



City of Cambridge

COMM. REP. # 5

IN CITY COUNCIL

February 27, 1995

VICE MAYOR RUSSELL

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the City Solicitor with the view in mind of preparing an amendment to the Municipal Code banning sidewalk bicycling citywide.

In City Council February 27, 1995.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

D. Margaret Drury

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury,
City Clerk

Improving the Lot of Cambridge Pedestrians: The 3 most important things to do now

by Astrid Dodds 2/8/95

1. Pass a municipal ordinance banning sidewalk bicycling citywide.

If State law permits cities to do it (see attachment), it should be done now. Most Cambridge pedestrians feel it is long overdue. This ordinance is not "anti-bicyclist;" it is pro-pedestrian and it is pro-pedestrian in a city with one of the highest rates of walking and walking+public transit-use in the U.S. Yes, Cambridge should work to make travel safer for bicyclists, but not at pedestrians' expense. The ordinance should be drafted with public input. It should exempt children 12 and under as well as specific sidewalks deemed by a multi-modal committee to be irreplaceable connectors which are then posted accordingly.

2. Fund a fulltime pedestrian coordinator

whose job description can be fine-tuned by the municipal ped committee. Call it affirmative action for walkers in a city where 24% of residents already walk to work -- a figure few other U.S. cities can match. In a densely-populated city like ours where large numbers of people walk, bicycle and take the T, walking and bicycling *each* deserve a fulltime coordinator. There must be 100 city employees at work daily to ensure that life goes smoothly for motor vehicles and their drivers. A mere 1% of the \$12 million a year that the city collects annually from the storage and regulation of automobiles would fund a fulltime pedestrian coordinator who, with sufficient supporting staff and facilities, could also perform the ombudsman services that Cambridge T riders have needed for so long.

3. Inaugurate a municipal pedestrian committee

whose composition, agenda, schedule, and priorities are determined by a process in which the public participates. Even the most committed and hard-working municipal employees cannot do it all by themselves. ISTEA -- and soon the State Transportation Plan -- requires public participation in transportation planning from the ground up.

(See attached article, Surface Transportation Project *Progress* newsletter, 12/ 94-1/95)

Appendix B: Selected Massachusetts Bicycle Laws

Chapter 85, Section 11B

PUBLIC WAYS AND WORKS

85 § 11B

§ 11B. Bicycles; operation and equipment; regulations; federal product safety standards, effect; races; violations; penalties

Every person operating a bicycle upon a way, as defined in section one of chapter ninety, shall have the right to use all public ways in the commonwealth except limited access or express state highways where signs specifically prohibiting bicycles have been posted, and shall be subject to the traffic laws and regulations of the commonwealth and the special regulations contained in this section, except that: (1) the bicycle operator may keep to the right when passing a motor vehicle which is moving in the travel lane of the way, (2) the bicycle operator shall signal by either hand his intention to stop or turn, and (3) bicycles may be ridden on sidewalks outside business districts when necessary in the interest of safety, unless otherwise directed by local ordinance. A person operating a bicycle on the sidewalk shall yield the right of way to pedestrians and give an audible signal before overtaking and passing any pedestrian.

Operators of bicycles shall be subject to the following regulations:

- (1) The operator shall ride single file on any way except when passing.
- (2) The operator shall not ride other than upon or astride a permanent and regular seat attached to the bicycle. The operator shall not carry another person on said bicycle, except on a baby seat attached to the bicycle, provided that such seat is equipped with a harness to hold the person securely in the seat and that protection is provided against the feet of said person hitting the spokes of the wheel of the bicycle.
- (3) The operator shall give an audible warning whenever necessary to insure safe operation of the bicycle; provided, however, the use of a siren or whistle is prohibited.
- (4) The operator shall park his bicycle upon a way or a sidewalk in such a manner as not to obstruct vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
- (5) The operator shall not permit the bicycle to be drawn by any other moving vehicle. The operator shall not tow any other vehicle or person, except that bicycle trailers properly attached to the bicycle which allow for firm control and braking may be used.
- (6) The operator shall not carry any package, bundle or article except in or on a basket, rack, trailer or other device designed for such purposes. The operator shall keep at least one hand upon the handlebars at all times.
- (7) Every bicycle operated upon a way shall be equipped with a braking system to enable the operator to bring the bicycle traveling at a speed of fifteen miles per hour to a smooth, safe stop within thirty feet on a dry, clean, hard, level surface.
- (8) During the period from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise, the operator shall display to the front of his bicycle a lamp emitting a white light visible from a distance of at least five hundred feet, and to the rear of said bicycle either a lamp emitting a red light, or a red reflector visible for not less than six hundred feet when directly in front of lawful lower beams of headlamps on a motor vehicle. A generator powered lamp which emits light only when the bicycle is moving shall meet the requirements of this clause.
- (9) During the period from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise, the operator shall display on each pedal of his bicycle a reflector, or around each of his ankles reflective material visible from the front and rear for a distance of six hundred feet, and reflectors or reflective material, either on said bicycle or on the person of the operator, visible on each side for a distance of six hundred feet, when directly in front of lawful lower beams of headlamps of a motor vehicle. This clause shall not prohibit a bicycle or its operator to be equipped with lights or reflectors in addition to those required

FHWA/F A Interim Policy on Public Involvement

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves"—Thomas Jefferson

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Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña's Strategic Plan establishes the objective of putting people first in all of the Department's endeavors. Consistent with this objective, it is the policy of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to aggressively support proactive public involvement at all stages of planning and project development. State departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, and transportation providers are required to develop, with the public, effective involvement processes which are custom-tailored to local conditions. The performance standards for these proactive public involvement processes include early and continuous involvement; reasonable public availability of technical and other information; collaborative input on alternatives, evaluation criteria and mitigation needs; open public meetings where matters related to Federal-aid highway and transit programs are being considered; and open access to the decisionmaking process prior to closure.

To achieve these objectives, the FHWA and FTA commit to:

- ▶ Promoting an active role for the public in the development of transportation plans, programs and projects from the early stages of the planning process through detailed project development.
- ▶ Promoting the shared obligation of the public and decision makers to define goals and objectives for the State and/or metropolitan transportation system, to identify transportation and related problems, to develop alternatives to address the problems, and to

evaluate the alternatives on the basis of collaboratively identified criteria.

- ▶ Ensuring that the public is actively involved in the development of public involvement procedures themselves in ways that go beyond commenting on drafts.
- ▶ Strongly encouraging the State departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, and transportation providers to aggressively seek to identify and involve the affected and interested public, including those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems and facilities.
- ▶ Strongly encouraging planning and implementing agencies to use combinations of different public involvement techniques designed to meet the diverse needs of the general public.
- ▶ Sponsoring outreach, training, and technical assistance and providing information for Federal, State, regional, and local transportation agencies on effective public involvement procedures.
- ▶ Ensuring that statewide and metropolitan planning work programs provide for effective public involvement.
- ▶ Carefully evaluating public involvement processes and procedures to assess their success at meeting the performance requirements specified in the appropriate regulations during our joint certification reviews, metropolitan planning and conformity findings, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) approvals and project oversight.

Rodney E. Slater, Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

Gordon J. Linton, Administrator
Federal Transit Administration

City of Cambridge

The Environment Committee conducted a public hearing on Wednesday, February 8, 1995 beginning at 4:45 p.m. in the Ackermann Room, second floor, City Hall.

Councillor Francis H. Duehay, Chair of the above referenced Committee, convened the hearing and stated that the purpose of this date's proceedings was to initiate discussions on the topic of pedestrian safety in the City of Cambridge. Present at the hearing were: Vice Mayor Sheila T. Russell, Councillor Kathleen L. Born, Susan Everdell Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, Elizabeth Epstein, Director of the Environment Program, Steven L. White, Deputy Commissioner of Public Works, Lauren Preston, Deputy Traffic Director and John E. Flynn, Deputy City Clerk.

In beginning the discussion, Councillor Duehay stated that there exists a general feeling that the City Council should pay more attention to the issue of pedestrian safety. He noted that there exists no specific conflicts but general ones surrounding pedestrian/automobiles, pedestrian/joggers, pedestrian/rollerbladers, etc. He stated that he had witnessed several incidents in Porter Square, Inman Square, Central Square, Harvard Square and the Cambridge Common. He stated the need for greater coordination by multiple City departments and the need to formalize the City's goals and objectives in this area.

Vice Mayor Russell commented on a number of seniors complaints she has received with regards to this issue. These issues ranged from bicycles on the sidewalks to the timing of the Walk/Don't Walk pedestrian lights on major public ways. She noted the need to better educate the pedestrian public with regards to safe passage over the public way and the need for better enforcement of the bicycle rules and regulations.

At this time Councillor Duehay recognized Ms. Epstein for an overview of her department's efforts in this area. Ms. Epstein stated that the City has a pedestrian program in place. She noted that there exists a need to do better education and to achieve this she noted that the Environment Department is working closely with the Police regarding enforcement and with Traffic, Parking and Transportation and Public Works regarding facility management. As part of the education piece, she stated that the City recently published a map entitled "How to Get Around in Cambridge" (available to the public in a number of City departments) that identifies bicycle paths, recreational sites, "T" routes, etc. She further stated that the department is working cooperatively with universities such as MIT, Lesley and in the future with Harvard to

develop a comprehensive and coordinated bicycle strategy. She also spoke of a number of pedestrian access/safety measures that have been initiated in conjunction with infrastructure improvements being made in the City. She also stated that a pedestrian ad hoc committee has been formed and in the future months be formalized. Ms. Epstein also stated that the City is presently in the early stages of developing a pedestrian policy/facility management plan that will deal with crosswalks and signal timing.

Vice Mayor Russell inquired if a senior was on the ad hoc committee.

Ms. Epstein in response stated that membership was very informal at present and that a senior could be involved in a formal setting of a committee.

Vice Mayor Russell requested that this inter-departmental cooperative review a number of areas such as Concord Avenue to Alewife; Huron Avenue (near stores) and Appleton Street/Vassal Lane to name a few and make recommendations to improve safety.

Ms. Epstein responded in the affirmative and spoke of the plans for the 23 million dollars secured from the Commonwealth for improvements in the Alewife Parkway corridor and at present working with the MDC on design.

Mr. Preston was next to be recognized and spoke of his departments efforts in the areas of signal timing and channelization areas.

Councillor Duehay inquired of the ability to do a comprehensive program.

In response Mr. Preston stated that the department was trying to develop one by looking at intersections, developing appropriate crossing speeds, etc.

Councillor Duehay inquired of the timing of the policy to be made public.

In response Ms. Epstein stated that the City is presently at the first draft stage, a revised draft would follow in two months and then a period of public comment before it becomes final.

Councillor Born inquired if this policy formulation was impeding any quick fix approach such as splashy pedestrian crosswalk markings, enforcement of bicycle regulations or sidewalk - snow and ice removal.

Ms. Epstein responded in the negative.

Councillor Duehay inquired of the composition of the committee working on the draft.

Ms. Epstein stated that City personnel made up the committee.

Ms. Clippinger stated to the committee that pedestrian safety was a top priority and that she did not intend to wait until the final draft is finalized. She noted that in the long-term it is beneficial for the City to do this plan so as not to always be placed in a reactive mode. She also stated that the department is coordinating its efforts with Public Works regarding pavement markings.

Councillor Duehay inquired of the progress being made with the walk/don't walk signals.

In response Ms. Clippinger stated that the signal maintenance is under contract and that the department is working closing with the contractor.

Councillor Born inquired if the signals are adjusted to come on immediately.

In response Ms. Clippinger stated that it depends on the intersection with regards to balance flow, congestion, etc. She stated that this issue will take a long time to review and address.

Mr. White stated that Public Works favors both the long term plan as well as short term adjustments. He noted that standards need to be developed on a neighborhood basis. He called the Follen Street a good example of a well coordinated project. He stated the need to change pedestrian behavior. He also stated that the PWD snow annual was a first attempt at changing behaviors.

Councillor Duehay inquired if Public Works has been involved in a coordinated sidewalk usage policy.

Mr. White responded in the affirmative but at present it is not fully developed. He noted that the ADA will determine a lot.

At this time the Committee heard from members of the assembled public.

Ms. Fran Wirta, 248 Franklin Street, stated that pedestrian traffic safety is a top priority of the Central Square Association. She identified the following concerns:

- 1) Timing of signal at Essex Street
- 2) Placement of planters at Temple Street
- 3) Inman Street improvement
- 4) Prospect Street improvement

Ms. Geneva Malenfant, 75 Henry Street, commented on the need of professional advice to be given in conjunction with the formulation of Central Square

Plan on the issue of pedestrian safety. What effects - expanded sidewalks, sidewalk furniture on pedestrian safety.

Ms. Louise Olsen, 49 Hancock Street, commented on the lack of enforcement of the applicable traffic and bicycle regulations. She spoke of the need to create an atmosphere where if you run a light you get a ticket.

Vice Mayor Russell stated that the Police do respond and do enforce.

Councillor Sullivan spoke of the Police Department Selective Enforcement Unit and because of the hours of operation it appears not to functional but it is under negotiation. He also expressed hope that the ADA Law has been considered in the Central Square Plan.

Mr. Eric Pfeufer, 9 Sycamore Street, called the Central Square area an incredible opportunity to focus upon pedestrian activity. He spoke of his frustration that the issue has not been discussed in the Central Square Committee. He stated that people enjoy urban public space and that Massachusetts Avenue from River Street to Porter Square provides a unique opportunity.

Ms. Vicky Casana, 87 River Street, presented her survey results done last year that illustrated frustration with bicycles on sidewalks, enforcement of other bicycle rules, lack of shoveling snow from both city and residential properties and poorly markers crosswalks.

Ms. Astrid Dodds, 73 Wendell Street, spoke of her experience in working with these pedestrian issues and can not understand why the same problems come up year after year. She stated that the City is trying but not succeeding. She noted that the pedestrian ad hoc committee has not met since August, 1994. She expressed her criticism of the PWD snow manual and of the Environmental Department Map. She provided the Committee with a proposal (copy attached).

Vice Mayor Russell made the following motion:

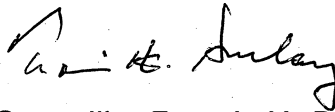
ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the City Solicitor with the view in mind of preparing an amendment to the Municipal Code banning sidewalk bicycling citywide.

On a voice vote the motion carried.

Mr. Charles Bahne, 244 Concord Avenue, stated that enforcement is a top priority. He noted that vehicles are running red lights. He was critical of the hours of operation of the selective enforcement unit. He stated that all intersections need improvement and the traffic signals need to be better maintained.

The hearing was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

For the Committee

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Francis H. Duehay", written in a cursive style.

Councillor Francis H. Duehay, Chair

5.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

S-72

Environment Committee Report for a
hearing held on February 8, 1995
regarding pedestrian safety in the
City.

In City Council,

February 27, 1995

Report accepted
Order adopted