traffic data collected for projects completed in SBL YR4 and expected date of post installation report of impact of the project
4. Full accounting of the SBL miles completed in SBL YR4 and total SBL miles completed to date with how each segment of roadway was measured in terms of SBL miles.
5. Full accounting of the cost of CSO installation in SBL YR4 and total expenditure to date.
6. Performance metrics of planned vs completed SBLs in SBL YR4
7. The Capital budget for FY25 should fully disclose the 5-Year Appropriation Plan for all remaining capital CSO projects consistent with SBL YR4 Progress Report.

I certainly will be paying close attention to whether SBL YR4 Progress Report followed the same format of YR3 Report in "business as usual" manner or City took a positive step to report in a more transparent and accountable way.

Thank you for your consideration,
Respectfully yours,
Young Kim
Norris Street



Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>

Reject PO #2 - propose amendments to the Cycling Safety Ordinance to extend the deadline

1 message

Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 7, 2024 at 11:36 AM

To: "Simmons, Denise" <dsimmons@cambridgema.gov>, "McGovern, Marc" <mmcgovern@cambridgema.gov>, "Azeem, Burhan" <bazeem@cambridgema.gov>, "Nolan, Patricia" <pnolan@cambridgema.gov>, "Pickett, Joan" <jpickett@cambridgema.gov>, "Siddiqui, Sumbul" <ssiddiqui@cambridgema.gov>, "Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan" <jsobrinhowheeler@cambridgema.gov>, "Toner, Paul" <ptoner@cambridgema.gov>, "Wilson, Ayesha" <amwilson@cambridgema.gov>, City Clerk <cityclerk@cambridgema.gov>

Cc: "O'Riordan, Owen" <ooriordan@cambridgema.gov>, "Farooq, Iram" <ifarooq@cambridgema.gov>, "McKenna, Brooke" <bmckenna@cambridgema.gov>, "Watkins, Kathy" <kwatkins@cambridgema.gov>, "Saffari, Pardis" <psaffari@cambridgema.gov>, "Bayer, Megan" <mbayer@cambridgema.gov>

Honorable Mayor, City Council, City Manager and City Clerk,

This Policy Order (PO) is yet another example of the City solving "the current problem and not relitigate (*sic*) the past errors", ignoring the timeline of Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO) and the past history of CSO related POs. It is an example of governing reactively rather than proactively.

As much as I need to speak up at the 4/8 City Council meeting, I can't because I will be on my way overseas to attend a family event.

The Agenda summary for Policy Order #2, POR 2024 #50, introduced by Councillors Toner, Pickett, and Wilson reads That the City Manager is requested to direct the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, the Department of Public Works, the Community Development Department, and the Law Department to draft proposed amendments to the Cycling Safety Ordinance to extend the deadline associated with the completion of those sections of the ordinance that are required to be completed by May 1, 2026.

Please reject this PO and instead introduce POs to

1. mitigate negative economic Impact and traffic congestion caused by separated bike lanes installed to date and
2. require City Manager to include the following in the CSO YR4 Report
 - o definition of CSO Mile and CSO segments and miles completed to date by segment name and type (quick build vs capital project)
 - o CSO segments and miles in progress by segment name and type
 - o full disclosure of the cost and schedule impact of expanding MassAve4 into Mass Ave Partial Construction from Harvard Square to Alewife Brook Parkway without due process but by simply introducing it in FY24 Capital Budget Plan one week after Massve4 plan was approved by the City Council.
 - o forecast of CSO implementation for CSO YR 5 and beyond by each CSO year and projected total cost to completion.
3. Update all the CSO project pages to be with CSO YR4 Report after it is issued and accepted by the Council and be more hierarchical.

Policy Order to amend CSO implementation timeline beyond CSO YR4, as necessary, should be introduced for all remaining CSO segments, not just the segments called out in PO#2, only after the City Council accepts the CSO YR4 Report.

Below are the background information/justifications for this request.

Thank you for your consideration,

Respectfully yours,
Young Kim
Norris Street

[Requirements + Timelines - City of Cambridge, MA \(cambridgema.gov\)](#) shows sections of the ordinance that are required to be completed by May 1, 2026:

1. The Special4 including
 - o Broadway from Quincy St to Hampshire St;
 - o Cambridge St from Oak St to Second St;
 - o Hampshire St from Amory St to Broadway; and
 - o Garden St, eastbound from Huron Ave to Berkeley St, and westbound from Mason St to Huron Ave.
2. 11.6 miles of separated bike lanes in other locations (aside from Mass Ave and the Special4). In locations where we choose to do construction, we're only required to start construction by the end of April 2026.

The summary of this PO states "This deadline extension will apply to separated bike lane installations on Cambridge Street, Main Street and Broadway allowing time for the zoning amendments and other process improvements to be put in place." Are these segments consistent with the segments specified in the CSO?

The CSO as amended has built in deadline extension provisions

1. If we do not install separated bike lanes on all segments of the Special4 by the end of April 2025, we must provide a report to the Cambridge City Council explaining how we plan to get them done within the next year.
2. For other locations, If we need a one-year extension (for any reason) we must provide a report to the City Council explaining why the extension is needed. Extending this deadline is the City Manager's choice.
3. Possible Extension (based on MassAve4) If, when working on the MassAve4, we install 1.25 miles of quick-build separated bike lanes in the segments from Beech St to Dudley St or from Waterhouse St to Roseland St: We must finish the installation of 11.6 miles of separated bike lanes in other locations.

City Manager's Fourth Annual CSO report should be coming out 3 weeks after the 4/8 City Council meeting. Why couldn't this PO be introduced after the report comes out as there might be some other reasons for amending the CSO? The past history of CSO implementation shows that the CM is the only one who can change the scope and timeline of the implementation as clearly demonstrated by how MassAve4 morphed into Mass Ave Partial Construction in just a week after MassAve Plan was accepted by the City Council last year

This PO is reacting to "Residents and business owners along the Cambridge Street, Main Street and Broadway commercial corridors express(ing) significant concerns regarding the potential negative impacts to their businesses due to the loss of significant parking as the result of the proposed installation of separated bicycle lanes." Another example of preferential treatment was after Garden Street was reconfigured as one way, City responded quickly to the community's outcry and conducted traffic counts within a few weeks. But when the residents and small business owners along Mass Ave from Dudley Street to Alewife Brook Parkway expressed such concerns, there was no such quick response. Matter of fact, the City started to remove parking meters even before the first community meeting was held, if I remember correctly. The community's request to delay the Porter Square Project and implement it as part of MassAve4 after all the catenary wires have been removed was also flatly rejected even as the MassAve4 project was being expanded to redo Porter Square and Mass Ave Dudley Street to ABP separated bike lanes.

This PO is two years too late. CSO implementation should have been stopped when Policy Order O-5 of Feb. 28, 2022 and its predecessor O-1 of December Dec. 6, 2021 ordered that the

1. "City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Economic Development division and other appropriate departments with the intention of conducting a study to collect relevant economic data relating to business impacts from bike lane installations, positive or negative, which will help inform future installations of bike lanes along commercial corridors"
2. "City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with appropriate departments on what the standard public process will be prior to implementing new sections of bike lanes consistent with the Cycling Safety Ordinance, and what general evaluation process will take place post-installation now and for a full year once the bike network is completed, and to report back to the City Council on these matters"

But the City continued on with CSO implementation because the timeline was cast in concrete, so to speak, by the 2020 CSO Amendment and the negative impact kept snowballing.

The CDD's CSO Economic Impact Report, not to be confused with Volpe's Economic Impact Study Report, did not propose any concrete mitigation measures nor did CM's initial response address the second part of the PO.

From: [Madeleine A](#)
To: [Joan Pickett](#)
Cc: [City Manager](#); [City Clerk](#); [City Council](#)
Subject: Transportation Committee Meeting 4-10-24 on Congestion: Please monitor and mitigate the congestion caused by quick-builds especially on N. Mass Ave
Date: Wednesday, April 10, 2024 11:16:15 AM
Attachments: [Backed up car lanes and empty bus-bike lanes.jpg](#)
[Empty Bus Rush Hour.jpg](#)
[Backed up car lanes and empty bus-bike lanes2.jpg](#)
[Truck 1.jpg](#)
[Truck2.jpg](#)

Congestion on N. Mass Ave is causing the following:

Increased Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- There has been a huge increase in idling because of the traffic jams caused by removing a car lane on each side. Please see the attached pictures.
- Idling a car for two minutes can use up to the same amount of gas as driving for a mile.
- Drivers are idling at lights for up to five lights because they are not able to turn onto Massachusetts Avenue.
- Drivers are idling whenever they get stuck behind a large truck that is trying to turn because it can take up to 15 minutes for the truck to turn.
- My local librarian's commute doubled from ½ hour to 1 hour. The extra half hour she spends idling. This is equivalent to greenhouse gas emissions of driving 15 extra miles.

Increased Commutes

- Angry managers from Kendall Square tech companies have complained that their employees are arriving half hour late because of the increased congestion.
- Hundreds of SeeClickFix tickets have been filed. See this ticket about the congestion on N. Mass Ave that was opened on 6/8/22 and took almost 700 days to be acknowledged and has been viewed 2,243 times. <https://seeclickfix.com/issues/12524562>

Loss of Business

- Frank's Steakhouse is already losing two hours of business a day because drivers do not want to get stuck in traffic during rush hours. And bike lanes have not been installed here yet so they will be hit again when they lose parking.
- Valvoline has lost 20% of its business. Drivers are now going to the Arlington franchise because they don't want to get off Massachusetts Ave during rush hour.

Safety and Decreased Quality of Life

- 18-wheelers are going into residential neighborhoods to avoid traffic jams. See attached pictures. One child almost got hit as she was playing on the sidewalk.

At an on-site meeting with Ms. McKenna and Mr. Reker on 10/18/2021, residents were told that TPT has traffic volume data from 2016 and that once the Mass Avenue to Dudley Street quick-build was implemented, they would monitor traffic volume and implement adjustments to mitigate any traffic issues. There is absolutely no indication that this has been done.

Please try to get TPT to restore Massachusetts Avenue to an acceptable level of congestion.

Madeleine Aster
North Cambridge



3255
3315
3055

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