

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

TO: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

FROM: Susan E. Clippinger, Director
Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department *[Signature]*
[Signature]
Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

DATE: August 28, 2000

RE: Council Order #025, dated 7/31/00: Concord Avenue Bike Lanes

In response to the above referenced order regarding the bike lanes on Concord Avenue, we report the following:

BACKGROUND

In 1997, Concord Avenue between the Ground Round Rotary and Blanchard Road was repaved due to the poor condition of the pavement. In conjunction with this work, the lane configuration of Concord Avenue was changed. Bike lanes were added in each direction and the number of vehicular travel lanes was reduced from four to three: two eastbound and one westbound.

BICYCLE COUNTS

Bicycle counts have been conducted on Concord Avenue at Moulton Street to determine the number of cyclists using the bike lanes. Bicycle usage has increased since the bike lanes were installed. In June 1998, 21 cyclists used the Concord Avenue bike lanes in the peak hour. In May 1999, usage had increased to 27 cyclists in the peak hour.

The eastern terminus of the bike lane is at the Ground Round Rotary. The rotary is currently an extremely difficult location for cyclists. It has high volumes of traffic from Alewife Brook Parkway (Rt. 2), Fresh Pond Parkway and Concord Avenue. The Fresh Pond Parkway enhancement project, currently underway, will provide safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities from the Concord Avenue bike lanes through the Ground Round Rotary to Huron Avenue. Once the Fresh Pond Parkway project is completed, bicycle volumes on Concord Avenue are anticipated to increase.

The western terminus of the bike lane was at the Blanchard Road intersection. This summer the Town of Belmont installed bike lanes on their section of Concord Avenue, extending the bike lanes west to Belmont Town Center. This creates an important commuter and recreational connection and is expected to increase the number of cyclists using the Concord Avenue bike lanes.

TWO-WAY BIKE PATH ON THE FRESH POND RESERVATION

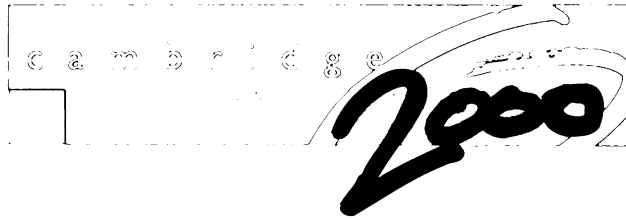
The option of a two-way bike path along Concord Avenue separated from the sidewalk has been evaluated. Removing the bike lanes from Concord Avenue would allow an additional travel lane to be installed on Concord Avenue. However, this would have several negative impacts on cyclists and on the Fresh Pond Reservation.

- ◆ The path would require the removal of undergrowth and existing trees in the reservation, including some specimen trees and an Olmstead grove of trees at the northeast corner of fairway 5. These currently provide a visual and acoustical screen for Fresh Pond Reservation from the Concord Avenue traffic.
- ◆ Cyclists travelling on the proposed path would have limited access to the businesses located along the north side of Concord Avenue.
- ◆ The path would likely come within 100' of Blacks Nook and would therefore require Conservation Commission approval because of the potential impacts to the bank and bordering vegetative wetland. Blacks Nook is a sensitive habitat area and the Stewardship Plan recommends a vegetated buffer adjacent to Concord Avenue.

TRAFFIC FLOW ON CONCORD AVENUE

In an effort to reduce congestion and queues on Concord Avenue, the City changed the timing of the signal at Blanchard Road in June 1999. The new signal timing gives more time to Concord Avenue. The delays and the backups on Concord Avenue have decreased as a result of the signal timing changes, but traffic flow improvements due to these changes are difficult to evaluate at this time because of the ongoing construction on Fresh Pond Parkway.

The Fresh Pond Parkway construction project is scheduled to be completed in the Spring of 2001. At that time, vehicular congestion associated with the construction will be reduced. Bicycle usage of the enhanced facilities is expected to increase, particularly with the improved connection to Belmont Center. City staff will continue monitoring the bicycle and vehicular use of Concord Avenue both during and after the construction period on Fresh Pond Parkway.



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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

September 11, 2000

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 00-55, regarding a report on the impact on traffic due to the Concord Avenue bicycle lanes and determine how to reduce traffic congestion caused by the bicycle lanes, received from Assistant City Manager for Community Development Beth Rubenstein and Traffic, Parking & Transportation Director Susan Clippinger.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment



2000 Things to Do in 2000

Consent Agenda #6

Relative to AW Rpt. #00-55,
regarding a report on the impact of
traffic due to the Concord Avenue
bicycle lanes and determine how to
reduce traffic congestion caused by
the bicycle lanes.

In City Council September 11, 2000

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