

MARIE C. GUZELL, PH.D.
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST
44 HARVEY STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02140
(617) 876-5580

RECEIVED BY
OFFICE OF CITY CLERK

January 17, 1998

98 FEB 18 PM 3:52

TO: Ms. Sheila Russell and members of the City Council

CAMBRIDGE MA.

RE: Petitions against making first block of Harvey Street two-ways
as proposed in redesign of upper Mass Avenue

Dear Ms. Russell:

After attending the January 24, 1998, meeting of Public Works, Community Development, and Traffic Departments with North Cambridge residents on the proposed redesign plans for upper Mass Avenue, I became concerned about:
1) The unexpected deadlines; 2) The slim to random chance of a neighborhood being able to give meaningful input in the large group format where eight smaller groups meet and funnel ideas in a review period at the end; 3) Who was going to make decisions that would affect the community for years to come; and, 4) Some specific redesign plans that would, if implemented, affect the Trolley Square neighborhood drastically.

One design plan--to make Harvey Street between Massachusetts Avenue and Cedar Street a two-way street and to eliminate parking on that block--I knew would create problems for the neighborhood residents and businesses:

1. IT WOULD ELIMINATE 12 TO 14 PARKING SPACES

Harvey and Cedar Street residents need these parking spaces.
Local business depends on these spaces for customers and deliveries.
At the Trolley Square "triangle" there is no parking on the Cedar Street side and no parking for a long stretch on both sides of Mass Ave, so preserving Harvey Street parking is crucial.
Two valued organizations in our community--United American Veterans and Knights of Columbus--also use Harvey Street parking

2. IT WOULD INCREASE HAZARDS FOR PEDESTRIANS AT ALL TROLLEY SQUARE CROSSINGS

This includes two Mass Ave, two Harvey, and two Cedar Street crossings which are already hazardous even with only one-way Harvey St. traffic. Traffic flow is fast-paced on both Harvey and Cedar, and on Mass Ave. Typically drivers do not stop for pedestrians in the crosswalks. Pedestrians would have to watch out for unpredictable traffic from all directions.
Groups of children wait for the school bus on two corners of Harvey. Pedestrians must walk on the street due to blocked, narrow sidewalks at times. (It does not take much to effectively block a narrow sidewalk--a group of kids waiting for a bus, one person carrying bags on each side, a baby stroller, two persons walking side-by-side, a pile of snow at corners from snow plows, a bicycle parked on the sidewalk, etc.) Mothers with baby strollers and small children come from nearby streets and must cross Harvey and Cedar to get to the playground on Cedar Street. The elderly fear the many Trolley Square crossings.

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The curved shape of Harvey at Trolley Square creates a partially "blind" intersection.

Buildings on sidewalks at corners--no off-sets (three businesses and one residence) create "blind" corners.

Parked cars are a buffer for pedestrians on narrow sidewalks.

3. IT WOULD BRING MORE THRU TRAFFIC TO TROLLEY SQUARE AND ONE COULD EXPECT BOTTLE-NECKS

Large lumber trucks make right hand turns on to Harvey Street from Mass Ave. which is difficult to negotiate. This would block cars traveling toward them on Harvey Street.

Motorists who currently use several other approaches to get to some route on the other side of Mass Ave. may converge at Trolley Square.

Some motorists, seeing a red light on Cedar, may turn right on Harvey as a quick detour to get to Mass Ave outbound lanes.

If more than a small number of cars turn right on Harvey, they will block Cedar traffic on a green light, while Harvey waits at a red light.

One can only speculate that some inbound Mass Ave traffic would take Cedar inbound for a Harvey Street left hand turn, in order to avoid the awkward and difficult left hand turn from inbound Mass Ave to Cameron Ave.

In general, the intersections at Trolley Square would be much more busy, congested, and more hazardous to motorists and pedestrians.

4. IT IS AN ASSAULT ON THE STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF THE TROLLEY SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD

By eliminating parking and making traffic two-way in the first block of our one-way street, it is like "chopping off" a part of Harvey Street, taking it away from the neighborhood, and literally giving it to public thru traffic.

Dividing any street into two different kinds of traffic, effectively divides the street into "two streets" and breaks up a neighborhood. (Would ours be "West Harvey Street and East Harvey Thruway?")

It would bring the busy public traffic atmosphere one block closer into the neighborhood. We would lose our buffer from Mass Ave.

It is an assault on a street that has already had more than its share of beatings.

I approached 101 local residents with a petition against the plan to make that first block of Harvey Street two-way, and got strong support: 97 individuals readily signed the petition, while only 4 declined. Residents voiced concerns equally about LOSS OF PARKING SPACES and PEDESTRIAN SAFETY.

The local business community circulated a parallel petition & got 25 signatures. Among these are: North Cambridge Laundromat; Cambridge House of Pizza; We Mean Business (convenience store); Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral (toy and hobby shop); United American Veterans; Knights of Columbus; George W. Spartichino, Attorney; Danahey Realty; Frank's Barber Shop; Frank's Steak House; George McCray Antique Shop; Henry J. Quinn Insurance Agency; and others. Business cares about losing parking spaces!

Attached are the residents' petition and the business community's petition. Both petitions seek to keep Harvey Street one-way, to preserve parking spaces, to protect pedestrian safety, to prevent traffic problems, and to preserve the integrity of the Trolley Square neighborhood. Please help us protect our neighborhood. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Marie C. Guzell

Marie C. Guzell
44 Harvey Street
Cambridge, MA 02140
876-5580

MCG

Enclosures: Residents' petition
Business community's petition

cc: Department of Public Works
Traffic & Parking Department
Community Development Department

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Consent Communication #17

1125

Communication was received from Marie Guzell, submitting petitions against making the first block of Harvey Street two way as proposed in redesign of upper Massachusetts Avenue.

In City Council February 23, 1998

Referred to City
Manager with request
for discussion at the
ongoing public
meetings in connection
with North
Massachusetts
Avenue Silver Project.
copy sent 2-25-98 mc