



# CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Craig A. Kelley  
City Councillor

June 22, 2017

Fellow Council Members,

Today's streets are increasingly required to accommodate an expanding listing of uses and users, a trend which is especially prominent in a City as dense and as busy as Cambridge. The familiar dynamic of cars, bicycles, and pedestrians competing for space in Cambridge's streets and on its sidewalks still dominates conversations on urban planning, but in many ways that scope is already obsolete. Our various public ways are shared by a growing list of multi-modal transportation options such as hover boards and automated cars, while the electrification of familiar transportation modes such as skateboards, bicycles and even medical devices such as wheelchairs renders them something new, and increasingly available as well. Add to that the popularity of transportation services like Lyft and Uber, which make frequent stops in vehicles that are less conspicuous, and therefore less predictable, than our taxi fleet, and our public ways are becoming dangerously chaotic.

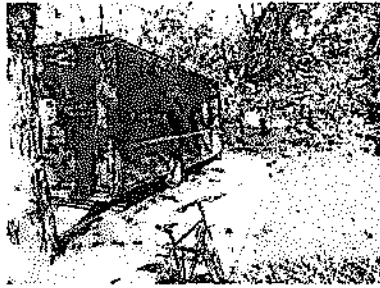


Further complicating our street use is the growth of the delivery economy that reimagines Cambridge's streets as a sphere for the global market place to operate, supplying everything from household goods such as clothing and toilet paper, to more immediate needs such as late-night ice cream Sundays. The flow of residents to large department stores in the suburbs has receded, and in its wake a torrent of goods now rush into the city, deposited directly to one's front door or place of business in many small scale deliveries.



The convergence of these two changes to our streetscape's uses, combined with a growing population, a dramatic increase in bicycle use of all types and increased automation of motorized vehicles, requires a comprehensive review of the City's curb access and freight management policies in order to better define traffic flow and, in doing so, make our public ways more predictable and safer for all users, with a special emphasis more vulnerable users such as cyclists and pedestrians. This review, which would be broader in scope than our current and very relevant Vision Zero efforts (<http://www.cambridgema.gov/traffic/sustainabletransportation/visionzero>), would require cooperation across numerous City departments as well as extensive input from the public, research institutions, local

Attachment: Councillor Kelley changes in today's streets (COF 2017 #19 : Uses and users of our city streets)



and interstate business owners, and our public transportation authorities plus coordination with other municipalities and state officials.

**This transportation safety effort will be a big lift-** progress on such a project will require years of conversations and study, but there are certainly smaller steps the City can take more proximately in areas such as data-driven parking and traffic enforcement and a renewed emphasis on safe and predictable curb access for all roadway users. The massive challenge of this issue, combined with the opportunity for immediate

iterative solutions, is all the more reason that it start with this Council term.

In an attempt to describe the sometimes chaotic nature of our shifting streetscape, I sent members of my staff out to record observations of improper curb access on Massachusetts Ave between Essex and Sidney Streets. If a vehicle spent more than 5 seconds in a space posted for some other use, or opened a door outside of a metered space, then an observation was recorded. During 2 total hours of observation (over four days), a vehicle or truck was recorded improperly occupying a space for a cumulative 6 hours and 33 minutes. During the same period, a collision was observed with a delivery truck in a bike lane with another vehicle.

Non-commercial drivers were found to be the worst offenders, spending some 2:22:30 hours in an improper location, mostly parking in tow zones, no parking spaces, and parking for persons with disabilities. They rarely occupied bike lanes, the survey found. Ubers and Lyft drivers were the most frequent abusers of the marked bike lanes, but spent the least amount of time in them per stop.

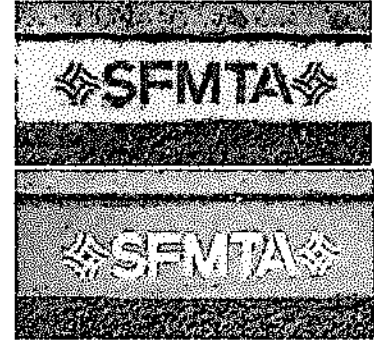
USE CATEGORY	OCCUR- RENCE	TOTAL DURATION	BIKE LANE OCCUR- RENCE	TIME IN BIKE LANE
Commercial	1	8:00	0	0:00
Delivery	21	2:02:45	13	1:25:30
Non-Commercial	30	2:22:30	7	8:45
Other	15	1:20:45	9	1:04:30
Passenger	25	39:45	16	11:45
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>6:33:45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>2:50:30</b>

*This table shows the duration of vehicles improperly occupying a space on Massachusetts Ave between Essex and Sidney Street, divided by use category. 1. Commercial use included all vehicles driven for a commercial purpose (the sole observation was a Red Bull van occupying a MBTA bus stop). 2. Delivery indicates vehicles transporting food, goods, or equipment to a location along that street. 3. Non-Commercial was used for vehicles that did not outwardly displace any commercial markings and did not appear to be engaged in commercial behavior. 4. Other was used most often to capture utility or construction vehicles parked in an improper space. 5. Passenger would indicate taxi, Uber, or Lyft activity.*

The amount of work is admittedly daunting, but cities even larger than Cambridge have taken on the task and have implemented policies that increase the safety, comfort, and utility of their streets. San Francisco, for example, rolled out a new curb access program to deal with the increasing number of uses

for the finite spaces. Together with metered parking spaces, San Francisco created five curb designations corresponding to color-coded use categories. (Their curb color brochure is attached at the end of this memo.)

Curbs painted red, yellow, and blue correspond to use categories that we would recognize from signs posted across the city which create space for no parking, commercial loading zones, and parking for persons with disabilities, respectively. Curbs painted white denote passenger loading and unloading, and require that the driver remain within the vehicle at all times. This color-code may be used in front of hospitals and medical offices, senior centers, restaurants with over 100 seats, hotels, theaters, churches, schools, and government buildings. Green curbs indicate short-term parking of 15 to 30 minutes, and are “intended for establishments where transactions tend to take less than 10 minutes, such as dry cleaners, florists, small neighborhood grocery/deli convenience stores, shoe repair shops, postal shipping centers, and some hardware stores.”



San Francisco’s program is just one example of how cities are more intentionally thinking about their street users. While some solutions are decidedly low-tech and immediate, such as installing plastic barriers to better guide traffic flow, many cities are undertaking much more complex efforts such as beginning to develop plans for urban freight management, creating low emission zones, combined use lands, incentivizing off-peak deliveries, and consolidating shipments. Such concepts are not new to Cambridge either. In 2003, the Council enacted a truck ordinance restricting deliveries between 11:00 PM and 6:00 AM, but the idea has not been revisited after legal pressure ended the program a month after implementation. Vision Zero has already had success lowering the speed limit of our densely populated communities, and its ongoing traffic safety efforts can be seen as a model for further work.

Though likely to take three or more years, this curbside access and freight management effort is a project that the current Council could initiate and one that would complement ongoing efforts such as Vision Zero and Envision Cambridge, but it would require more aggressive efforts to assemble the institutional capacity to ensure a timely completion. The list below broadly outlines actionable tasks that would move Cambridge toward a more organized streetscape.

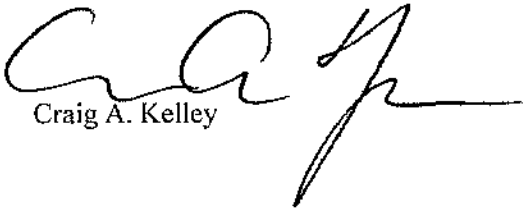
- Conduct a regional review of urban freight truck routes servicing the Boston Metropolitan area
- Sponsor a study of delivery truck (of all sizes) use on Cambridge’s streets to identify problem practices
- Open a dialogue with companies that provide freight-specific guidance systems
- Host symposia to bring stakeholders together around the issue of urban freight and the delivery economy to:
  - Review vehicle specifications
  - Develop best practices in Cambridge
  - Map out inclusive and safe roadway geometry
  - Recommend behavioral campaigns to improve safe use for multiple users



- Invite commercial and governmental stakeholders that frequently use Cambridge's streets, such as FedEx, the US Postal Service, UPS, Uber, Lyft, beverage distribution companies, etc., to a conversation on developing policy recommendations
- Create parking and curbside access policies specific to both residential, commercial, and throughway streets
- Establish communication lines to receive comments and input from residents, neighborhood groups, and advocates representing bicyclers and pedestrians
- Partner with university and governmental research institutions

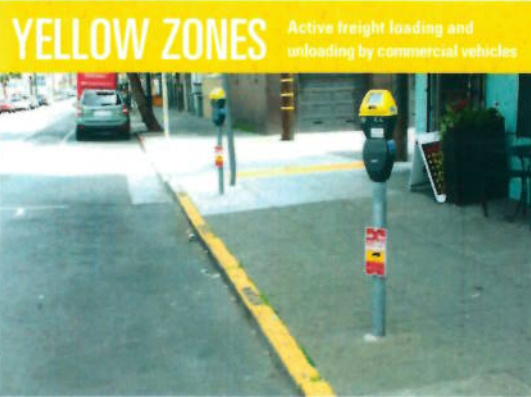
I hope the Council will provide clear and resolute direction to significantly expand on Vision Zero's efforts in approaching these goals of safety, equity, and efficiency in our public ways, and I look forward to engaging in a dialogue that aggressively advances a safer, more predictable, more inclusive, and better utilized urban streetscape.

Sincerely,



Craig A. Kelley

cc Donna Lopez, City Clerk, with instructions that this letter be included in Communications from City Officers at the June 26, 2017, Regular City Council Meeting.



Yellow zones are typically used for large businesses or properties that receive or deliver a lot of shipments. They are for active loading and unloading by commercial vehicles only (those with a commercial license plate).



A blue zone designates parking spaces for persons with a valid disabled parking permit. Blue zones are normally located in areas with high public use, such as in dense commercial areas and near public parks and playgrounds, where the blue zones can serve a large number of individuals. Blue zones are not established to serve a specific individual or a small, select group of individuals.

## FEES & RENEWAL

For green and white zones, fees vary depending on the size of the zone.

Call 311 or visit [www.sfmta.com/NewColorCurb](http://www.sfmta.com/NewColorCurb) for more details.

## Public Hearing Process

Public hearings on the installation of new color curb zones are held once a month at City Hall. The hearing allows for public comment regarding proposed changes to San Francisco streets. The hearing officer will review the items, consider possible opposition, and then make a final decision.

A public notice of the proposed change is posted in the vicinity of the proposed zone approximately 10 days before the hearing date. Agendas are posted on the SFMTA website at [www.sfmta.com/about-sfmta/organization/committees/color-curb-hearings](http://www.sfmta.com/about-sfmta/organization/committees/color-curb-hearings).

# Color Curb Program

**Sustainable Streets/Transportation Engineering Division**  
 1 South Van Ness Avenue, 7th Floor  
 San Francisco CA 94103-5417  
[www.sfmta.com](http://www.sfmta.com)

**Color Curb Program**  
 1 South Van Ness Avenue, 7th Floor  
 San Francisco, California 94103-5417  
 415-701-4639 | [ccp@sfmta.com](mailto:ccp@sfmta.com)

SFMTA.COM

**311 Free language assistance / 免費語言協助 / Ayuda gratis con el idioma / Бесплатная помощь переводчиков / Trợ giúp Thông dịch Miễn phí / Assistance linguistique gratuite / 無料の言語支援 / 무료 언어 지원 / Libreng tulong para sa wikang Tagalog / ความช่วยเหลือทางภาษาโดยไม่เสียค่าใช้จ่าย / خط المساعدة المجاني على الرقم**





# How to Apply

## How to apply for a color curb zone near your business, residence or school:

- Call 311 to submit your application over the phone, or visit [www.sfmta.com/NewColorCurb](http://www.sfmta.com/NewColorCurb)
- If you are applying for a green or white zone (businesses) or a driveway red zone (residences), you must pay the non refundable application fee before we process your request. There is no application fee for yellow zones, used for commercial loading, and blue zones, which designate parking for persons with disabilities.
- Applications are usually processed within 30 days. The installatin of approve zones may take up to 90 days depending on the complexity of the zone.
- Application fees are nonrefundable and cannot be combined with paint or installation fees. Do not pay any paint or installation fees when applying; we will send you an invoice when those fees are due.

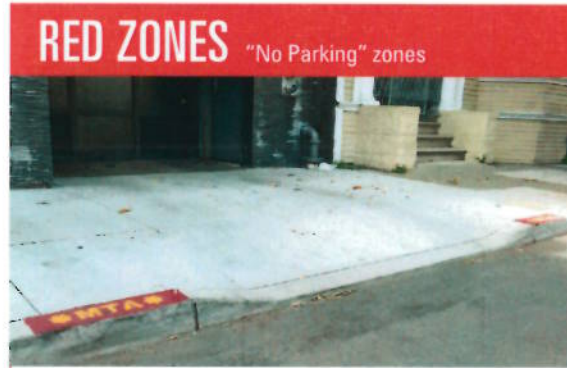
## I've applied for a color curb, what's next?

### YELLOW, GREEN, WHITE AND BLUE ZONES

- We review your request and determine whether to recommend the new color curb for installation.
- If we recommend installation, a public hearing will be scheduled at City Hall. You will receive notification by mail of the hearing date, time and location, and public notices will be posted in the vicinity of the proposed zone.
- Some curb colors require fees to establish them. If your request is approved at the public hearing, you will need to pay all applicable fees.
- The SFMTA completes the permitting process and installs the zone as scheduling permits.

### DRIVEWAY RED ZONE

No public hearing is required. Once we receive your nonrefundable application fee, we will process and review your request. After our investigation is complete, we will send you an invoice for installation or a response with our recommendation.



Red zones may be installed near intersection corners, at bus stops, at fire hydrants, at curb ramps or at the edges of driveways.

Driveway red zones typically take up two feet on each side of the driveway. They provide additional clearance for vehicles entering and exiting driveways.

Driveway red zones are not required to be renewed at regular intervals. Renewal requests are treated as new requests and must include the nonrefundable application fee. Renewal requests are subject to the same assessment as new applications and may not necessarily be approved. Paint fees are applicable if the renewal request is approved.

#### Common reasons for denying driveway red zone requests:

- Parking spaces would be lost
- A driveway is improperly constructed, or does not lead to an actively used garage.



Green zones are intended for establishments where transactions tend to take less than 10 minutes, such as dry cleaners, florists, small neighborhood grocery/deli convenience stores,

shoe repair shops, postal shipping centers, and some hardware stores. Green zones are for public use and are not reserved for particular establishments. Applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

If approved at the public hearing, painted green zones are required to be renewed every two years.

#### Common reasons for denying green zone requests:

- Private off-street parking is available
- There are already limited-time zones nearby
- The establishment's transactions are not predominantly short-term in nature



White zones are intended for establishments with active passenger loading and unloading, such as hospitals, senior centers, hotels, theaters, places of worship or assembly, schools, and government buildings. Certain medical offices, restaurants, and residential buildings may also qualify. Time limits are typically 5 minutes, and the driver must remain with the vehicle at all times (limited exceptions apply at preschools and hospitals).

#### Common reasons for denying white zone requests:

- Private off-street parking is available
- Seating or unit requirements are not met
- There are adjacent passenger loading zones nearby