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By e-mail  
Public Safety Committee, Cambridge City Council  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02198

**RE: Support for Bike Enforcement Order and Sideguard Order. General comments on need to improve Bicycle/Pedestrian /Traffic Safety**

Dear Councillor-Chairman Kelley, Vice Mayor Simmons, and Councillor Toomey:

I write to express my strongest support for approval and implementation of Councillor Cheung's proposed Bike Enforcement and Sideguard Orders. As you are well aware, bicycle/pedestrian, and traffic safety is a significant public health concern in Cambridge. I believe the two referenced orders will significantly increase public safety and continue the process of increasing public awareness.

I walk many miles every day in Cambridge and find two locations are particularly dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists. I've seen several near collisions between pedestrians and vehicles at the Garden and Waterhouse Street crossing in front of the Cambridge Sheraton. Cars often do not stop for pedestrians despite the sign ordering them to do so. The crossing at Massachusetts Avenue and Waterhouse is equally dangerous with vehicles often speeding up and running the red light. Both locations could clearly benefit from increased enforcement.

I am also a big supporter of the proposed Sideguard Order. This innovative technology has been proven to save lives and reduce injuries. Given the large number of City vehicles and the high rate of vehicle/pedestrian accidents in Cambridge it is imperative the City adopt effective measure to protect its citizens from preventable injury or death.

In addition to the two orders, I would also like to make some general comments on this issue that will focus the City on solutions to this dangerous situation. My comments on education, enforcement, and accountability are as follows:

1. **Education.** I was not aware until earlier this month what the rule of the road were for bicycles. Boston NPR had an excellent segment about bicycle safety and "rules of the road." I walk

everywhere in Cambridge and started to notice only about one in ten bicyclists follows the law. Needless to say most motorists and pedestrians also break the rules. I have also been mocked several times for waiting at corners for the light to turn. **The people of Cambridge need to be educated on what the rules of the road are and why they must be followed.**

2. **Enforcement.** In my 10 months in Cambridge I have only seen a few instances of drivers/cyclists/ pedestrians being ticketed for illegal actions, yet I see many violations every day. City records provided to me by Councillor Cheung show that around 800 tickets were issues to bicyclists in 2012. This is unacceptably low and will not change behavior. Unfortunately, the City and people of Cambridge accept illegal and unsafe actions as the norm. **Unless you enforce the law more effectively this dangerous situation will continue.** It's ironic that the city chooses to effectively enforce parking regulations while accepting serious traffic safety problems. Perhaps we need to better balance your resources.

3. **Accountability.** At the end of the day, each citizen needs to be personally accountable. Education and enforcement will help convince citizens. I realize changing a mindset is difficult but the alternative is unacceptable. You, and all the other Cambridge City employees, must also be held accountable. Every time a citizen is injured (or worse) because you fail to enforce the law or create the safest possible environment you must take your share of the blame. **I realize you have many other important issues you face every day and you already put significant resources against this problem. However, you are clearly not successful enough.** I firmly believe your most important responsibility is for the safety of the citizens and urge you to increase your efforts.

Sincerely,



Mark K. Thomas