2

Lopez, Donna

From:	C. Shipley [mc.shipley@verizon.net]
Sent:	Sunday, April 08, 2012 2:38 PM
To:	Kelley, Craig (home)
Cc:	visioncentralsquare@googlegroups.com; 'Fougere,Blacklow'; colleenjclark@earthlink.com; Billaugustusa@aol.com; 'Mark Schneider'; 'Kaiser, Steve'; 'Mark Jaquith'; 'Heather Hoffman'; City Council; RNA
Subject:	RE: Traffic Issues on Council's Monday night agenda # 6 4/9/12
Attachments:	Signs Pointing to streets on left encouraging illegal left turn.jpg; Sign Pointing to Legal Right turn E-NE direction to 3 streets.jpg

Please enter this message in the official record of the city council.

Hi Craig, Thank you for bringing this matter to the attention of your email list.

Ms. Clippinger's response is full of a lot of holes, lacks any semblance to logic or facts, and leaves out some necessary supporting data from the consultants. Is there any supporting data from the consultants? Where is their full report? I'm sure someone will tell me it is somewhere on the city website, but very difficult to find, I'm sure.

I can tell you this, Ms. Clippinger doesn't have to cross this intersection every day. She probably doesn't ever cross this intersection, nor do many city officials, I assume, or we poor working schmucks wouldn't have to continue to deal with this dangerous and stressful pedestrian crossing as we try to get to our jobs every day. I have rarely seen any city officials, elected or appointed, at this intersection. I travel through this intersection on foot at least two times daily and very often 4 times daily. The odds of a chance sighting of a city official in 31 years seem to dictate that I would have seen several or more city officials more than a couple of times at this intersection. However, I can only recall running into two city councillors on maybe two occasions in that intersection in Central Square in 31 years and can assure you I have never run into any appointed city officials in Central Square in that time. I am not counting the times city councillors have been in the square to promote their campaigns during this period. My argument is that if more city officials had to cross at this intersection on a daily basis, I doubt if this dangerous 3-second pedestrian lead time would still be in effect.

Yes, Ms. Clippinger gives us 3 seconds to cross, while she gives pedestrians in front of city hall over 40 seconds to cross (not sure of the exact timing sitting here in my house 5 blocks from the intersection, but all traffic stops in all directions for pedestrians in front of city hall. Why is that, I wonder? To give city officials the impression that all intersections are just as pedestrian-friendly?).

This paragraph (below) in the response by the city manager is also very vague and I can assure you that the consultant hired was encouraged to soft pedal the dangerousness of the intersection. What vertical red arrow was replaced? On which signal in which direction? That is not explained. It boggles the mind that such reports are accepted with no accompanying data.

"In May 2009 Rod Emery of Jacobs engineering consultants completed a review of the intersection. In the technical memorandum's Recommendations section, Jacobs wrote, "In summary, the overall operation and safety of the Central Square intersection is exceptional given the sheer volume of vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle activity." Emery made three minor suggestions to improve the intersection, two of which TP+T implemented. We did replace the vertical red arrow traffic signal indication with a circular one. We also made the northbound right-hand lane a right turn only lane, as recommended." **Huh?**

I would never call the safety of that intersection "exceptional." One has to ask Rod Emery at what time of day did he do his survey? How many days did he visit the intersection? Did he do his observation during rush hours, morning and evening? Did he consult MBTA data?

As far as the northbound right-hand lane* (it is really not north-bound, but more W-NW, since northbound would be going down Prospect St. which runs in a more northerly direction than does Mass. Ave.) being made into a right turn only lane (I'm assuming she means the lane in front of Starbucks) it ALWAYS WAS a right-hand turn lane because, if a vehicle tried to go straight ahead it would have to fight with the vehicles in the other lane to get into a travel lane owing to the fact that there is a sidewalk bump-out which eliminates the right-hand lane and cars are parked on the right-hand side of the street! Sounds like they did something, but they didn't really. Big deal. TP&T painted an arrow on a lane that always was right-turn only.

Illegal left turn: people do it all the time and there is never a traffic cop around to give them a citation/ticket. The signage is not clear. There is no enforcement, so new-comers to the area don't realize there is no left turn allowed. This should be corrected. Also there are signs that seem to encourage illegal turns. (See below.)

*If the consultants can't get the compass directions straight, one wonders about their competence and the rest of the data in their report. According to city-issued maps, Mass. Ave. runs east to west from a E-NE direction in Kendall Sq. to a W-NW direction in Harvard Sq.

Pedestrian traffic at that intersection is estimated at 40,000+ people per business day according to MBTA usage data. Yes, it is a miracle that there have not been more personal injuries. However, what there is **is** pedestrian stress when trying to cross that intersection in 3 seconds without having to fight with a huge bus, semi, or impatient personal vehicle driver. How does TP&T expect a handicapped person or an elderly person with severe arthritis to cross in 3 seconds or even to step off the curb in 3 seconds? This 3-second pedestrian lead time interval is clearly in violation of the ADA guidelines.

Many residents of the Central Square area have been asking for more than 3 seconds for years and especially at the time when that young doctoral student was dragged to his death in Central Square back in 2008. I have cc'd Colleen Clark on this email because she was one of the speakers, including me, before City Council back in 2008 when this accident was on the agenda. At that time, we asked for more time to cross the street and nothing happened.

Ms. Clippinger has never explained her rationale for not giving more than 3 seconds at this intersection while she gives 40+ seconds at the city hall intersection as well as at the intersection of Prospect St. and Bishop Allen Drive only a block from this intersection in both directions. Can anyone explain that?
Since Ms. Clippinger is not a licensed traffic engineer, I am curious to hear from someone in her department who may be a licensed traffic engineer as to the scientific theory supporting the huge differences in pedestrian lead time in these three intersections in Central Square. The least amount of pedestrian lead time is given to the intersection with the highest pedestrian traffic volume.

To further my argument that a lack of engineering expertise is the problem here, I wish to call your attention to the fact that several years ago 3 signs were posted on each of two utility poles at the intersection, one at the River & Mass. Ave. side and another at the Western Ave. & Mass. Ave. side of the intersection. These three signs were signs pointing to 3 streets: River, Western,

and Magazine. The three signs on the utility pole at the River St. & Mass. Ave. side of the intersection are still there. They are fine for vehicles traveling E-SE on Mass. Ave., because vehicles traveling East-southeast on Mass. Ave (towards MIT) may turn right onto Western Ave. at this intersection. However, the signs are visible to traffic traveling W-NW towards Harvard Square and could lead drivers to assume that they may follow those signs and turn left, which they can't.**

**However, the same three signs had been attached to a utility pole on the Western Ave. side of the intersection near the Tax Man office at 678 Mass. Ave., visible by traffic traveling in the W-NW direction towards Harvard Sq. and there is no left turn allowed in that direction. When I first spotted the signs, I said to myself: we're in for big trouble here. Why tell drivers with directional arrows the location of streets they are not supposed to access? Well, the signs came down in about 3 weeks or a month. Someone In TP&T woke up. See attached photos of the directional signs still on one utility pole: on correct side of the street, i.e., the pole on Carl Barron Plaza if traveling E-NE, but visible from two directions—one being illegal to turn, i.e., W-NW. So, in order to avoid encouraging illegal left turns, the side visible to drivers driving in a W-NW direction should be painted over.

A side issue to the above-mentioned sign issue: One wonders: how much did it cost to have the signs made, how much to install them and then take them down? One asks: what is the review process for such requisitions? Is there any double-checking process? Does more than one person have to review and then sign off on such requisitions? It is obvious that the requestor did not think through the advisability of these signs or the fact that they would encourage—even seem to sanction—illegal turns at this intersection. Nor did anyone else signing the requisition, if, indeed, anyone else had to sign the requisition.

It seems a review of how requisitions are authorized in this city is in order as well as a serious review of the danger of the 3-second pedestrian lead time interval.
Thanks to Councillor Cheung for introducing the original policy order and thanks to the full council for voting to approve it. Thanks to Councillor Ken Reeves for his efforts to improve Central Square. However, pedestrian lead times are a fact of life in Central Square that, along with all the other factors considered by the Red Ribbon Commission, add to improving the quality of life for all users of Central Square. (I'm not sure if pedestrian lead times came up in the conversations about Central Square.)
Thank you very much,

Carolyn Shipley
15 Laurel Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-492-0601

WESTERN AVE
RIVER ST

Lopez, Donna

From: C. Shipley [mc.shipley@verizon.net]
Sent: Monday, April 09, 2012 10:08 AM
To: Lopez, Donna
Subject: RE: Traffic Issues on Council's Monday night agenda

Hi Donna, Yes, that is okay. I only learned about the report to the council after viewing the city council agenda for today. Just wanted it to be on the record anyway.
Thanks,
Carolyn

From: Lopez, Donna [mailto:dlopez@cambridgema.gov]
Sent: Monday, April 09, 2012 9:59 AM
To: C. Shipley
Subject: RE: Traffic Issues on Council's Monday night agenda

April 9, 2012

Carolyn:

This communication was received after the deadline of Thursday, April 5 at 5 PM and therefore will be put on the communication list for the April 23rd meeting.

Very truly yours,

Donna

From: C. Shipley [mailto:mc.shipley@verizon.net]
Sent: Sunday, April 08, 2012 2:38 PM
To: Kelley, Craig (home)
Cc: visioncentralsquare@googlegroups.com; 'Fougere,Blacklow'; colleenjclark@earthlink.com; Billaugustusa@aol.com; 'Mark Schneider'; 'Kaiser, Steve'; 'Mark Jaquith'; 'Heather Hoffman'; City Council; RNA
Subject: RE: Traffic Issues on Council's Monday night agenda

Please enter this message in the official record of the city council.

Hi Craig, Thank you for bringing this matter to the attention of your email list.

Ms. Clippinger's response is full of a lot of holes, lacks any semblance to logic or facts, and leaves out some necessary supporting data from the consultants. Is there any supporting data from the consultants? Where is their full report? I'm sure someone will tell me it is somewhere on the city website, but very difficult to find, I'm sure.

I can tell you this, Ms. Clippinger doesn't have to cross this intersection every day. She probably doesn't ever cross this intersection, nor do many city officials, I assume, or we poor working schmucks wouldn't have to continue to deal with this dangerous and stressful pedestrian crossing as we try to get to our jobs every day.