

FW: Pearl Street

Lopez, Donna

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Inbox

To:

From: Andrea Whitaker [mailto:andiwhitaker@icloud.com]

Sent: Sunday, February 08, 2015 11:05 AM

To: Lopez, Donna

Subject: Pearl Street

Please enter this into the official record of the City Council

Hello,

I wrote earlier in favor of the Pearl street plan that included a daytime parking ban to make room for a daytime biking lane.

I have since reconsidered my position.

A problem I now see with that plan is that I think that it will be very unlikely that all cars will be moved out of the bike lane each morning. That there will be cars present dotting the the bike lane and creating obstacles to clear, safe passage for bikes. It also would do no good for bicyclists after 6pm when cars start parking.

I think a much better idea has been presented by Vivek Sikri.

After Pearl street has been repaved, paint a bike lane right down the middle of the street to indicate that it is a shared road. As a person who uses a bicycle as my primary mode of transport, I would appreciate this accommodation as harmonious for all users of Pearl Street.

Here is how Vivek proposed it:

On small streets like we have around Cambridgeport and much of Cambridge there is an approach that in my mind would solve the bike lane problem in a very elegant way: Put the bike lane right down the middle of the road.

This has several advantages vs putting a bike lane on the side of the road:

1. It is clearly communicated to cars that bikes do belong in the middle of the road. This would be much more effective than putting up a few "Share the road" signs that us "Boston drivers" will obviously ignore and continue to honk and try to squeeze by bikes.

2. Much less expensive to implement. All the city needs to do is paint a bike lane right down the center of the road, for example Pearl St.
3. Bikes sharing the road will slow the cars, making it safer for everyone.
4. Parking is preserved as-is.
5. By being in the middle of the road bikes are not close to parked cars so the risk of being "doored" is minimized. Ask anyone who rides a bike and they can tell you that you have to be just as vigilant of parked cars as moving ones.

What then about cars getting stuck behind bikes going down a bike lane in the middle of Pearl St? Lets look at the numbers:

* Pearl St is 0.8miles long (according to Google maps)

* A bike goes about 12mph, which is about 4 minutes to get down Pearl St ignoring stops

* Car speed limit down Pearl is 25mph which is about 2 minutes to get down Pearl St

Assuming worst case of a car being stuck behind a bike going down Pearl St all the way it would slow the car down only 2 minutes! That's not bad at all. In reality this is quite unlikely to happen because either the bike or the car would likely turn off Pearl at some point anyway.

In my opinion a better way to get more people to take public transport or use bikes is to improve public transport and bike infrastructure rather than take the punitive approach of making it harder to park. The city should implement creative approaches to getting bikes and cars to share the road better. A dedicated bike lane is not a good solution on small streets, but a bike lane down the middle of the road would have several ancillary benefits and minimal hassle.

Bikes and cars are both part of our reality and the best solution is one that provides for both with minimal harm to the other.

Thank you,

Andrea Whitaker
19 Rockingham Street
Cambridge 02139