

## CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL 349-4300

FAX 349-4307

### EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

ROBERT W. HEALY

City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI

Deputy City Manager

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert W. Healy, City Manager  
FROM: Richard Rossi, Deputy City Manager *PCR*  
DATE: May 1, 1996  
RE: Report from the Cambridge Common Ad Hoc Committee

#### Purpose of Ad Hoc Committee

At the request of the City Council, an ad hoc committee consisting of representatives from groups having a particular interest in the Cambridge Common, including the pedestrian and bicycle committees, was formed. The goal of the ad hoc committee was to explore if agreement could be reached concerning the possibility of accommodating both pedestrians and bicyclists on the Cambridge Common while at the same time reducing the conflicts currently experienced between the two groups of users. Through a series of meetings and discussions, they have reached agreement and are submitting the committee's recommendations for next steps including project funding in time for the City Council's review of the city budget. This report is to indicate that agreement in concept for compatibility of use has been reached.

#### Committee Membership

Committee members are:

##### Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Astrid Dodds, Michael Owu, Tom Reisz, Betsy Thagard

##### Bicycle Committee

Rebecca Hall, Jane Marston, Si Shapiro, Betsy Thagard

##### Committee on Public Planting

Janet Burns, Phebe Leighton

##### Harvard University

Harris Band, Happy Green

##### Office for Tourism

Maura Smith

*(continued next page)*

### City

Deputy City Manager Richard Rossi, Charles Sullivan (Historical Commission); Ann Daughaday (DPW), Lauren Preston (Traffic, Parking and Transportation), Roger Boothe, Susanne Rasmussen, Cara Seiderman, Rosalie Anders (Community Development)

The Harvard Square Business Association was also invited to participate but did not attend any meetings.

### Committee Recommendations

As directed by the Council, the committee started its work with the goal that making it possible for both pedestrians and bicyclists to travel safely through the Common is beneficial to everyone and deserves to be given very serious attention with the expectation that a satisfactory compromise can be reached.

The Committee agreed unanimously that changes need to be made to accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists safely on the Common:

- because automobiles dominate the area around the Common, forcing bicyclists and pedestrians to share a limited space on the Common itself; and
- because there is no practical way of completely banning bicycling on the Common since the existing road conditions are unsafe for bicyclists and improvements necessary to make the roads safe for bicycling would require removal of a large number of parking spaces and/or the elimination of one or more motor vehicle travel lanes;
- therefore measures should and can be taken to minimize conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists and others users including changes to the pathways on the Common as well as safety improvements on the roads surrounding the Common to the greatest extent possible.

The Committee agreed unanimously that any plan for the Common must meet two primary goals:

- To maximize actual pedestrian safety as well as pedestrians' perception of being safe.
- To provide safe and adequate facilities for bicyclists.

The committee examined several alternatives that it believes hold promise of meeting the primary goals and that merit the attention of a project designer. The committee concluded that a plan should, as much as possible:

- Retain all significant pedestrian desire lines.
- Accommodate in a safe manner as many bicycles on the street as possible.
- Preserve existing, healthy trees and add new trees to the Common.

- Retain bicycle travel desire routes.
- Not increase the amount of paved area on the Common.

### Project Funding and Process Elements

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council has recommended that Cambridge be allocated \$500,000 of ISTEA funding to construct the project, including funds to make the paths safer for bicyclists and pedestrians and to improve the landscaping, historic elements, and other transportation corridor elements, such as lighting. To take advantage of this opportunity, the committee recommends that the City Council appropriate \$50,000 to hire a project designer. Final approval for funding construction is expected by the end of the summer.

The committee recommends the following process elements:

- A project designer is retained with input from ad hoc committee members.
- Designer assembles all necessary background information including physical survey.
- Designer produces diagrammatic design options.
- Preferred design is articulated.
- Public meeting(s) to provide input into plan.
- Input from pedestrian, bicycle, and public planting committees and Historical Commission
- Public meeting(s) to review preferred design.
- Design completed.
- Approval by pedestrian, bicycle, and public planting committees and Historical Commission.
- Project construction bids prepared and project constructed by Massachusetts Highway Department.



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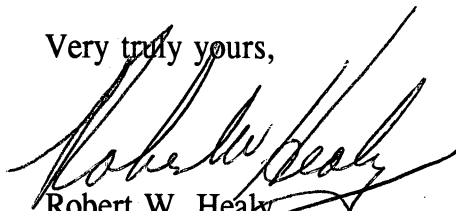
RICHARD C. ROSSI  
Deputy City Manager

May 6, 1996

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached for your information, a report from the Cambridge Common Ad Hoc Committee received from Deputy City Manager Richard C. Rossi.

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

RWH/mec  
attachment

Consent Agenda #9

S-249

Relative to a report from the  
Cambridge Common Ad Hoc Committee.

In City Council May 6, 1996

*Referred to Finance  
and Environment  
Committees*