

From: Joseph Poirier [jpoirier20@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, January 10, 2015 3:33 PM
To: Lopez, Donna
Subject: Fwd: Vote NO on Toomey's Pearl St. Policy Order

Please enter the below communication in the council record.

thanks!

joe

Begin forwarded message:

From: Joseph Poirier <jpoirier20@gmail.com>
Subject: **Vote NO on Toomey's Pearl St. Policy Order**
Date: January 10, 2015 at 3:26:36 PM EST
To: council@cambridgema.gov
Cc: rossi@cambridgema.gov

Dear City Council & Manager Rossi,

Please re-design Pearl Street so that it is safe and encourages additional usage of environmentally and socially-conscious transportation. I'm asking you to do two things:

- + Please vote NO on Councillor Toomey's policy order to abandon the 'Complete Streets' option.
- + Please go back to the drawing board and add a cycle track on the opposite side of the street, build real bus stops, add tree plantings, and build bike racks for Pearl St. small businesses.

I grew up one block from Pearl St. and continue to use the street as a pedestrian, cyclist, driver, and commercial trucker (yes - sometimes a delivery requires navigation of a few blocks of Pearl St.). The street, as it currently exists, is an outdated and auto-centric idea of what public land should be. It is 66% for parking cars and 33% for driving cars. It doesn't have an inviting place for cycling, the sidewalks are narrow and dangerous for the elderly, and MBTA buses do not efficiently navigate the roadway. The bus stops are not inviting places (most of them aren't places at all). There are very few bicycle racks. In short, the status quo is BAD.

The street we build will influence the way people use it. If you abandon the 'Complete Streets' option and return the street to an auto-only zone, people will drive down it, and residents will not be encouraged and not be emboldened to use MBTA buses and bicycles to travel. This order would return the street to the status quo. Please vote no.

I know that you have heard a good deal from residents afraid of losing parking. The city financed an extremely thorough parking study of Pearl St. and side drives that shows the area can bear the loss of parking. 47% of spaces on Pearl are unoccupied during the day. At night, 25% of spaces are unoccupied. Yes, there is no doubt that the loss of spaces will make parking more difficult. No one disputes that. Al Gore called climate change an inconvenient truth for a reason. Some of the changes we are going to make in our lifetime are going to be *inconvenient*.

Let's be brave and accept the fact that we need to change our lifestyle to stop climate change. Driving less and owning fewer cars is one of those changes. Be brave and stand up for the environment. Combating climate change means personal sacrifice from all of us - and Cambridge should bear the torch for us in this change. Push back against city-subsidized car storage and make a progressive street design on Pearl happen.

I'm asking you preserve the 'Complete Street' plan and build upon it by making important changes:

- + **Add real bus stops:** Add real bus stops, with places for commuters to stand in the rain and posted bus schedules. This will encourage residents to use public transit and not autos. Add bumpouts so the bus does not have to pull over to the side of the road to discharge and pick up passengers. This will allow more efficient travel for buses, reducing air, water, and noise pollution, and shortening commuting times.
- + **Move the cycle track:** Move the cycle track to the opposite side of the street, where cyclists will not be in conflict with people waiting for the bus. Make it a 24/7 cycle track and encourage non-cyclists to buy bicycles and use them to get around the city. We desperately need to reduce our auto emissions and provide the carrots for our residents to take better care of their physical and mental health. Encouraging cycling by building the infrastructure kills these two birds with one stone.
- + **Plant more trees:** Use trees to separate the pedestrian space from the cycling space. This keeps cyclists and pedestrians safe, reduces pollution, raises property values, and beautifies the area.
- + **Widen the sidewalk:** With the removal of parking and the addition of a cycle track, you will have more room for pedestrians. The street will become wheelchair accessible.
- + **Build bike racks:** We know that cyclists spend more money at small local businesses than drivers because they can stop more often and more easily than drivers. Add ten bike parking spaces each outside Pepper Sky, Farr Academy, Baraka, the spa, the launromat, and at Putnam and Pearl.

Thank you for reading, and thanks for your attention to this project. It's encouraging to know that our government is as involved as they are.

Joseph Poirier
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