

Report of the City Council Subcommittee on Transportation and Parking
with regard to the Clean Air Transportation Control Plan
for the Boston region

The following report is formally presented to the Cambridge City Council for its action. This analysis and these recommendations are the result of public hearings conducted by the City Council in November, 1973, and are the product of much careful study by members of the General Court from Cambridge; members of the City Council; the Chamber of Commerce; the Cambridge Departments of Traffic and Parking, and Planning and Development; and especially of the Cambridge Transportation Forum.

for the Subcommittee

Francis H. Duehay, Chairman

January 2, 1974

I. INTRODUCTION

In response to the air pollution problem, resulting in substantial portion from exhaust emission of motor vehicles, the United States Congress passed the Clean Air Act in 1970; Clean Air Transportation Control Plan for the Boston region, formulated by the Governor of the State of Massachusetts and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in October, 1973, to meet the provisions of the Clean Air Act, currently obliges the City of Cambridge and the State to implement the particular proposals for installation restrictions on parking by 1975. The State is responsible for installation of emission control devices. In addition, the Control Plan recommends measures to increase carpooling, build fringe parking facilities, and make MBTA "commuter passes" available for sale to the general public. A summary of these provisions and recommendations follows. See Appendix A for a complete summary of the Plan.

Summary of
State/EPA Plan

Parking Restrictions and Other Provisions

Employee
Parking

Section IV states that within the entire Boston Air Quality Control Region (101 cities and towns) by May 31, 1975, each employer with 50 or more employees must reduce the ratio of parking spaces to employees by 25% below the September 1973 level.

Off-street
for Hire
Parking

Section V deals with off-street for hire parking in the Boston Regional Core, including Cambridge and Logan Airport by:

- a. requiring that a \$.25 per hour surcharge be applied to all such parking during the 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. period on weekdays, except that no charge should exceed \$2.50, effective

May 31, 1975,

- b. and by imposing a freeze on the total supply of such parking facilities (but not new construction) as of September, 1973.

Section VI promulgates a parking strategy for the Regional Core, including Cambridge, in regard to:

On-street
Parking

- a. on-street parking, by the imposition of a ban on all parking between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. weekdays effective March 1, 1975, and

Off-street for
Hire Parking

- b. off-street for hire parking, by requiring a 40% vacancy rate between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. weekdays, effective March 1, 1975.

Note: The provisions in Section VI a. do not apply to residents and handicapped persons.

Park-and-ride
Facilities

Section X states that the State will develop fringe "park and ride" facilities for use by commuters.

Carpooling

Section VIII encourages carpooling by:

Carpooling to
be Encouraged

- a. urging employers to match carpool mates and to give priority in parking for employees forming carpools, and
- b. supporting the WBZ/ALA computerized mate-matching scheme.

MBTA

Commuter
Passes

Section IX states that commuter passes will be for sale to regular MBTA users.

Note: The Plan assumes the completion of the Governor's regional transportation improvement plan, including notably the extension of the Red Line.

Possible
Revision of
Guidelines

Cambridge may request the State to seek a revision in the present guidelines.

To gain acceptance of any changes by the State and the Federal Government, the State and the EPA have indicated that an alternative program would have to:

- have the same net effect on air quality,
- enjoy broad support in the City, and
- be made promptly.

A number of considerations, including but not limited to the need for clean air in Cambridge, argue that this City must not merely work to comply with the guidelines, but should actively support the State and Federal government's efforts.

The benefits
to Cambridge
in the form of
cleaner air

1. The benefits of clean air would be substantial. These proposed restrictions are necessary because our air does not now meet the standards set by the Federal government. Everyone is adversely affected by poor air, often in ways we do not notice. The very active, the very old and those with heart or respiratory diseases suffer especially. See Appendix B for data on current air quality in Cambridge area and information on the Cambridge area and information on the health effects of air pollution.

Since air movements do not respect political boundaries, Cambridge must work co-operatively on a regional basis to obtain clean air. We cannot solve this problem by ourselves, nor can it be solved if we do not support regional pollution-control efforts.

The long-term trend toward public transit 2. There is a long-term trend toward more reliance on public transportation and less on the private passenger automobile. It now appears nearly certain that the Red Line transit extension will be built and that highways such as the Inner Belt will not be built in Cambridge. These decisions have been supported by the City. They will be complemented by a policy of increased regulation of parking in Cambridge.

Excessive traffic in residential areas 3. Cambridge citizens express widespread and apparently growing dissatisfaction with the amount of traffic and the attendant increase in congestion and hazard and decreasing availability of parking in residential areas. For example, the increase in traffic on Sherman, Line, Oxford, and Walden Streets; problems with congestion on Gore and Prospect Streets, and parking problems in East Cambridge, Cambridgeport, and Harvard, Inman, and Porter Squares. These are only examples; all of Cambridge is affected to some degree. A policy of increased parking regulation can help solve some of these problems.

Gas shortage will ease implementation of parking restrictions 4. The present gasoline shortage may impose severe limits on automobile use in the near future. Rising gasoline prices, higher taxes, and rationing are in the offing. Limited

domestic refining capacities imply that higher prices and shortages will not end with the Arab oil embargo.

Selective parking cutbacks will be much easier to implement and enforce at a time when people are driving less for other reasons. Cambridge and the Boston area should take advantage of this opportunity.

Present guidelines would be disruptive

It is also apparent, however, that the imposition and strict enforcement of the present parking guidelines would cause great disruption and personal and economic hardship if not accompanied by substantial improvements in the provision of public transportation. Enforcement would be possible, if at all, only at great cost. Nothing would be worse than a proliferation of regulations that are not observed.

The following four considerations argue that Cambridge should key the implementation of the parking restrictions to certain minimal improvements in public transportation and other modifications.

Not all commuters are well served by transit

1. Cambridge is only moderately well served by a public transportation system that is oriented to downtown Boston. Only 19% of people employed in Cambridge took public transportation to work, compared with 58% of those employed in downtown Boston. According to the Department of Planning and Development existing public transportation service is "fair" for the 6.3% of people employed in Cambridge who commute from the North Shore and "poor" for the 37.5% who come from the directions of I-93 and the Massachusetts Turnpike. See Appendix C for data on commutation to Cambridge. The extension of the Red Line will alleviate this problem

somewhat, but is at least seven years in the future. Thus, there is and will continue to be a large number of people who will want to drive to Cambridge to work, until they are served better by public transportation, regardless of parking restrictions.

Restrictions will have greatest impact on Cambridge

2. Owing to the unusually high proportion of on-street parking in Cambridge, the present guidelines would mean an overall reduction of parking spaces available to employees of many firms of over 50%. The net effects will probably be substantially less severe everywhere else in the Metropolitan area. In downtown Boston there is a much greater supply of off-street for hire parking. More importantly, in the suburbs, the effective cutbacks will be less than 25% for most firms; some now have excess parking capacity and there are to be no new restrictions on on-street parking as there will be in Cambridge. Without significant improvements in public transportation, the guidelines will make Cambridge significantly less attractive as a place to work or own a business.

Parking needed in commercial areas

3. Three commercial centers in Cambridge, East Cambridge, and Harvard and Inman Squares currently have or are expected to have a shortage of short-term parking spaces that may require some addition of off-street for hire parking facilities. A total freeze on the supply of off-street customer parking may induly harm some businesses in these areas.

Difficulty of enforcement

4. The enforcement at present parking restrictions is uneven at best. Effective enforcement of far ~~more~~ stringent regulations will require a major increase in personnel. Even with an

increase in personnel, enforcement may be ineffective unless commuters and shoppers are provided reasonable alternatives to the private passenger car. The cost of enforcement could be paid for by the fines imposed and parking meter fees.

Basis for
a response
exists now

The basis for a prompt response to the State and EPA's guidelines along the lines suggested above now exists. The report of the Department of Planning and Development and Traffic and Parking and the responses of citizens and organizations both in the public hearings held by this committee on November 15 and to the questionnaire distributed by the Cambridge Transportation Forum all indicate that a consensus can be achieved along the lines indicated in this Report.

A specific proposal, a new city-wide parking policy, is made in this report. This proposal would meet the requirement of having the same net effect on air pollution as the State-EPA guidelines. It would also minimize the adverse impact of the guidelines on Cambridge. Finally, this report makes specific recommendations for the enforcement procedures, transportation improvements, and program of public education that will be necessary for the success of comprehensive parking policy.

II. THE CAMBRIDGE RESPONSE TO DATE

Response from
Cambridge so
far--from the
Planning and
Traffic Depts.

A. From the Departments of Planning and Development and Traffic and Parking
The City Departments of Planning and Development and Traffic and Parking have analyzed the EPA-State guidelines. In their report to the City Manager (Appendix D) they express reservations about the economic effects of the present parking guidelines on

Cambridge, but they also recommend that Cambridge support the general objectives of the Plan to reduce the amount of long-term parking and use of cars by commuters.

Their reservations about the impact of the present guidelines on employment and retail activity in Cambridge are shared by the business community (see below), and are recognized by this Report. Because of their reservations, the Departments recommend that Cambridge should seek certain relaxations of the guidelines. In view of the unanimous view of citizens, business groups, and the Departments that the objective of Clean Air should be supported, this Report recommends that the City should insist on improvements in public transportation rather than seek relaxation of the guidelines.

Response
from Citizens

B. From Cambridge Citizens

Citizen response has been obtained in a hearing held on November 15, 1973, by the City Council Committee on Transportation, Councillor Francis H. Duehay, Chairman, and by means of a survey conducted by the Cambridge Transportation Forum (see Appendixes E and F). Most citizens expressed strong support for the State-EPA guidelines as a means to obtain clean air. A minority of citizens expressed reservations about the economic impact. This Report strongly endorses citizen support for guidelines that will obtain clean air.

Response
from
Businesses

C. From the Business Community

Business' views have also been obtained in the November 15 Committee hearing and the Transportation Survey. A majority of

business spokesmen expressed concern about the economic impact of the present guidelines. In a statement by the Chamber of Commerce at the hearings (see Appendix E) the Chamber of Commerce recommended that Cambridge (a) should insist on transit improvements before any implementation and (b) should not be included in the Regional Core. The recommendation of transit improvement, also made by many citizens, is shared by this Report. The recommendation that Cambridge should not be included in the Regional Core is not shared by this Report, because of the legitimate concern of citizens that Cambridge would become an overspill parking area for downtown Boston.

In summary, recommendations made by this Report reflect the expressed concerns of both residents and business.

Based on the information supplied by the Departments of Planning and Development and Traffic and Parking, the testimony given at the November 13 and 15 hearings, and the results of the questionnaires, four groups of recommendations are proposed. The recommendations deal with:

- a. the proposed parking restrictions,
- b. the enforcement of these parking restrictions,
- c. the necessary improvement of public transit, and
- d. public education on the issues.

III. PARKING POLICIES

Recommended
proposed
employee
parking
reductions

A. Employee Parking

An across-the-board reduction of 25% would unfairly impact on employers who now provide few spaces to their employees. Where transit is reasonably available, the reductions should be progressive.

1. Employers of 50 or more employees located within 3/4 mile of a mass transit station should be required to reduce parking for employees below the number in September, 1973, according to a sliding scale, in such a way that the reduction increases directly with the ratio of parking spaces per employee, with a minimum reduction of 12 ½%, and with a city-wide average reduction of 25% (see (2), below). Employers with fewer than 10 spaces should be exempted from this restriction.

2. Employers of 50 or more employees located more than 3/4 mile from the nearest mass transit station should be required to reduce parking for employees by 25%, as proposed by the State and the EPA, or by the percentage calculated in (1), above, whichever is less. However, employers with fewer than 10 spaces should also be exempted from this restriction.

Implementation should be contingent on the making of transit improvements described in III. B.

Examples: (formula used is only illustrative-actual formula still to be determined)

		<u>Employees</u>	<u>Present Spaces</u>	<u>Ratio</u>	<u>Reduction</u>	<u>Future Spaces</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
Employers within 3/4 mile of transit station	A	100	5	.05	0	5	.05
	B	100	15	.15	2	13	.13
	C	100	30	.30	6	24	.24
	D	100	60	.60	22	38	.38
Employers beyond 3/4 mile of transit station	E	100	5	.05	0	5	.05
	F	100	15	.15	2	11	.11
	G	100	30	.30	6	24	.24
	H	100	60	.60	15	45	.45

3. Some steps can be taken (and have already been taken by some firms) immediately. All businesses and non-profit institutions should take firm steps to prohibit employees living in or near Cambridge or in proximity to public transportation from commuting to work. These institutions should also commence or join the carpool effort for the remainder of their employees.

Practical steps
for institutions
to take

Institutions which operate parking lots or garages may well find that they can make parking spaces open due to this saving, available for municipal use for off-street parking for shoppers.

The Department of Traffic and Parking is requested to encourage such policies and to monitor their effectiveness.

B. Off-Street for Hire Parking

Recommended
restrictions on
off-street for
hire parking

There should be a freeze on the total city supply of parking allowing replacement of on-street with off-street parking within a radius of 1 mile but no other new construction should be allowed.

- Supply freeze

The 40% vacancy requirement between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. will free spaces for shoppers as will the on-street parking ban during the same period. The \$.25/hour surcharge to a limit of \$2.50 will also discourage long-term parking and free space.

- Surcharge

These proposals should be implemented as soon as possible with the provision that there be a freeze in the total number of for hire parking spaces, allowing the replacement of existing on-street spaces with off-street facilities. The City should

insist that all surcharges be levied in Cambridge accrue to the City. All of Cambridge should be included in the Regional Core.

C. On-Street Parking

1. Residential - The Resident Sticker Program should gradually be expanded to all neighborhoods with full enforcement.

Recommended expansion of sticker parking

Neighborhood stickers should be color-coded to cut down excessive inter-city use of cars. If color-coding is not implemented as the Resident Sticker Program expands, much of the purpose of the program will be vitiated. The once-a-week street cleaning program should also be included in a comprehensive parking program.

Recommended measures for other on-street parking

2. Commercial - There should be a 2:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. ban on curb parking on all non-residential streets except for night-shift employees not served by transit. Implementation of this provision only should be contingent on transit

- 2-10 a.m. ban

improvements described in III. C. This along with the street-cleaning program, will prevent employee parking in shopping spaces and free curb lanes for possible use as exclusive bus lanes. A very limited 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. ban for a bus lane, on Massachusetts Avenue should also be included. The meter charges should be increased to at least \$.25/hour with an enforced parking limit of no more than two hours. This will improve the allocation of spaces to short-term parkers. The City should ask the State for permission to raise the parking fine structure in order to make effective enforcement possible.

- \$.25 minimum meter charge

Support for more
fringe parking

3. Fringe Parking - The City should recommend that the State build fringe parking in conjunction with the increase in coverage and service level of mass transit to encourage trip completion by transit. The I-93 and Massachusetts Turnpike corridors are particularly crucial in this respect.

IV. ENFORCEMENT OF PARKING POLICIES

Enforcement
by Traffic
Dept.

- A. Enforcement of the several city-wide parking policies is paramount to the effectiveness of this program. The Department of Traffic and Parking should be given primary responsibility for enforcement of all parking regulations. Including all limits on off-street parking. Parking enforcement is a regulatory function that should not be a primary responsibility of the Police Department, whose primary function is public safety. Parking enforcement personnel should be assigned to the Department of Traffic and Parking or provided by the Police Department as necessary. This does not mean, however, that the Police Department should be prohibited from issuing traffic tickets, but rather that the primary departmental responsibility for enforcement be shifted. The Department of Traffic and Parking should make a study of the personnel needed to enforce and implement these policies, and in so doing should take account of the existing capabilities of other Departments.

Parking Fund

- B. The Parking Fund should be used to defray the costs of enforcement.

Short-term
on-street spaces

C. The Department of Traffic and Parking should study and recommend new measures for making more efficient use of existing off-street and on-street spaces in commercial areas before further construction of off-street parking facilities.

Universities
role

D. The City's educational institutions must bear a major responsibility for reducing automobile usage by their students and personnel. The universities should be encouraged to work with the Department of Traffic and Parking in a program of continued co-operation to achieve this reduction, and, in particular should be requested to prohibit resident students to own cars in Cambridge (and Boston).

Towing program

E. In order to facilitate public transportation by bus, the present municipal towing program should be expanded under the Department of Traffic and Parking for the sole purpose of removing vehicles that park in bus stops or bus lanes.

Private towing
companies

F. In order to ensure public respect for the entire parking enforcement machinery, the State Department of Public Utilities should be requested to regulate more closely the operations of all private towing companies operating in the City of Cambridge.

Enforce
present laws

G. To ensure compliance with the objective of reducing traffic and allocating parking spaces in the most efficient possible manner all existing traffic and parking regulations should be strictly enforced.

Re-use of surplus parking spaces

- H. In order to assist employers who will have unusable parking spaces, the Department of Planning and Development should study and recommend measures for making productive use of parking spaces retired by this program.

V. EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC TRANSIT

Provision of improvements in public transportation is primarily the responsibility of the State and the MBTA. The guidelines cannot be enforced by the City of Cambridge unless public transit is improved by the time each restriction takes effect.

Support proposed transit improvements

- A. Presently proposed transportation improvements -- Red Line Extension to Route 128, Extension of the Green Line, MBTA Commuter Passes, carpooling -- should be implemented at the earliest possible date.

Propose small improvements in public transit

- B. The City should work with the State and the MBTA to implement the following improvements in public transportation by the end of 1974 and insist on their implementation before full implementation of the employee parking restrictions.
 - 1. General distribution of easy-to-read, complete MBTA bus schedules and route maps to every Cambridge household and employee in order to eliminate an important obstacle to transit usage, and ignorance of the availability of service.
 - 2. Institution of an exclusive bus lane on Massachusetts Avenue and Harvard Square and between Central Square and

MIT, where the street is wide enough, inbound from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and outbound from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., weekdays. This provision means the elimination of on-street parking and the necessity of a municipal towing program.

3. Enforcement of laws that require buses to pull to the curb at bus stops and preventing parking at bus stops by use of a municipal towing program if necessary.

4. Implementation of the following "small route changes:"

a. Extension of the Central Square-Granite Street bus over the B.U. Bridge, preferably to the hospital area. This is a major corridor for commuting from Cambridge.

b. A re-routing of the Lowell bus line to end at Harvard Square. This would make it useful for commuters to Cambridge, since the bus now stops at Kendall Square, without inconveniencing commuters to and from Boston.

c. A linking of some bus routes running west of Harvard Square with routes east of Harvard Square to eliminate time-consuming transfers.

Propose major improvements in transit service

C. The City should work with the State and MBTA to implement the following improvements in public transportation by the end of 1975 and insist on their implementation before full implementation of the 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. street parking ban in non-residential areas.

1. Implementation of new bus service:
 - a. Express bus service to and from "park and ride" facilities in the I-93 corridor, the Massachusetts Turnpike-Riverside Line corridor, and the Red Line Extension corridor.
 - b. Cross-town bus service north to Somerville and south across the Charles River to reduce automobile commutation through Cambridge to and from destinations outside the city.
2. Improved transportation to Logan Airport:
 - a. Licensing of an inexpensive airport limousine service to cover all of Cambridge.
 - b. Relaxation of the regulation which prohibits taxis from carrying passengers both going to and coming from the Airport.

Improvements in public transportation are the subject of a study now being made by the Department of Planning and Development. When they are made the Department's recommendations should be given full consideration.

VI. PUBLIC EDUCATION

As public transit is expanded and improved and certainly before the parking restrictions are fully enforced, the people who live and work in Cambridge must understand the need to change old habits and be ready to look to public transit for meeting more and more of their

transportation needs. To accomplish this end, there should be an on-going City-sponsored educational program co-ordinated by the Department of Planning and Development. This program should foster a growing awareness on the part of each person as to the availability of transportation means other than the private automobile and the effects and costs of all transportation modes in terms of our environment and our physical and mental health as well as the obvious and not so obvious financial costs.

The programs should reach those in the public schools, those beyond the age of public school who live in Cambridge, those who work in Cambridge but who do not live here, and those attending college here. In reaching these people the Department should seek the cooperation of citizen groups, institutions, and businesses.



City of Cambridge

IN CITY COUNCIL

Comm. received from Francis H. Duehay,
Chairman of the subcommittee on Transportation
and parking transmitting a report with regard
to the Clean Air Transportation Control Plan
for the Boston region.

In City Council,

January 14, 1974

1/14/74
Hearing scheduled
for Jan. 28, 1974 at
8 P.M.

1 Hearing in 2 weeks
8 P.M. 1/28/74 whole
Council