



# CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Craig A. Kelley  
City Councilor

8 April, 2010

**FROM:** Craig Kelley, Cambridge City Council  
**TO:** Cambridge City Council  
**SUBJECT:** City Manager's Communication about Walden Street Crosswalk

Dear Colleagues:

At our last meeting, there was some discussion about why a fourth crosswalk was not to be installed at the junction of Walden Street and Richdale Ave.

As I explained at the meeting, and as the attached report from the City Manager describes (my emphasis added), part of the stated reason for the lack of a fourth crosswalk is the impact such a crosswalk would have on on-street parking in the immediate area.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.



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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Robert Healy  
**From:** Susan Clippinger  
**Date:** February 23, 2010  
**Re:** Walden and Richdale, Council Order awaiting report

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When the Walden Street Bridge was being reconstructed by the State, the City committed to implementing traffic calming improvements for the street prior to its reopening. Those changes were implemented. In addition to the Traffic Calming changes, the TP&T Department also converted the Richdale and Walden intersection to an all way stop.

Residents have indicated that the all-way stop has been an improvement to the intersection by making it easier for pedestrians and vehicles to use safely. The remaining concern among residents is that driver compliance with the stop sign (which they feel has improved since it was first installed) could still be better and that a vehicle that fails to stop jeopardizes the safety of both vehicles on Richdale and the pedestrians crossing.

The Department met with area residents on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 to discuss the future of the intersection. Since then the Department conducted three "stop sign compliance studies" during the morning, midday and afternoon peak times. We sampled 335 vehicles and found that 99% of the vehicles sampled stopped or partially stopped (less than 3 MPH). Two vehicles however did not stop at all. From our study we can conclude that the Walden Street stop signs are working much better now than 6 months ago when they were first installed. Nevertheless, we have replaced the standard 30" STOP sign with a much bigger 36" STOP sign and in June of this year, will install the two missing stop lines with the words "STOP".

**Also, the Department of Public Works will be reconstructing the corner of Walden and Richdale at the store to construct the pedestrian ramp that was not reconstructed during the bridge construction by MassHighway (now MassDOT). The construction will provide pedestrian ramps for pedestrians crossing Richdale, but does not include a crosswalk across Walden Street at the store, as it is not possible to make a ramp for the crossing of Walden that meets the disability access requirements without removing the much needed parking at the store.**

Because the vehicles stopping on Walden may have to stop when no pedestrian or vehicle is present, some drivers who use the street regularly have a tendency either not to stop or to roll through the

intersection. Also vehicles that speed up to get over the rise of the bridge and do not see the intersection until the top of the bridge may fail to stop or stop completely. These behaviors cannot be totally eliminated and the improvements listed above should increase compliance. Also, The Cambridge Police Department will continue to provide ongoing intermittent stop sign enforcement. The Police have found the changes on Walden have been effective in reducing speed issues on Walden.

Residents who use the intersection are urged to use care (as they should at any location). Before crossing/entering Walden Street as a pedestrian or driver, a person should establish eye contact with the driver on Walden and make sure you know they will come to a stop before entering into the intersection.

Attached is a list of the issues raised by residents at the February 1<sup>st</sup> meeting and the status of those requests.

## Walden and Richdale

### Suggestion

### Status

Mark the stop line.

This will be done this summer. In addition the word "STOP" will be marked on the street at the stop line location.

Add a crosswalk across Walden to the store.

This cannot be done and both meet disability requirements and not reduce or eliminate parking for the store.

Increase enforcement of vehicles that fail to stop.

The Police are stepping up their enforcement at this location.

Add rumble strips to warn drivers of the stop.

This design would create unacceptable noise for local residents.

Build a raised intersection to improve stop sign compliance.

The Fire Dept does not support a second raised device on this important response route.

Install a traffic signal.

A stop light at this location does not meet the engineering criteria and the Federal Government guide lines and warrants for installation of a light. The delay for pedestrians and vehicles would be much greater than the current situation. Vehicles waiting on Richdale for a red light would block access into Richdale for vehicles on Walden.

**Additional traffic signal concerns.** A traffic signal would also encourage speeding on both streets due to vehicles attempting to "make the green light before it changes to red". There are no speeding concerns currently on Richdale Ave and a traffic signal would cause speeding. Also, the back-up that a traffic signal would cause on southbound Walden St would place vehicles onto the bridge deck and our previous observations have shown that the sight lines are reduced due to the bridge elevation. Even with warning signs and a warning signal, serious rear-end crashed will occur due to the limited sight lines.

**Put up more signs warning drivers to stop.** The stop is signed as per the guidelines of the MUTCD. Our experience and studies elsewhere indicate that additional signs do not change behaviors.

**Build a raised device or change the grade and profile of the road to fit in the crosswalk without eliminating the parking space at the store.** Walden St was just rebuilt and will not be considered for reconstruction again for many years. It is not clear that any reconstruction is possible that will meet this goal. One or two parking spaces would be lost in front of the store if this was possible to install.

Notes of issues raised at the Richdale mtg of Monday 2/1/2010.  
Attended by Wayne Amaral and Sue Clippinger.