



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Traffic, Parking and Transportation
57 Inman Street,
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Susan E. Clippinger
Director

Administration	349-4700
Parking Violations	349-4705
Resident Parking	349-4701

March 20, 1997

TO: Robert Healy, City Manager

FROM: Susan E. Clippinger, Director

SUBJECT: Council Order #075 dated 2/24/97

RE: List of City's worst intersections/Cambridge Tab Article

1. Columbia and Bishop Allen Drive

Three year accident report shows 38 accidents from 3/1/94 to 3/30/97. This intersection is made more difficult by the many vehicles making turns at this location. Options for improvements will be presented to Area IV for consideration.

2. Volpe Center

There is a high volume of pedestrians who cross Broadway between the Volpe Center and the Marriott (whose lobby provides easy access to the T's Kendall Square Station).

The Department is designing a special treatment and warning system for converting this dangerous and illegal crossing to a safe and legal one.

3. Mass Ave. and Sheppard Street-Mass and Beech Street

By the fall, all these locations will be signed with delay green for one direction and advance green for the other.

4. Brookline St.

Improvements are part of the Cambridgeport study currently underway under the direction of Community Development.

5. Intersection is under the control of the MDC.

We are working with MIT, MDC and various City Departments to improve Mass. Ave. and Memorial Drive which will allow improvements to this intersection.

6. Wadsworth Street and Memorial Drive

This is an MDC intersection which experiences a lot of accidents. MIT, the City and the MDC are working on a plan that rebuilds the intersection to improve the ease of using it for cars, pedestrians and bicycles. This project is not yet funded, it is anticipated that state funding will be secured.

7. Mount Auburn Street from Brattle to Belmont St.
This section of Mt. Auburn Street was reconstructed several years ago. The roadway was made a uniform four lanes with new traffic signals at Aberdeen Ave., Homer and Belmont Streets. Permanent highly reflective pavement markings were also installed including international crosswalks.
8. First and Cambridge Street Walk Light
The walk at First and Cambridge street is exclusive on a push button. This summer, we will be putting this intersection and others in the area in a closed loop computer system which will allow us to control vehicular and pedestrian conflicts better.
9. Porter Square Intersection
The Porter Square area is being reviewed by the Transportation consultants working on the north Mass. Sewer separation job. Improvements will be designed and then implemented as part of the sewer work.
10. Quincy Street Intersection
There is also sewer work occurring at Quincy and Broadway. The City, working closely with Harvard, has proposed changes to improve the intersection, especially for pedestrians and bicycles. These changes will be implemented as part of the current sewer job in this area.
11. Green and Magazine St.
We are looking into installing a signal at this intersection. In the mean time, the stop sign situation has been improved.
12. Pearl St. and Mass. Ave.
The part of the Central Square improvements not yet completed will add a crosswalk and lane markings that will substantially improve the safety of this very well used pedestrian crossing.
13. Inman Square
We have changed the sequence of the signals in this intersection and have improved the safety and congestion. The timing has also been changed and is currently undergoing further change.
14. Memorial Drive intersections
The Metropolitan District Commission is proceeding with the Charles River Basin planning process. One component of the Charles River Basin Master Plan Scope of Services is a site analysis evaluation that "will focus on safe, convenient connections between adjacent land uses for pedestrians and bicycles as well as for vehicles". The City will seek to have the intersections of Memorial Drive at River and Western Ave. fully evaluated for safety of all users through the master planning process to ensure that appropriate improvements are recommended.
15. Alewife Brook Parkway Rotary
The Alewife Brook Rotary is being redesigned as part of a project for redesigning the Fresh Pond corridor. Substantial bicycle and pedestrian improvements are part of this joint City/MDC project. Community Development is the lead Department in implementing this project.

Last week the TAB invited readers to call and let us know what intersections they would include on the list that qualify as candidates for the "city's worst." The phones rang all week, and here are some of the nominees...



Columbia and Bishop Allen Drive

The worst intersection in Cambridge is the corner of Columbia and Bishop Allen Drive. There are so many accidents there... something should be done about that.

Volpe Center

I think the Cambridge TAB might want to be aware of the traffic problem in front of the Volpe Center, especially the U-turn that goes to the Marriott. Cars speed from that light to the next light. They don't stop.

'Chicken' phenomenon

It's not one particular intersection, but a phenomenon that I call "chicken." There are several places in Cambridge, busy intersections where you get the ability to turn left before oncoming traffic but you don't know it because it's not a green arrow, it's just a regular green light. This is the case at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Sheppard Street and at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Beech Street. And you're just playing chicken, because you think you can go left because the other cars that you think have a green haven't

flooded it yet. But actually, you have the green first. Why Cambridge cannot utilize a green arrow for these intersections — and I'm sure there are more than ones I just mentioned — is beyond me.

Stop the cars on Brookline Street!

Since I moved to Cambridge, I don't take my bicycle anymore because the cars go down so fast. When I first moved I was knocked off twice. *Brookline Street resident who recently moved from Newbury Street in Boston*

Wadsworth Street and Memorial Drive

The intersection at the corner of Wadsworth Street and Memorial Drive down by MIT and near Kendall Square. We have really terrific crashes there almost weekly — good weather or bad weather. People continue to violate the signs and make U-turns at bad intersections, which are forbidden. That's one of the worst ones.

Mass. Ave. and Memorial

One of the worst intersections is right where Mass. Ave. and Memorial Drive intersect at the bridge. The problem is that people coming over the bridge on Mass. Ave. from Boston are flying and when there's still a pedestrian — watch. They could care less. They're not going to stop; they'd just as soon run you down.

Impossible intersection

There are a lot of bad intersections, but the worst place to drive is Mt. Auburn Street from Brattle Street to Belmont Street. It's just impossible.

First and Cambridge streets

The worst intersection in the city is the intersection of First Street and Cambridge Street by Lechmere Station. The cars coming up First Street never have to stop. They're making a right onto McGrath Highway. The cars come whipping around off McGrath Highway and around to make a left onto First Street without ever stopping either. It's a terrible intersection.

Install a walk light in Porter Square

One of the fastest things to improve Porter Square is to install a walk light just to change timing on the light so one can cross the street without having to wait in the middle of the street for another light. That would certainly speed the flow of pedestrians and probably make life a little bit easier for all the traffic without pedestrians trying to jaywalk to try to catch a light and run across the street. It is probably one of the most dangerous intersections in the city.

Quincy Street intersections terrible

A couple of intersections I think are horrible are where Broadway crosses Quincy Street and where Cambridge Street crosses Quincy Street. I have to go through these intersections on my way to work. They're just terrible for pedestrians. The Cambridge Street intersection is incredibly clogged with traffic at rush hour. You have to wait a really long time for the light if you're a pedestrian, and when it finally changes in your favor, you have to contend with cars turning left off of Quincy Street onto Cambridge Street.

The other intersection at Broadway and Quincy, it seems like they're always doing some kind of work there. At this point they seem to have turned off the light completely as far as pedestrians go. So people end up waiting and waiting for the light. And finally they end up rushing into the street trying to cross against the light, which is extremely dangerous.

Anyway, I'm glad that this traffic calming work is being done, and I hope that more will be done in the future.

Green and Magazine streets

The worst intersection in Cambridge is not the biggest headache — but the biggest danger. It's in Central Square at the corner of Green Street and Magazine Street by the bus stop. There is only one stop sign and most drivers ignore it. There is a traffic light ahead and people see it and completely disregard the stop sign. I've seen cars blow through the sign with a school bus approaching with adults and children in the crosswalk. It's in spitting distance of the Cambridge Police Department headquarters who could collect some serious coin for violations. But better yet, a flashing red light would keep the intersection a lot safer.

Green Street and Magazine is life-threatening

Somebody will die at the corner of Green Street and Magazine walking across. Nobody stops — not buses, not cops, nobody.

Pearl Street and Mass. Ave.

The intersection of Pearl and Mass. Ave. is very heavily used by pedestrians. There have been several accidents there involving automobiles

and pedestrians. People routinely ignore state law requiring a stop at unlighted crosswalk took down the sign that was in the middle of the intersection and drivers of that and haven't it since the renovations of Square. Something should be done about that.

Inman Square

You'll find another bad spot in Cambridge, it's Inman Square to cross on Cambridge Street Hampshire — you're taking life in your hands.

Memorial Drive intersections need a 'walk cycle'

Two intersections that really concern me are the intersection of River and Memorial Drive and Western and Memorial Drive. Neither of which has any sort of pedestrian walk cycle in spite of high volume of recreational sidewalks in that area. The appears to be very slow to respond to complaints about the problem.

Alewife Brook Parkway rotary

My least favorite intersection is the rotary at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Alewife Brook Parkway. People rush into the rotary, rush out of the rotary. Nobody follows the traffic laws that's yield to traffic in the rotary. On the other hand, if you don't follow traffic laws, you can never get to where you're going.

Porter Square intersections

I think the intersection of Porter Square is so hazardous. I am deterred from doing shopping because of the anxiety involved



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

April 14, 1997

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item Number 10, regarding a list of the City's worst intersections, please find attached a report submitted by Susan Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/dls
attachment

Consent Agenda #2

S-214

Relative to Awaiting Report Item
Number Ten, regarding a list of the
City's worst intersections.

In City Council April 14, 1997

PLACED ON FILE