

Ms. Seiderman indicated that Community Development staff researched European and American models in developing the current bike lanes and in exploring new models (**Attachment A**, September 9, 2002 Report of Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager for Community Development on European-style bike lanes). First, regarding the European models, she described different types of bike lanes, or "cycle tracks", with a primary focus on Germany, Denmark and Holland. Cycle tracks are different from the lanes on streets or separate bike paths, such as old railbeds. Cycle tracks separate bike riders as far as possible from traffic; they are usually graded up or down from street levels, and marked or otherwise distinguished from the street and sidewalk, although some are located in streets. Ms. Seiderman also reviewed the pros and cons of these designs. They have the advantages of creating more separation from traffic for bicyclists, preventing cars from driving in the tracks, which are too narrow for cars, and reducing the risk of dooring by allowing only the passenger side of cars to open onto the tracks. According to Ms. Seiderman, a big factor in the advantages of bike tracks in Europe is the fact that Europeans are better educated about bike safety and rules. The primary disadvantage and risk of bike tracks she identified for Cambridge: surprise at intersections and driveways, and resultant accidents, occur where there is no public education and experience with how these tracks work. In those places, motorists and pedestrians will encounter bikes where they do not expect them. However, according to Ms. Seiderman, if there are clear rules about travel lanes, there is a better chance of success with tracks. Another disadvantage of cycle tracks is faster bike traffic, and this increased speed creates greater risk for pedestrians.

Ms. Seiderman stated that the city plans to be cautious in redesigning bike paths. According to Ms. Seiderman, the city plans to run an experiment with bike tracks. Taking advantage of the reconstruction of Vassar Street, with MIT's cooperation, the city will create a bike track using Dutch and Danish standards; because there is only one intersection on the street where bikes will cross pedestrian paths, the risk of collisions will be minimized.

Regarding the issue of "dooring," Ms. Seiderman stated that this has become a high-visibility issue because of the death of bicyclist Dana Laird in Central Square earlier this year and is in the forefront of the city's efforts to improve safety for bikes. At the same time, she emphasized that the city has to focus on the broad picture of street and bike safety and to understand what the most serious issues are. She noted that drivers' education is lacking in terms of bike presence on the street. Educating drivers to watch for bikes is a particular interest of the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department. According to Ms. Seiderman, the most serious accidents occur when cars turn without seeing bikers and hit them. Dooring is not usually fatal. She identified more markings and more safety education as two ways of preventing fatalities. Her department is aware of research and experience in the U.S. and abroad on these issues and this information on safety improvements has been used in the city's designs. Over the next few months, Cambridge will run a study on Hampshire Street to determine how to improve safety for cars and bikes. The study will include videotaping to identify traffic patterns, as well as education and outreach to drivers and bikers. Ms. Seiderman noted that statistics show that bike lanes increase safety.

Ms. Seiderman suggested several possibilities to prevent dooring: using the process for annual parking permits as an opportunity for educating drivers, a safety campaign using decals, posters, the web and flyers, mailings to motorists, use of variable message boards for reminders such as night lights for bikes, and efforts to change the state law to require motorists to check for bikes before opening doors.

Vice Mayor Davis then introduced Superintendent DeGou to speak about enforcement issues.

Superintendent DeGou began by describing his observations on a 500-yard walk from the Post Office to City Hall in Central Square: bikers traveling in the wrong direction and almost getting hit, no helmets, no illumination, and running red lights---a situation of incredible danger. He speculated that there might be an influx of new people in the city who are not familiar with the rules of the road here. He considers education vital, since enforcement alone may not solve the problems. According to Superintendent DeGou, one of the most serious problems is double parking in bike lanes, which is endless, since people want to make quick trips into stores. While he can try to assign someone at designated spots to move traffic, his experience is that even after police issue tickets and warnings, the problem continues to occur.

Councillor Murphy thanked everyone present for attending. He identified different components of the efforts to improve traffic safety: design, enforcement and education. Regarding design, Councillor Murphy recommends looking at other communities for ideas, while realizing that it may be difficult to apply some ideas because of the Cambridge's age and layout; the city needs to do its best in the circumstances present. For this, real-life study of the situation is important. Regarding enforcement, Councillor Murphy emphasized the need for meaningful fines, changes in state law and serious penalties for violations. On the issue of education and behavior modification, Councillor Murphy referred to Rozann Kraus' ideas about an intensive education campaign for all street users, with sanctions as a fall back. According to Councillor Murphy, people need to understand the repercussions of their behavior, for example, that double parking can create a risk to the safety of other street users.

Vice Mayor Davis pointed out that Councillor Murphy had basically outlined the 4 "E's" of travel safety: education, engineering, enforcement and encouragement.

Ms. Lavoie raised the issue of unsafe biker conduct. She commented that, although bikers are subject to the same rules as other vehicles on the street, they often violate them by running red lights and blocking crosswalks. In her experience trying to cross Mass. Ave. in Central Square, she is almost inevitably cut off by bikers running red lights. She has checked with Jeff Parenti at Traffic and Parking on whether bikers might have a green light, when a walk sign is on; he informed her that if the walk sign is lit, traffic has a red light. Ms. Lavoie also raised concerns about the ability of people with poor vision or other handicaps to cross streets safely since a collision with a bike can

cause serious injuries. Her feeling is that there are too many inconsiderate bikers on the streets.

Mr. Nesbitt remarked that, as he was biking to the meeting, he was given the solution to the street safety problem by an SUV driver who yelled at him “get a car”. He asked Superintendent DeGou how many citations were issued to drivers for various violations: double parking, no lights and parking away from the curbs. According to Mr. Nesbitt, double parking is an obvious problem, but the hidden dangers from the other infractions above are even worse. Superintendent DeGou did not have statistics on these.

Mr. Nesbitt stated that there can be significant improvements in safety, for example, with lights. Front lights on bikes are particularly important for visibility. Regarding bike tracks, he has lived in places with them and points out that they introduce conflicts at intersections, where bikes, pedestrians and cars meet at different rates of speed. Mr. Nesbitt does not think that tracks will help in Cambridge but that putting lights on bikes will, and that people will follow the leader on safety measures.

Mr. Rogers described his experience biking at night in France without lights; the police stopped him and required him to walk. He doubts that there have been any citations for no lights on bikes in Cambridge.

Mr. Levendusky stated that he has spent three years riding bikes, including in the city. He was hit by a car on a turn a month ago; in his experience, colliding with cars on turns is a more common problem than dooring. Bike tracks would only increase this type of accident by hiding bikers behind cars. Mr. Levendusky believes it would be safer to move the bike lanes further away from car lanes. Citing three bike fatalities in Boston and Cambridge this summer, he stated that what is needed is a concerted effort to educate motorists, publicity about accidents and enforcement of rules. His experience is that police are unsympathetic about bike accidents that are not dramatic. Mr. Levendusky also believes that many accidents involving bikes and cars are unreported. He urged the city to encourage people to report accidents, maybe through a campaign and heightened enforcement by the bike police; this could include undercover police. He has found many motorists to be gracious, but aggression from motorists is commonplace; they don't seem to understand how vulnerable bikers are and they misjudge the speed of bikes, which can move very fast. Mr. Levendusky pointed out that, as car and bike traffic increase, there will be more incidents. If the city does not improve enforcement, there will be more tragedies.

Superintendent DeGou heads the police bike unit, in addition to other responsibilities. While patrolling on his bike, he has been subject to rude behavior and agrees with Mr. Levendusky about the “me first” mentality that travelers have. He stated that the police are interested in more enforcement; he emphasized the importance of education as well. He stated that he takes bike/car accidents seriously and will investigate any reports. In response to a question from Ms. Lavoie about the police response if a biker hits a pedestrian, Superintendent DeGou stated that it should be reported for investigation and will be treated as an assault. Although there are difficulties

in identifying bikes or riders, Superintendent DeGou is also in charge of the police investigative division and can apply its resources to bike accidents. Ms. Seiderman also suggested that people report endangerment by motorists on the city's website. Superintendent DeGou pointed out that bikes and cars are subject to the same \$20 fine for running red lights.

Mr. Halle stated that the death of bicyclist Dana Laird in Central Square this summer raises issues of the need to focus on people's safety and to understand people's fears. He has been working with city officials to address these issues. He described the police bike patrols which ride 50 miles a day, which is important to understand the community issues. The patrols primarily enforce rules against bikers. Mr. Halle wants to expand their role to enforce the rules of the road with all players, so that the maxim of "same roads, same rules" applies. He admits that this is not an easy problem to solve, complicated by the lack of licensing and education for bikers, different backgrounds and attitudes towards biking, and the transience of the Cambridge community. In response to Councillor Simmons' interest in the European model of bike tracks, Mr. Halle stated that the members of the city's Bike Committee disagree among themselves about shared or separate facilities for bikers. Mr. Halle reiterated several suggestions for improvements: lights for bikers, more enforcement to encourage law-abiding behavior, and a study of real traffic behavior on Hampshire Street. According to Mr. Halle, the fact that there are so few bike/car accidents is fortunate, but that there is so little reporting is unfortunate. He believes that there is not enough data on the problem, and that there need to be more state efforts and education for everyone who uses the streets, perhaps through agencies such as the school department. Mr. Halle noted that after the biker's death in Central Square this summer, the Bike Committee wrote to the police asking for more enforcement, and observed more police efforts in the square. He also pointed to taxi behavior as another safety issue and stated that the police liaison spoke to cabbies about this.

Ms. Rasmussen stated that the Community Development Department plans to promote non-car use in a campaign in May 2003, and that, as part of this effort, she commits to work with the Bike and Pedestrian Committees and with city departments to focus on travel safety. According to Ms. Rasmussen, education is important but difficult, since people are given so much information to deal with. She will try to learn from other places what has been effective for them. She wants to ensure that the impact of the campaign is related to the effort; she has found it hard to get media coverage for public service, although this is the best way to reach people.

Mr. White considers Cambridge a great city, with sophisticated riders, a public and city officials who are concerned about safety, and the resources to address problems. Mr. White is amazed that people ride bikes without lights and that the bikes don't come equipped with such safety features. He suggests working with local bike schools and/or public officials to require safety features such as lights on bikes. Vice Mayor Davis remarked that Police Commissioner Watson is also interested in ways to require safety equipment as standard features on bikes. Regarding "dooring", Mr. White stated that it is nervewracking to anticipate open doors when biking in the street. On 60-foot wide

streets, two bike lanes, two or four car lanes, and two lanes for parking make for very congested conditions; he believes that something has to go. On the premise that it's better to have one safe bike lane rather than two unsafe ones, he recommends redesigning streets to run one way and to include one wide bike lane, two travel lanes, and a parking lane. Mr. White also urged more enforcement against double parking and running red lights; he believes this is important to get the message to drivers that lawlessness will not be tolerated. Finally, he congratulated everyone for taking steps in the right direction on this issue.

Ms. Kraus thanked the city for its efforts. Speaking as a hard-core biker, she stated that there isn't a day without close calls when she is almost hurt. She also emphasized the importance of using the tragedy of Dana Laird's death this summer to improve the situation. Ms. Kraus' son was injured by a driver who failed to stop; for years she has been involved in efforts to improve the situation, without seeing changes implemented. Ms. Kraus' perspective is that the city should not wait any longer; it has the resources, intelligence and ability to educate people and needs to use the resources it has now. Instead of relying exclusively on public efforts, Ms. Kraus proposes a six-week project of education and enforcement using the following:

- enhanced current resources, such as police
- school department early "travel education" throughout the city
- Chamber of Commerce
- students
- neighborhood committees
- warnings of serious fines and penalties

Mr. Kraus has studied the ways to change behavior and recommends this process as a way of "saturation in finite time." She envisions this project as a model for the state and beyond.

Vice Mayor Davis noted that Cambridge Cable TV would be airing panel discussions with members of the community and public officials on bike safety on October 29 and November 3.

Mr. Hamman stated that bike and pedestrian safety are issues for the city and the state. Despite conflicts, he believes that we are all in the same boat of improving non-vehicular travel safety. According to Mr. Hamman, House Bill 2101 of last year, which concerns bike safety, will be revised and reintroduced in the state legislature this year. On a personal note, Mr. Hamman recounted how, on a 12-day biking trip in France, only one car honked at him and that was to say hello.

Vice Mayor Davis described a recent ride on a public bus on which the driver harassed a biker off the road. She reported this driver to the agency and urged other people to report dangerous conduct.

Mr. Tull was excited about being on the same page with other people on the issue of bike safety. Two years ago, he was injured by a car which was turning in traffic; because he was a new father then, he was particularly scared by his vulnerability. As he sees it, the main challenge for a biker is to be both legal and safe. In his experience, a legal biker is not necessarily a safe one. While he looks out for pedestrians, he actively breaks the law now in order to avoid busses and cars. He received a warning recently but still thinks it can be necessary to break the law for safety. Mr. Tull challenges the notion of more education as key. His opinion is that education alone will not be effective, that it is utopian to hope that everyone will be law-abiding. His own approach to bike safety is one that has not been mentioned: attention to immediate interests. Because he feels that police are not very concerned about most bike accidents, he also wonders if a separate phone line to report them would be useful. Based on his work in international dispute resolution, Mr. Tull suggested that option generation is critical, before focusing on solutions. Vice Mayor Davis exercised her prerogative as chair to urge Mr. Tull to obey the rules of the road, and reminded him that running red lights contributes to the tone of danger on the street. Mr. Tull responded that, when he has to make a quick decision on the street, he distinguishes between safety and stupidity and will do what he has to to be safe.

Mr. Sylvester offered his opinion that enforcement is on-the-spot education. Referring to the statistics in the October 21, 2002 report from Police Commissioner Watson on enforcement efforts against double-parking in bike lanes (**Attachment B**), Mr. Sylvester stated that it was discouraging to see how little enforcement there was. For example, he read the statistics to indicate that there were an average of seven bike violations per day in August 2002; warnings only were issued in over 70 percent of the incidents, and from January through September 2002, there were only 1.2 fines per day.

Mr. Moot asked several questions. First, he wanted an explanation of the different patterns in crosswalks and stated that both pedestrians and drivers need to know what they mean. His opinion is that the state needs some uniformity on crosswalk markings; on a related issue, he stated that video surveillance of cars running red lights would be useful in improving safety. In response, Ms. Clippinger, Director of the Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department, stated that what's important at crosswalks is the traffic signal. Pedestrians are only supposed to cross on the "walk" signal; if there is no signal, cars are required to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk. Different municipalities have experimented with different kinds of markings to identify the crosswalks, but all of the different street markings mean the same thing—they simply mark the crosswalk. Vice Mayor Davis confirmed that there are different costs to different kinds of road paint, which also explains some of the differences. Ms. Clippinger stated that Cambridge has been using zebra bars with plastic-coated paint to increase visibility and that this project doubled the pavement marking budget two years ago. Secondly, Mr. Moot asked if helmets were required for bike riders. Councillor Murphy stated that he had been involved in the issue of bike helmets when he worked in the State House, and that the legislature had only required helmets for bike riders twelve years of age and under. Next, Mr. Moot inquired if there were laws requiring bikers to warn pedestrians when they were about to pass; according to Mr. Moot, speeding bikes

routinely zip by pedestrians on the river with no warning. Vice Mayor Davis stated that there are rules requiring a warning but that they are not followed. Finally, Mr. Moot inquired about the rules covering bikes on sidewalks; he said that he is unclear about these rules.

Ms. Dodds stated that she was a member of the city's Pedestrian Committee for five years. Based on her experience, it takes 15 years for good ideas to materialize. Noting that this is the sixth year of the combined Bicycle and Pedestrian committees, she said that the city's policy on bike and pedestrian safety is not constructive or effective. According to Ms. Dodds, there is a lack of consistency, so that people do not know what's expected and this makes enforcement impossible. She is not aware of any enforcement against bikes on sidewalks north of Porter Square. Illustrating the problems, she recounted a recent incident where a bike, a few inches away, sped by her on the sidewalk, and then almost collided with a car exiting a parking lot. Her observation is that the running of red lights is also on the increase. Ms. Dodds states that, since pedestrians generally have 17 seconds to cross a street on a walk light, they can lose time trying to avoid bikes that are running red lights and then find themselves in danger when the light changes. Referring to Mr. Halle's statement that it was important to understand people's fears, Ms. Dodds stated that the perils on the sidewalks from bikers are real, not imagined. She noted that there have been many injuries, some fatal, from collisions between pedestrians and bikes. According to Ms. Dodds, the "big bad wolf" is not just cars; bikers have wheels and speed, which make them dangerous.

Ms. Dodds wants more red light enforcement. She also seconded many of the suggestions from other speakers, including making lights part of the purchase of bikes, visible identification on bikes, and a distribution of lights to increase visibility and prevent accidents such as "dooring." Right now, pedestrians have no way to identify bikers who injure them. Ms. Dodds believes that since bikes are vehicles under state law, they should have identification.

Mr. Loutzenheiser made the following suggestions:

- On-the-road, in-your-face education with bright yellow "yield to pedestrians" signs and possibly signs about other dangers
- Recognizing that streets are designed for cars and sidewalks for pedestrians, and that bikes as a third category of transportation have unique needs

Vice Mayor Davis thanked everyone for attending, and remarked that the meeting produced a lot of food for thought. Councillor Murphy stated that it was a testament to the city that it was having these conversations and that it must not lose the momentum for change from the death of Dana Laird this summer. Councillor Murphy urged the city to work on specific legislation for increased penalties and other changes. He looks forward to the Hampshire Street data and wants to make the city a safer place for everyone.

Vice Mayor Davis outlined the next steps on the issue, and the list of specific suggestions for action:

- Include bike safety in the city's "Go Green" month education
- Intensive education campaign for bike safety
- Legislation to require safety equipment on bikes
- Set and enforce appropriate fines for double parking
- Include bike and pedestrian issues in youth driver education
- Include bike classes in school physical education
- Encourage reporting and recording of bike and pedestrian accidents and make sure that city personnel are knowledgeable about procedures
- City research about safe bike lanes
- Follow up with the state caucus on bike and pedestrian safety issues
- Investigate how to license bikes

Vice-Mayor Davis thanked everyone for attending. She also entered eight letters and e-mails she had received about bike safety into the record of the meeting:

- **Attachment C**, "A 200-pound slab of cycling arrogance", a Commentary by Katherine A. Powers
- **Attachment D**, October 7, 2002 Letter from Ken Field
- **Attachment E**, October 7, 2002 e-mail from Walter Willett
- **Attachment F**, October 8, 2002 Letter from Bryce Nesbitt and Ilil Carni
- **Attachment G**, October 8, 2002 e-mail from Wade T. Smith
- **Attachment H**, October 9, 2002 e-mail from Jesse Gordon
- **Attachment I**, October 25, 2002 e-mail from Bryce Nesbitt
- **Attachment J**, October 28, 2002 e-mail from Gail Roberts

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 P.M.

For the Committee,

  
Vice Mayor Henrietta Davis, Chair



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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

*Robert W. Healy, City Manager*

*Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager*

September 9, 2002

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item No. 02-68, regarding a report on the possibility of changing to bicycle routes located between the sidewalk and parked cars, in the European model, Assistant City Manager for Community Development Beth Rubenstein reports the following:

**Background**

In some European countries, standard bicycle facilities include cycle "tracks," which are essentially grade-separated bicycle lanes, also known as "raised bike lanes." These are usually located between the street and the sidewalk, or between the parking lane and the sidewalk. This type of facility is primarily found in The Netherlands and Denmark. The tracks are one-way facilities on each side of the street and are clearly distinct from the sidewalk, with different paving materials, and an additional curb between the cycle track and the sidewalk. These countries do also use on-street bicycle lanes as a type of bicycle facility. Germany also uses a grade-separated bike facility, although often it is a marked travel path essentially on the sidewalk. While a cycle track is not the standard for bicycle facility design in the US, there are some examples, most notably in Oregon.

**Advantages and disadvantages**

Cycle tracks incorporate the convenience of riding on the street with the psychological separation of a barrier. They also have the advantages that motorists are not likely to drive or park in the bike area; novice bicyclists are more likely to ride in the cycle track, leaving the sidewalk for pedestrians; and there is potential for minimizing the likelihood of a "dooring" occurring, since most places drivers will park on the right hand side of the road and exit on the street side. However, since passengers will also be exiting vehicles, there needs to be additional space between the parked cars and the cyclists for them to be away from the car door zone. This usually means that the overall width needed to provide a cycle track is greater than that for an on-street bike lane.

Although there are advantages to the lanes, there are disadvantages to be considered as well. The most significant one involves safety, conspicuity and expectations of behavior. Motorists are not expecting to see cyclists emerge from behind parked cars and won't be looking for them. This is of particular danger at driveways and intersections; the danger is greater to the cyclist than to the pedestrian because of cyclists' higher speeds and the inability of the cyclist to stop in the same way as a pedestrian. Most major roadways in Cambridge have many cross streets, where motor vehicle traffic will be turning and not expecting to have cyclists emerging from the sidewalk area.

In contrast, on-street bicycle lanes put cyclists in the same place where they would be on a street without bicycle lanes. With greater expectations of where cyclists will be, there is less likelihood of a collision.

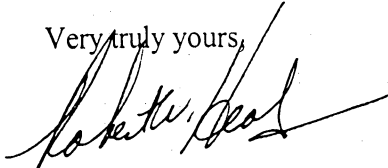
#### **Financial costs**

Constructing cycle tracks require significant expenditure. This is because curbs need to be moved, and a new drainage system put in place to deal with drainage on the cycle track itself. In addition, the travel lanes and tracks must be paved separately. There are also additional maintenance costs required for cleaning and snow clearance; these would need to be done by different equipment than is used for the streets (would be similar to those used on sidewalks).

#### **Cycle tracks in Cambridge**

Although the safety and financial concerns about cycle tracks suggest limited applicability, there are circumstances where the cycle track may be safe and appropriate. For a cycle track to work, there needs to be good visibility and limited cross-traffic. This means few or no side streets or driveways, which is where the conflicts occur. With these considerations in mind, the City has agreed to the construction of this type of facility on Vassar Street. MIT has designed and will construct and maintain this facility; the first section between Massachusetts Avenue and Main Street is expected to be completed by the spring of 2003. The design was based on Danish and Dutch technical standards has been thoroughly reviewed by the relevant city departments and by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committees. The design includes some traffic calming devices as well as special signing and pavement markings to call attention to the special facility. Vassar Street will enable us to evaluate the potential for the cycle track design in other locations in the city.

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

RWH/mec



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

*Robert W. Healy, City Manager*

*Richard C. Rosst, Deputy City Manager*

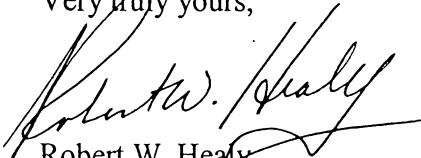
October 21, 2002

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item No. 02-90, regarding data on enforcement of double-parking in bicycle lanes across the City, Police Commissioner Ronnie Watson reports the following:

Enclosed you will find a report of the Police Department's enforcement effort regarding double-parking in the bicycle lanes across the City. The report defines the locations of bike violations issued and types of violations. As a result of increased incidents involving pedestrian and bicycle operators in bike lanes, there has been increased enforcement regarding bicycle lane violations by double parked vehicles. The Police and Traffic, Parking & Transportation Departments have issued a total of 1,417 violations for double-parked vehicles throughout the City since January 2002. Directed patrols were assigned to combat the identified problem areas. Since August 16, 2002, over 189 parking tickets were issued as a result of double parking in bicycle lanes. Be advised that citations are not issued to violators of double-parking in bicycle lanes. Violators are issued a parking ticket because it is not a moving violation. In addition, the Department has communicated with the MBTA to insist that bus operators are advised of the importance of pulling into the bus lane for picking up passengers. Also, the Hackney Officer is advising all taxi drivers to adhere to the same guidelines with reference to taxi stands.

Very truly yours,

  
Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

RWH/mec  
Attachment

Below is a breakdown of the bike violations issued from 1/1/02 to 9/30/02:

Month	Number
January	153
February	125
March	125
April	132
May	217
June	160
July	150
August	227
September	203

\*\*Below are the areas of the city where violators were cited.

Location	# Total 2002
Harvard Sq.	295
Central Sq.	794
Inman Sq.	13
Huron Village	3
Massachusetts Ave	133
Other	254

\*\*Other violation could be helmet, wrong direction, no headlight etc.

Infraction	# Total 2002
Sidewalk	169
Red Light	928
Other	395

Fine/Warn	# Total 2002
Fine	428
Warn	1064

**\*\* Amount of violations issued by sections of the department**

Assignment	# Total 2002
Bicycle Patrol Unit	1445
Day Patrol	38
Night Patrol	9

**\*\*List of cities where violators reside.**

Address	# Total 2002
Cambridge	774
Boston	213
Somerville	262
Other	243

## A 200-pound slab of cycling arrogance

I'll tell what has gone wrong in this city and that is people riding their bicycles on the sidewalks as if they were the Queen of Sheba. If they did it in

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### COMMENTARY

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KATHERINE A. POWERS

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a hang-dog manner it would be one thing; but no.

One recent evening I was walking down Prospect Street, on the sidewalk, from Mass. Avenue toward Harvard Street, and saw, half a block or so ahead, a bicycle and its rider barreling down the sidewalk toward me, other pedestrians scurrying out of its way as if they were the scum of the earth and had rights to nothing, not even the air they breathed — and something in-

side me said: Nope.

I held my ground and, as I had just come level with a little tree, the cyclist, a strapping individual with a great big helmet on his head and an English accent (as it turned out), had the choice of hitting me, hitting the tree or stopping. He stopped. I stopped. He wagged his front wheel at me in a get-out-of-the-way manner. I said, "Get off the sidewalk." His head reared back in something that looked like outraged astonishment. "What?" I told him again, referring to him as "buster," and an exchange of ideas occurred. His point was that it was dangerous to ride in the street and that I was out of my mind. My point was that pedestrians have the right to the sidewalk and that he was a pig.

Finally he sidled past. I, once

more (how many times?), directed him to the street, to which he replied over his hammy shoulder, as if he were the noblest thing in all creation: "I care too much about my life!" You will probably think I ran after him and struck him with a heavy stick or pushed him off his bicycle and ground my heel in his face. I did not. This is a civilized country, or should be, and would be if cyclists were kept off the sidewalks. What about old people? Many of them are unwilling to hold their ground in the face of a 200-pound slab of arrogance dressed like a gladiator bearing down on them at 10-miles-an-hour. What is to be done, is what I'd like to know.

*Katherine A. Powers is a resident of Cambridge.*

**Ken Field**

108 Pleasant Street #3

Cambridge, MA 02139-4452 U.S.A.

October 7, 2002

Rep. Tim Toomey, House Chair  
Committee on Public Safety  
Massachusetts Statehouse Room 39  
Boston, MA 02133  
617-722-2215 (fax)

Dear Rep. Toomey,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit these comments for your October 15th Public Hearing on Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety, which I am unable to attend in person. I have been an area resident for over twenty years, during which time I have been an active pedestrian, bicyclist, and driver.

Your continued support for bicycling and other safe transportation alternatives is greatly appreciated. As you know, encouraging safe bicycling benefits bicyclists, pedestrians, and drivers alike by:

- 1) improving the physical fitness of community members, thereby decreasing public health expenditures;
- 2) decreasing the amount of automobile traffic, thereby freeing roadway and parking resources for those who must travel by car; and
- 3) improving air quality by reducing the number of cars generating exhaust fumes.

One proven way to encourage safe bicycling is for communities to provide bicycle lanes where road widths allow. Bike lanes have been shown to increase the overall safety level of a complex mix of roadway users, including pedestrians. Studies show that wrong-way bicycling is far less common on roads with bike lanes, and that bicyclists are less likely to endanger themselves and pedestrians by riding on the sidewalk when bike lanes are present. Bike lanes also provide a visual reminder to car drivers and pedestrians that bikes might be present.

A significant danger for bicyclists is that of car doors opening suddenly in their path. We are painfully aware that a young woman was recently killed in Cambridge as the result of such an incident. Some people have irresponsibly claimed that bike lanes are the cause of this danger, saying that they encourage biking in the "dooring" zone. But as we all know from our experience as bicyclists and drivers, bicyclists tend to ride in this part of the

voice: 617-491-1917 • fax: 617-492-1970

fieldk@att.net

<http://fieldk.home.att.net>

roadway whether or not bike lanes are present. Bike lanes are not the cause of dooring incidents, and in fact they likely prevent dooring accidents by providing a visual reminder to drivers that bicyclists might be present. Improved bike lanes that visually encourage bicyclists to stay far enough away from parked cars (via painted warning strips or other mechanisms) might be effective in reducing dooring accidents, and should be investigated. In addition, statewide legislation to hold people responsible for opening a car door into moving traffic without looking first would serve to educate the public regarding this danger, and would save lives and reduce injuries. We owe it to that young woman to pass such simple and common sense legislation this session.

Best wishes,

Ken Field

021029 Public Safety Committee:  
Bike Safety  
Attachment E

**Garrett Simonsen**

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**From:** Freehandquilting@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, October 07, 2002 8:04  
**To:** hdavis@ci.cambridge.ma.us  
**Subject:** (no subject)

Dear Henrietta,

I hope you enjoyed the CAOS exhibits this weekend; this has become a great neighborhood institution.

This note is a quick follow-up to our conversation yesterday about bicycle safety in Cambridge. Unfortunately, I won't be able to make your hearing, so I will convey a few thoughts by email.

With the support of the City Council, the Bicycle Committee, and the Department of Traffic Safety, we have made some real progress in promoting bicycle safety and use of bicycle transportation in Cambridge. However, as the recent death on Mass Ave has indicated, more needs to be done. Part of the problem derives from the increased use of SUV's, which are very wide themselves, and have wide doors that almost completely obstruct many of the bike lanes the city has constructed. It is highly likely that the recent fatality would not have occurred if a driver owned a compact size vehicle rather than an SUV. Although the bicycle lanes we have created have almost certainly reduced the chances of fatal accidents, the reality is that many of our bicycle lanes are now far from optimally safe because they are adjacent to parked cars and do not prevent the kind of accident that we have recently witnessed. Only in a few areas, such as Huron Ave, are the streets wide enough to create bike lanes sufficiently far from parked cars to ensure that opening doors will not hit cyclists. Thus, future serious accidents and death are to be expected unless we make major improvements. Also, because many potential riders justifiably feel unsafe riding next to parked cars, we will not be able to substantially increase the use of bicycles, and thus reduce traffic congestion, unless bicycle facilities both feel safe and are as safe as possible. For these reasons, I would encourage the City Council, working with the Bicycle Committee, to support a major enhancement of safe bicycle facilities in Cambridge. I suggest several specific steps that are critical, recognizing that many other actions, particularly in education can help as well.

A fundamental objective should be to create bike lanes that are not close to parked cars. While our bike lanes next to parked cars are probably better than having no lane at all, they are far from an optimal solution because opening of car doors can cause serious injury or death, as we have just witnessed. Thus I suggest several short and long term solutions:

1. On one-way streets where parking is presently only on the right side, the parking should be moved to the left side. This will allow an excellent bicycle lane on the right side without adjacent parked cars. Inman Street is a perfect example. The cost of this would be very small, but firm support from the City Council will be needed because there will inevitably be complaints about any change. After review by the Bicycle Committee, this could be implemented very quickly.
2. The City should commit to creating the safest possible bicycle lanes on major bicycle routes, such as Mass Ave and Hampshire St., and on major routes to schools. This means that bicycle lanes should not be close to parallel parked cars, i.e., opening of car doors should not obstruct the bike lanes. Where the solution noted above is not possible, there are several alternatives. One potential solution where cars are parked on both sides of the street could be to remove parking on one side (and thus allow space for a safe bicycle lane), and on the other side of the street use "back-in angle parking". This form of parking means that opening of doors will not obstruct the lane, and approaching bikes are easily visualized by the car drivers. A test of this approach is underway on Vassar St, but the method is potentially applicable to many locations, including much of Mass Ave and Hampshire St. This approach will need some further evaluation, but is a low cost method that could potentially greatly enhance bicycle safety and have little impact on the number of parking spaces. It could also be implemented rather quickly.
3. Where neither of the above approaches is possible, parking should be removed from at least one side of the street to create safe bicycling conditions, i.e., a bike lane on one side without adjacent parked cars and ample room on the other side for sufficient space between the bike lane and the parked cars. Recognizing that parking is in short supply and there would be objection to loss of spaces, this could be made neutral in the number of parking spaces and cost to the City by building additional multilevel parking structures on land already owned by

10/7/2002

the city and charging sufficiently to cover the cost of parking. For example, in Central Square the City owns many single level parking spaces, and by building additional multilevel parking structures we could easily eliminate parking on Mass Ave. This could be financed by bonds paid for by parking fees, so it will not cost the city anything. In some areas where the city does not own land, more creativity may be needed, such as buying into new construction to create underground parking. The cost of driving would increase slightly, but this only recognizes that there are real costs of driving cars. Again, this cannot be done without the strong support from City Council.

Fundamentally, the main requirement needed to greatly improve bicycle safety in Cambridge is a strong support by the Council. In addition to enhancing safety, this will greatly encourage more people to use bicycles for routine trips, and will thus assist in the reduction of traffic congestion. With support from the City Council, and working with the Bicycle Committee, we can achieve these goals in a reasonable time frame and with only a minor cost to the City. Without such strong action, serious injuries and deaths will surely continue to accumulate.

Thank you for all support for improved transportation in Cambridge, and I will look forward to working with you further.

Sincerely,

Walter Willett

Bryce Nesbitt & Ilil Carmi  
170A Coolidge Hill  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
617-945-2414

October 08, 2002

Dear City Council Member;

We are Cambridge residents and bicycle commuters. We are writing to you on the issue of bicycle safety. Recent deaths (in Cambridge and neighboring communities) have highlighted the importance of this issue. We feel there are valuable actions the council can take to reduce the risk of more tragedies.

We ask the council to:

- (1) **Support the ongoing dedication of resources to carry out technical studies of bicycle facility design in Cambridge.** The City Community Development Department is currently evaluating bicycle lane impacts and design. In particular this study will address concerns that the lane design in Central Square, while meeting technical standards, encourages cyclists to travel *too close to car doors*. Little research has been done on this issue; Cambridge is poised to be a leader in researching and implementing the most effective and safe bike facilities.
- (2) **Ask the Schools Department to design a bike safety curriculum.** The curriculum should hit once in primary school (as kids get bikes) then again in High School (as teenagers get cars).
- (3) Ask the Parking & Traffic Department to **include with each parking sticker**, a detailed packet of information on alternatives to driving and including **bike safety information**. The information packet can be extended for new residents, containing resources like **transit maps**.
- (4) Consider much stricter enforcement of existing laws regarding **parking too far from the curb**, and **bicycle riding at night without lights**.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Bryce Nesbitt & Ilil Carmi  
ilil\_and\_bryce@obviously.com



Cc: Robert Healy

\* We both cycle regularly. So much, in fact, we recently realized owning a car in Cambridge no longer makes sense for us. We've sold the car. Bryce is a member of the Bicycle Committee, but speaks here as an individual.

Subj: Sharing the road: a personal response to the City Council's Order of July 29th  
Date: 10/8/2002 6:39:12 AM Eastern Standard Time  
From: "Wade T. Smith" <morbius@channell.com>  
To: [Brian@BrianMurphy.org](mailto:Brian@BrianMurphy.org), [denise@denisesimmons.org](mailto:denise@denisesimmons.org), [henridavis@aol.com](mailto:henridavis@aol.com),  
[mdecker@ci.cambridge.ma.us](mailto:mdecker@ci.cambridge.ma.us), [agalluccio@ci.cambridge.ma.us](mailto:agalluccio@ci.cambridge.ma.us),  
[dmaher@ci.cambridge.ma.us](mailto:dmaher@ci.cambridge.ma.us), [kreeves@ci.cambridge.ma.us](mailto:kreeves@ci.cambridge.ma.us),  
[msullivan@ci.cambridge.ma.us](mailto:msullivan@ci.cambridge.ma.us), [TimToomey@aol.com](mailto:TimToomey@aol.com)

Sent from the Internet (Details)

021029 Public Safety Committee:  
Bike Safety  
Attachment G

Dear Madams and Sirs:

I am speaking as a citizen of this fair city, and as a bicycling commuter with over twenty years experience in this area, and as a citizen member of the Bicycle Committee, although what follows is my own opinion and not meant to be anything other.

We have seen a recent tragedy, a fatality, a broad daylight weekday death on the road. I'm sure you're all aware of how Dana Laird died.

What no-one is aware of is quite why.

There are few places to point, if one wants to point a finger. To the operator of the vehicle who opened his door into traffic without looking. And, yes, to the city itself, for painting bike lanes on the street in the 'door zone' of parked vehicles.

Other than those two choices, this fatality can be discussed as a tragic accident, and, yes, accidents, even fatal ones, happen. But, accidents should be preventable, and, as a city that does care, and needs to care, we need to strive to discover and eliminate any and all conditions that might conjoin to create another result so dire.

It is my opinion, after considerable examination of the available literature about traffic conditions and bicycle facilities and patterns of enforcement and education of vehicle operators, and all the rest of the conditions and situations concerning bicycle and auto traffic, that bike lanes on shared roadways are a misguided attempt to create an atmosphere of safety, without the effective benefit of controlling and conditionally educating and enforcing the single demand that would ensure a chance at safe traffic flow- namely, that \_motorists must share the road\_.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has seen fit to list as Goal #1 'Motorists Must Share The Road' and I include their description of this initiative immediately below (found at [http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/bicycle\\_safety/index.htm](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/bicycle_safety/index.htm)) -

\*\*\*\*

Bicycles are a legitimate form of transportation and bicyclists are legal drivers of vehicles, with laws and regulations established for their use. Yet a major issue is that many bicyclists feel they are not respected by motorists and must fight for their place on the road. Like motorists, cyclists need space to safely operate in traffic. They need to anticipate correctly the actions of drivers and other road users. This requires mutual respect, which can be promoted by public

information, motorist education programs, and legal measures.

Strategy #1 Create a coordinated "Share the Road" public education campaign that can be adapted at the state and local levels.

#### Action Steps

1. Evaluate the feasibility and potential effectiveness of a campaign emphasizing the importance of sharing the road.
2. Survey successful state and local level programs to guide campaign development.
3. Identify the themes, content, and target audiences for the campaign.
4. Create tools that incorporate multiple forms of media and compelling stories to communicate "Share the Road" messages.
5. Design specific outreach activities to promote bicycle safety for motorists and bicyclists.
6. Encourage local organizations and bicycle advocacy groups to sponsor the campaign in their community.
7. Evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign.

Strategy #2 Amend the motor vehicle code to give precedence to bicyclists in the absence of overriding traffic rules.

#### Action Steps

1. Research morbidity, mortality, and cost issues related to existing laws to further policy development.
2. Work with the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances to determine needed policy changes.
3. Draft model language for inclusion in the Uniform Vehicle Code.
4. Develop a constituency of bicyclists and motorists to advocate for those code changes needed.
5. Facilitate passage of code-changing bills within state legislatures.

Strategy #3 Include components on "safe bicycling" and "sharing the road" in driver education programs.

#### Action Steps

1. Survey current programs to determine if and how bicycle safety is incorporated into driver education for beginning drivers and license renewal.
2. Draft model text, graphics, and/or audio-visual material about bicycles, bicyclists, and sharing the road to be included in the driver's license training classes and materials.
3. Draft questions about bicycles, bicyclists, and sharing the road that can be adapted for driver's license testing systems.
4. Encourage states and driver education providers to integrate model program components into existing driver's education programs including, but not limited to, novice driver training, license renewal, taxi cab driver training, professional driver training, bus driver training, commercial driver licensing, traffic (violations) schools, and the 55 Alive Program (offered by the American Association of Retired Persons).

\*\*\*\*

I would ask that the City of Cambridge, in like fashion, adopt the same as its number one Goal to prevent other fatalities, and to ensure continued and desired levels of safety on all our roads.

It is to this that I ask for your attention.

Thank you.

Wade Smith  
334 Harvard Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
617-497-5944

**021029 Public Safety Committee:  
Bike Safety  
Attachment H**

Subj: Non-motorist traffic in Cambridge

Date: 10/9/2002 10:42:42 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: "Gordon, Jesse" <jgordon@tpmc.com>

To: "'Brian@BrianMurphy.org'" <Brian@BrianMurphy.org>, "'denise@denisesimmons.org'" <denise@denisesimmons.org>, "'henridavis@aol.com'" <henridavis@aol.com>, "'mdecker@ci.cambridge.ma.us'" <mdecker@ci.cambridge.ma.us>, "'agalluccio@ci.cambridge.ma.us'" <agalluccio@ci.cambridge.ma.us>, "'dmaher@ci.cambridge.ma.us'" <dmaher@ci.cambridge.ma.us>, "'kreeves@ci.cambridge.ma.us'" <kreeves@ci.cambridge.ma.us>, "'msullivan@ci.cambridge.ma.us'" <msullivan@ci.cambridge.ma.us>, "'TimToomey@aol.com'" <TimToomey@aol.com>

Sent from the Internet ([Details](#))

Dear City Councilors --

I'm a resident of Cambridge and a member of the Bicycle Committee. I'm writing to try to gain an understanding of how best to address bicyclist, pedestrian, and MBTA-rider interests in Cambridge.

A former City Councilor said last year that he did not hear much from bicyclists, and therefore did not consider bicyclist issues to be high priority. Many of us on the Bicycle Committee have taken that as advice to write to you and express our concerns that bicyclists' needs, as well as the needs of pedestrians and MBTA-riders, should be given higher priority in city planning and redevelopment. Please add my name to the list of those who want to see those needs addressed as co-equal with the needs of motorists.

I'd like to ask your opinion of how best to promote the desires of non-motorists in city planning. Specifically:

- 1) Do you hear from bicyclists, pedestrians, and MBTA-riders enough that you consider their needs co-equal with the needs of motorists?
- 2) Would receiving more letters, e-mails, and phone calls from those constituencies make their needs more likely to be addressed?
- 3) Would a citizens' group be an effective voice? Something similar to the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition (MassBike), but focusing on Cambridge issues and also addressing pedestrian and MBTA-rider concerns.
- 4) How best can the Cambridge Bicycle Committee promote that bicyclists (as well as pedestrians and MBTA-riders) should have a co-equal voice with motorists in city development plans?

Thank you for your time.

-- Jesse Gordon

1770 Mass. Ave. #630

[jesse@JesseGordon.com](mailto:jesse@JesseGordon.com)

02140

617-320-6989

Subj: Re: promoting the use of bicycle lights at night  
Date: 10/25/2002 3:30:33 PM Eastern Standard Time  
From: Bryce Nesbitt <bryce2@obviously.com>  
To: Michael Halle <halazar@media.mit.edu>  
Cc: cbikecomm@media.mit.edu, cpedcomm@media.mit.edu, henridavis@aol.com  
Sent from the Internet (Details)

021029 Public Safety Committee:  
Bike Safety  
Attachment I

One of the barriers to front light use is that many front lights are hard to use. They are expensive, awkward to attach, heavy, easily stolen, require frequent battery changes and/or die suddenly.

I personally use a light, using new LED technology, which lasts seemingly forever on one set of batteries.

I was able to negotiate a bulk price of \$3.50 each (including batteries). A city-sponsored giveaway \*\* of such lights might be of benefit.

Or, the city could give a free light with each police citation written for riding at night without a light. You can't get a more clear message than that.

-Bryce

\*\* My conditions on a giveaway are as follows: It's free if you let me attach it to your bike. It costs \$5 if you want to walk away without attaching it to the bike.

Michael Halle wrote:

>I got some good news today about our efforts to promote bicyclists  
>using lights at night. With the change back to standard time looming  
>over us, many more bicyclists will be riding at night. For cyclist  
>safety and the safety of pedestrians and drivers, the use of lights  
>will now be even more important.

>  
>The DPW has talked to the contractors doing work at MIT at Vassar  
>Street, and they have agreed to add the words "Bikes use lights at  
>night" to their electronic traffic signs on Mass Ave. (They may be  
>able to fit "Bikes must use lights at night," but there are very small  
>number of letters on the signs.) I think this change will be very  
>visible reminder to commuting bicyclists.

>  
>In addition, the Cambridge Police have changed the sign outside  
>their station to read, "Bicycle helmets and lights save lives."

>  
>Many thanks to Kathy Murphy and the Police Dept, Cara and CDD,  
>Cambridge DPW, and MIT for helping us get this message out.

>  
>Have a great weekend!

--Mike

**Garrett Simonsen**

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**From:** roberts [lauer-roberts@attbi.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 28, 2002 2:13 PM  
**To:** hdavis@ci.cambridge.ma.us  
**Subject:** Meeting on bicycle and pedestrian safety

**021029 Public Safety Committee:  
Bike Safety  
Attachment J**

Dear Henrietta,

Thank you for your letter about the meeting to be held on October 29 regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend. However, I wanted to e-mail you about a few matters.

I have great respect for people who ride bikes rather than driving cars. However, many of the bicyclists are not obeying traffic laws. For example, when I am driving, I am always on the look-out for bicyclists because I know that many of them do not stop at red lights and are likely to try to pass on the right even if a car has signaled a right turn. Thus, a driver could end up turning into a cyclist.

I am still concerned about pedestrians not being able to cross safely at a few streets. Two new crosswalks were put across Mason Street between Phillips Place and James Street. However, cars do not stop for pedestrians here, and I think signs are needed at this location requiring cars to stop for pedestrians in the crosswalks. My daughter says she almost has been hit there. It is especially dangerous at rush hours.

Thank you for giving your attention to these matters.

Sincerely yours,

Gail Roberts  
13 Berkeley Street  
617-491-4106

# City of Cambridge

In City Council November 25, 2002

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

*Vice Mayor Henrietta Davis, Chair*

*Councillor David P. Maher*

*Councillor Timothy J. Toomey*

The Public Safety Committee held a public meeting on Tuesday, October 29, 2002 at 5:40 P.M. in the Sullivan Chamber.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss three bike safety issues:

- the possibility of changing to bike routes located between the sidewalk and parked cars, in the European model, and other ways of promoting bike safety
- “dooring”, the issues related to car doors opening into bike lanes
- enforcement of laws regulating bicycle riding

Present at the meeting were Vice Mayor Henrietta Davis, Chair of the Committee, Councillor Brian Murphy, Mayor Michael Sullivan, Superintendent David Degou, Cambridge Police Department, Sue Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking & Transportation, Suzanne Rasmussen, Community Development Department (CDD), Cara Seiderman, CDD, Rosalie Anders, CDD, and Elaine McGrath, City Clerk’s office. Also present were the following members of the public from Cambridge: Lorraine Lavoie, 929 Mass. Ave., Bryce Nesbitt, 170A Coolidge Hill Rd., member, Friends of the Community Path/Bike Committee, David Loutzenheiser, 230 Lexington Ave., C.R. Rogers, 27 Lee St., member of the Bike Committee, Joe Levendusky, 222 Concord Ave., Michael Halle, 2 Westacott Ct., Chapin White, 14 Suffolk St., Rozann Kraus, 91 Chilton St., Ted Hamman, 106 Holworthy St., Jim Tull, 9 Waterhouse St., Bruce Sylvester, 453 Franklin St., John Moot, 44 Coolidge Hill Rd., and Allison Dodds (no address). Also attending was Glen Berkowitz, 57 East Concord St., Boston.

Vice Mayor Davis opened the meeting and stated the purpose. She invited Mayor Sullivan to speak first, since he had to leave to attend a School Committee meeting.

Mayor Sullivan stated that almost ten years ago, the city redesigned its streets to include bike lanes. It is time to review the safety of the design again; residents have spoken to him about improvements in bike lanes. He thanked city staff for their work on the issue. Mayor Sullivan also commended the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committees for working together on the issue and noted that ten years ago, such cooperation would have been unthinkable. He believes there are enough intelligent ideas about bike safety in Cambridge that the city could be a model for other places. He stated that the goal is safer bike lanes, an issue always worth revisiting.

Vice Mayor Davis asked everyone in the room to introduce themselves and then invited Cara Seiderman of CDD to make a presentation on the issues.

S-357

**Committee Report #1**

Committee Report from Vice  
Mayor Henrietta Davis, Chair of  
the Public Safety Committee, for a  
meeting held on October 29, 2002  
to discuss three bike safety issues.

**In City Council November 25, 2002**

**REPORT ACCEPTED.  
PLACED ON FILE.**

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