

244 Lexington Ave.  
Cambridge, MA 02138

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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Dear Cambridge City Council:

The small pedestrian islands being placed in the middle of streets are dangerous and have caused numerous accidents. It is time to stop this type of "Street Calming" construction that makes our streets more dangerous. It is a waste of taxes and it has numerous negative effects.

For thousands of years governments have made roads safer by widening the roads, straightening the roads, and by taking dangerous obstacles out of the roads. Lately, for some dubious reasons, our city planners have been putting obstacles back in the middle of our streets. They call it "Street Calming". They are undoing generations of road building with the construction of small dangerous 'Pedestrian Safety Islands'. These obstacles placed in the middle of major streets, have caused numerous accidents to date, and will eventually result in someone being killed.

First off, I do not think these islands are going to improve pedestrian safety enough to justify the dangers they create for drivers. When I walk by the new islands on Concord Avenue, Mount Auburn Street, Brattle Street and Broadway, I note they are all scratched and chipped from being run in to on dark nights. The one in front of the high school on Broadway recently caused a car to explode in flames. Warning signs and reflectors have been added to little effect. The islands are dangerous because they are in the middle of the road.

On Concord Avenue cars are blinded by the lights of on-coming trucks and busses making the islands invisible. They are also particularly dangerous to drivers during heavy rain storms and blizzards. How many million-dollar lawsuits will it take to get them removed?

They also prevent proper snow plowing. Imagine yourself to be the driver of a snowplow trying to maintain enough speed to push a heavy pile of snow forward, and you hit one of our safety islands. If it does not kill you, it will surely do severe damage to your truck. This coming winter look at the streets with 'traffic calming islands',

'bump outs', and 'wavy streets' and ask yourself, "Is the snow removal on these streets as good as it used to be?"

It has become fashionable, and a job justification, to promote these changes to our relatively safe streets. I personally would rather spend the money on things we really need, like filling potholes and staffing our public schools. If there is a safety concern, good old fashion pedestrian controlled traffic lights, really make streets safe.

Traffic islands in the middle of narrow streets are a dumb idea, let's remove them before someone gets killed.

Sincerely,

Bill Forster