



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

TRAFFIC, PARKING, + TRANSPORTATION

MEMORANDUM

To: Yi-An Huang, City Manager

From: Brooke McKenna
Transportation Commissioner, Traffic, Parking, + Transportation Department
Jeffrey R. Parenti, PE, PTOE, PTP, ENV SP
Assistant Commissioner for Street Management/Traffic Director

Date: December 5, 2024

Subject: Awaiting Report Response 24-61: Lowering Speeds on State Highways

In response to Awaiting Report 24-61 requesting the City Manager work with the appropriate departments to produce the petition(s) necessary to accomplish the goal of lowering the speed limit as much as possible on all state highways that fall within Cambridge's geographic boundaries, including and especially Memorial Drive, we report the following:

There are several miles of state roads in Cambridge, over which the City has no jurisdiction. Those are the State Highways (owned and operated by the Department of Transportation) and the State Parkways (owned and operated by the Department of Conservation and Recreation). Pursuant to Chapter 90, Section 170C of the MGL, Cambridge has already set a citywide speed limit of 25MPH, but it does not apply to any state roads. Awaiting Report 24-61 requested that the City formally request a 25MPH speed limit from both agencies for all their roadways in Cambridge.

We sent formal letters requesting 25MPH to Commissioner Brian Arrigo of DCR and Assistant Administrator Neil Boudreau of MassDOT.

We asked DCR to set 25MPH for their parkways:

- Alewife Brook Parkway
- Fresh Pond Parkway
- Land Boulevard
- Memorial Drive

DCR has already established a speed limit of 25MPH in the area around the BU Rotary.

We asked DOT to set 25MPH for their highways:

- McGrath O'Brien Highway
- Charles River Dam Road

Additionally, we provide the following updates on DCR's work on Memorial Drive:

1) *Paul Dudley White (PDW) Path Improvements near the BU Bridge*

DCR continues work on the PDW path between Magazine Beach at the BU Boathouse. Contractors increased the width of the shared path in this section to comfortably accommodate two-way travel. DCR expects to complete work before the end of the calendar year.

2) *DCR to host Virtual Public Information Meeting December 12th on Memorial Drive Improvements, Phase III 90% Design*

The Department of Conservation and Recreation will be hosting a virtual public meeting on Thursday, December 12, from 6-7:30 p.m., to present the 90% final design for Memorial Drive Greenway Phase III.

The project limits extend from the Eliot Bridge, just west of the Cambridge Boat House, to JFK Street at the Anderson Memorial Bridge in Cambridge. The project includes numerous parkway and parkland improvements that will provide a safer experience for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicles that travel through this segment of Memorial Drive and the Charles River Reservation.

- To participate, residents can register for the virtual Zoom meeting at <https://www.mass.gov/event/memorial-drive-improvements-phase-iii-90-design-public-information-meeting-12122024-12-12-2024>.
- After the meeting, the presentation will be available for viewing on the Past Events for DCR Public Meetings Information [web page](https://www.mass.gov/dcr-public-meetings-information/events/past?_page=1) (https://www.mass.gov/dcr-public-meetings-information/events/past?_page=1).
- DCR also encourages the public to share additional feedback before January 3, 2025 through the [DCR Public Comment Portal](https://www.mass.gov/forms/dcr-public-comments) (<https://www.mass.gov/forms/dcr-public-comments>).
- Please check [DCR's project page](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/memorial-drive-greenway-improvements-phase-iii) for more information on this project at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/memorial-drive-greenway-improvements-phase-iii>.

The City is working with DCR to publicize this upcoming meeting.

3) *Paul Dudley White Path maintenance work planned for 2025*

DCR recently announced they are evaluating sections of the Paul Dudley White Path along Memorial Drive between Magazine Beach and River Street for short-term maintenance improvements with the goal of improving the current surface of the Path. This project will not include any changes to the roadway. According to DCR, planning and permitting will begin over the winter. We will provide additional information to the Community about this maintenance project as it becomes available.