

MICHAEL G. HERING

81 PLAYSTEAD ROAD • MEDFORD • MASSACHUSETTS 02155

RECEIVED BY (617) 391-9981  
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CAMBRIDGE MA.

April 6, 1998

The Honorable Cambridge City Council  
City Manager's Office  
City Hall  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

To The Honorable Cambridge City Council:

I write to express my approval of the North Mass. Avenue Sewer Separation and Surface Enhancement project, and I ask that this letter be placed on the agenda of the next Council meeting relating. I believe that this project will serve to enhance Mass. Ave. and the surrounding community by providing a safer and more pleasant environment for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. This project is long overdue, and I look forward to a new and revitalized thoroughfare that will serve all users well.

I am a former resident of Cogswell Ave. in North Cambridge, having recently moved to West Medford. My regular commute takes me through the neighborhood, and I continue to shop in North Cambridge at some of my favorite stores including TAGS, Frameworks, China Fair, The Woodworker's Store, Cambridge Savings Bank, Bed & Bath, Blockbuster and more. I travel through and around North Cambridge by various modes, including foot, bicycle, car and subway.

Recently, I have heard some negative comments about the plan. Having attended two of the public meetings held at the Fitzgerald School, I can say that the majority of the public feels that the planners and engineers have done an excellent job of balancing the needs of different users, and have responded well to public input about the plan. In fact, I recently received a notice for the next public meeting which indicates that seven significant changes have been made to the plan as a result of comments from the last public meeting.

The plan improves North Mass. Ave. for everyone. Pedestrians will have nearly double the number of crosswalks, and the crosswalks will be shorter in length because of curb extensions. In addition, uncontrolled crosswalks (crosswalks without lights) will have large pedestrian "refuges" at the median. These refuges will be wide enough for a mother and baby carriage, or a small child with her bike, unlike the present medians. The narrowing of the roadway (from the curb extensions and refuge) should have a significant "traffic calming" effect, encouraging cars to travel at or below the speed limit rather than 15-20 MPH above the limit. The elimination of the median along certain parts of the roadway will have a similar traffic calming effect. In addition, the present sidewalk widths are maintained to accommodate pedestrian traffic.

Under the plan, cyclists will have continuous bike lanes for the length of Mass. Ave. Eventually, these lanes will be connected back to the current lanes in Central and Harvard Squares, providing nearly continuous lanes for the all of Mass. Ave. from the Charles River to the Arlington line. These lanes will enhance the safety of cyclists and decrease the conflict between motorists and cyclists. Ideally they will

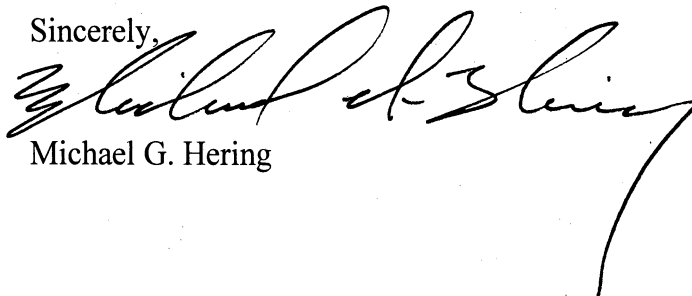
also encourage some motorists to use bicycles instead of automobiles, and thus decrease congestion and pollution. I recently had an opportunity to use the lanes on Mass. Ave. in Central Square and found them to be a great improvement over what was there before. The bike lanes will also encourage cyclists to use the roadway rather than the sidewalks, decreasing conflict between pedestrians and cyclists.

The plan is "motor vehicle neutral" in that it does not intend to either increase or decrease the motor vehicle carrying capacity of Mass. Ave., but the effect of traffic calming may be to actually allow more motor vehicles to use the roadway safely. The new plan makes U-turns on Mass. Ave. much easier, increasing legal U-turns from one to four. Parking on Mass. Ave. is maintained at approximately 90% of its present level, with spaces removed only where necessary to have new pedestrian crossings.

In sum, the plan has something for everyone, and it does an excellent job of balancing the sometimes competing interests of pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. For many years Mass. Ave. has been dominated by the automobile. Pedestrians and cyclists have been endangered by speeding cars, and speeding has been encouraged by the design of the roadway itself. Pedestrians (including drivers who have parked their cars on Mass. Ave.) have found it dangerous and difficult to cross Mass. Ave. because of the scarcity of crosswalks. The plan will bring Mass. Ave. back into balance. Ultimately, by improving the street scape, the plan will benefit all users of the thoroughfare, thereby benefiting merchants, residents and the community as a whole.

I ask that you give your support to the North Mass. Avenue Sewer Separation and Surface Enhancement project. Make Cambridge a better place for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael G. Hering", with a long, sweeping underline that extends below the printed name.

Michael G. Hering

Consent Communciation #2

5-257

A communication was received from  
Michael G. Hering, transmitting his  
approval of the North Mass. Avenue  
Sewer Separation and Surface Enhancement  
Project.

In City Council April 13, 1998

Referred to

7:00 pm. hearing