

City Council Members,

My name is Rachel Gunther and for the past 15 years I have lived within a block of Western Avenue and have been navigating crossing Western Ave for all these years. I currently have a 6 and 3 year old and crossing the street with them is a frightening endeavor.

As I am sure you know, cars, buses, and very large trucks barrel down Western avenue at speeds up to 45 miles per hour at all hours of the day and night, well over the speed limit and usually with no regard to pedestrians or school buses.

A few months ago I circulated an online and hard copy petition to area residents. Over 120 people signed this petition with dozens of them telling their heartfelt stories of how they feel scared for themselves and their children each time they cross the street.

We are all aware that construction is beginning on Western Avenue that will eventually help alleviate some of these issues, but waiting 2 more years is too long for change - we can and must have improved safety now.

We request that Minka Vanbuzekon's motion to make improvements for pedestrian safety on Western Avenue is adopted. Specifically we ask for:

- 1) barrels or posts to be placed in all crosswalks in the middle of lanes with pedestrian crossing signs
- 2) improved / more visible signage on sides of streets where there are crosswalks
- 3) additional signs posting appropriate speed limit
- 4) additional police presence to catch/deter speeding vehicles
- 5) additional crossing guards during bus pick up and drop offs / or consolidate bus stops so all children can cross safely.

I urge you to read the comments made by residents to fully understand the serious concerns over our safety.

thank you,

## Pedestrian Safety on Western Avenue & River Street

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1

**Name:** Rachel Gunther on Apr 2, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**  
**Flag**

2

**Name:** Deborah Gordon on Apr 2, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**  
**Flag**

3

**Name:** Mary Woodbury on Apr 2, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!** I have seldom seen a car stop for a pedestrian unless a police car happened to be parked on either River St (where I live) or Western Ave.  
**Flag**

4

**Name:** Adrianna Crowell on Apr 2, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**  
**Flag**

5

**Name:** Mark Lax on Apr 2, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**  
**Flag**

6

**Name:** Bari Brodsky on Apr 2, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**  
**Flag**

7

**Name:** Jesselynn Opie on Apr 2, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!** It feels like risking one's life to cross Western Ave. Drivers do NOT stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. My son and I have had two near misses crossing Western at Kinnaird. We have called CPD twice requesting a traffic cop during schoolbus pickup/drop off times and were told that is not possible. Please help.  
**Flag**

8

**Name:** Katy Downey on Apr 2, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!** 195 Franklin Street  
**Flag**

9

**Name:** Esme Caramello on Apr 2, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!** Cars routinely blow past stopped school buses, too. Traffic enforcement in early morning and mid-afternoon would be most appreciated!

**Flag**

10

**Name:** Anonymous on Apr 2, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**

**Flag**

11

**Name:** Larry Kolodney on Apr 2, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**

**Flag**

12

**Name:** Sheila Williams on Apr 2, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**

**Flag**

13

**Name:** Mark Cason-Snow on Apr 2, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**

**Flag**

14

**Name:** Megan DeMott-Quigley on Apr 2, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**

**Flag**

15

**Name:** Barbara Taggart on Apr 2, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**

**Flag**

16

**Name:** M. Carolyn Shipley on Apr 2, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!** Nearly 30 years ago, when Loren Preston headed up the Traffic Department, I asked him if the city could install synchronized traffic signals on River St. in order to keep traveling at 25 mph. He informed me, at that time, that the city did not have the technology. Yet, many other American cities had been using that technology for decades! At the time I asked Mr. Preston about synchronizing the traffic signals to 25mph, the city had about \$12 million in free cash but not enough money to purchase the technology to synchronize the traffic lights. Further, the city has been unsuccessful in convincing the DCR to synchronize their traffic lights with those of Cambridge on River and Western. It appears that in 30 years, the city has not been able to purchase the technology to synchronize traffic signals! These omissions do not seem supportable by any argument other than empty city coffers, (which is not the case), a lack of licensed traffic engineers and planners in the traffic department (which is rumored is the case), or a lack of concern for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on these streets (which appears to be the case). Further, the city created bike lanes on these two streets by the simple act of painting white lines to describe the lanes. Nothing was done to bring the quality of the road surface on the bike lanes up to compliance. Therefore, cyclists are forced to avoid potholes and deep puddles by riding out in traffic. The paint used to describe the bike lanes was of inferior quality and is more than 50% absent in many areas of the bike lanes. One finds it difficult to reconcile these problems with the fact that the city has over \$80million in free cash and yet chooses not to allocate the funds to improve safety on these two streets. Thank goodness, Western Ave. will be under construction soon and THAT should slow down traffic on Wester at least.

**Flag**

17

**Name:** Anonymous on Apr 2, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**

**Flag**

18

Name: Shi Yang on Apr 2, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

Flag

19

Name: Anonymous on Apr 2, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

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20

Name: John A. Shetterly on Apr 2, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: 127 Magazine Street

Flag

21

Name: Anonymous on Apr 2, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

Flag

22

Name: Wilma Nathanson on Apr 2, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

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23

Name: Lisa Z Chamblee on Apr 2, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

Flag

24

Name: Melissa Smith on Apr 2, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: This is important. Thank you for spearheading!

Flag

25

Name: Elijah Gunther on Apr 2, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

Flag

26

Name: Kevin Whifield on Apr 2, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

Flag

27

Name: Naomi Maekawa on Apr 2, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

Flag

28

Name: Mark Saltzman on Apr 2, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: 15 valentine apt 7

Flag

29

Name: Emily Bromley on Apr 2, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

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30

Name: Beate Gottschlich on Apr 3, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

Flag

31

**Name:** Mary-Ann Matyas on Apr 3, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:**  
Flag

32

**Name:** Karen Propp on Apr 3, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:**  
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33

**Name:** Andrew Adler on Apr 3, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:**  
Flag

34

**Name:** Laura Sheffield on Apr 3, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:** 219 Brookline St. Cambridge, MA  
Flag

35

**Name:** Robert Rimann on Apr 3, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:** 92 Henry St Cambridge, MA 02139  
Flag

36

**Name:** David Hofer on Apr 3, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:** I cross Western Avenue at Pleasant Street about once a day and cars almost never stop for me. I can understand why—they are just coming out of Central Square and naturally want to speed up. But it is annoying that they ignore the crosswalk so readily. It would be great if you could start enforcing the law there. Address: 189 Brookline St. #2 Cambridge, MA 02139  
Flag

37

**Name:** Alec Wysoker on Apr 3, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:** Years ago the plan was to slow the traffic by narrowing the lanes and adding a bike lane. What happened to that plan?  
Flag

38

**Name:** Judith Morse on Apr 3, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:** These changes sound sensible to me. I hope they can be implemented.  
Flag

39

**Name:** Sheri Simmons on Apr 3, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:** I am a homeowner on River St and regularly observe all the issues noted in the petition (speeding, failure to stop for pedestrians, lack of enforcement). In addition to this there is also very little enforcement of residential parking restrictions.  
Flag

40

**Name:** Anonymous on Apr 3, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:** 11 Hews Street Cambridge, MA 02139  
Flag

41

**Name:** Zoe Anderson on Apr 3, 2012  
**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:** children have to be and feel safe when they cross

streets to get to school, and everywhere else, please! i live on walker st.  
Flag

42

Name: Laurie Singletary on Apr 3, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!  
Flag

43

Name: M. L. O'Brien on Apr 3, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it: These recommendations sounds reasonable and not overly expensive (and I am a driver and a pedestrian who lives in the area).  
Flag

44

Name: Paul Trunnell on Apr 3, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!  
Flag

45

Name: Anonymous on Apr 3, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!  
Flag

46

Name: Kate Gakenheimer on Apr 3, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!  
Flag

47

Name: Joanne Nicklas on Apr 3, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!  
Flag

48

Name: Marge Amster on Apr 3, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it: 10 McTernan Street Cambridgeport  
Flag

49

Name: Steve Wineman on Apr 3, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it: 26 McTernan St Cambridge 02139  
Flag

50

Name: Rachel Gakenheimer on Apr 3, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!  
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51

Name: *Anonymous* on Apr 4, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: I'm a frequent traveler on these routes with three small children, including one with cognitive disabilities. Please help keep our streets primarily safe for pedestrians, not cars. Many thanks!

Flag

52

Name: Lee Montgomery on Apr 4, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: Kinnaird Street, Cambridge

Flag

53

Name: Joseph Teller on Apr 4, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: 266 Western Ave. Cambridge

Flag

54

Name: Eleanor Beram on Apr 4, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:

Flag

55

Name: Adriana Gutierrez on Apr 4, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:

Flag

56

Name: Nichole Cirillo on Apr 4, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: As a twice-daily pedestrian on Western Ave, I feel quite unsafe due to the "roaring" traffic speeds and general insouciance of drivers towards my safety. Please take these simple measures seriously for the health and protection of the many residents of Cambridge who walk Western Ave.

Flag

57

Name: Nita Sembrowich on Apr 4, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: It might also be a good idea to add bigger, better signs indicating that Western Avenue is one way-- we always see cars turning off Mem Drive onto Western, sometimes going the wrong way for blocks. It's a miracle no-one has been killed.

Flag

58

Name: Laura Blacklow on Apr 4, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:

Flag

59

**Name:** Carla Nolin on Apr 4, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!** Thank you for your attention to this - It is such an intersection that begs a little more attention than others to make it safe for all who pass by going to the river and to their house. It is only going to get busier

Flag

60

**Name:** Colleen Clark on Apr 4, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!** Both Western Ave and River St by their design and direct entry in and out of Central Sq. enable speeding. They are also crossed by smaller streets and all the streets are well used by pedestrians. Therefore enforcement of existing speed limits is important for public safety. Colleen Clark and James Cox 21 William St.

Flag

61

**Name:** David Gunther on Apr 4, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!** Where my children have long waited for their school bus at the corner of Kinnaird St. and Western Ave. I have consistently observed that drivers fly by stopped school buses with remarkable frequency. I find it impossible to believe that reckless child-haters are concentrated in our neighborhood (though this is what it can feel like to me). Rather I suspect there is something or other about the roadway environment that pre-disposes people to making errors in driving judgement. I am not a highway engineer or traffic enforcement expert, so I will only request that people with the appropriate expertise look at this particular child-sensitive aspect of the traffic problems on Western Ave. This situation is by its nature very high risk, however the impact has probably been mitigated by parents quickly learning to be exceptionally vigilant about their children's safety at these locations. Thank you

Flag

62

**Name:** David Gunther on Apr 4, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!** Where my children have long waited for their school bus at the corner of Kinnaird St. and Western Ave. I have consistently observed that drivers fly by stopped school buses with remarkable frequency. I find it impossible to believe that reckless child-haters are concentrated in our neighborhood (though this is what it can feel like to me). Rather I suspect there is something or other about the roadway environment that pre-disposes people to making errors in driving judgement. I am not a highway engineer or traffic enforcement expert, so I will only request that people with the appropriate expertise look at this particular child-sensitive aspect of the traffic problems on Western Ave. This situation is by its nature very high risk, however the impact has probably been mitigated by parents quickly learning to be exceptionally vigilant about their children's safety at these locations. Thank you

Flag

63

**Name:** Bob Woodbury on Apr 5, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**

Flag

64

**Name:** Catherine Carter on Apr 5, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**

Flag

65

**Name:** Theodore Lund on Apr 6, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!**

Flag

66

**Name:** Sue Butler on Apr 6, 2012

**Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!** Traffic calming will improve quality of life for us all.

Thank you for acting on this, Sue

Flag

67

Name: Roy Perlis on Apr 7, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: Crosswalks at Western/Kinnaird don't work - drivers don't stop even for kids, and when they do other cars speed around them which is even more dangerous. The 'yield to pedestrians' sign was sort of ironic, until someone knocked it down.  
Flag

68

Name: Rachel Gunther on Apr 8, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: I already signed this important petition, but didn't write any comments. -- Although we appreciate the plans for the coming two years for improvements to Western Ave, there are still simple and relatively inexpensive changes that can be made immediately that will greatly improve the safety for the community. Western Ave and River St. are streets that surround thousands of Cambridge residents, and pedestrian safety must come before trucks, buses, and unsafe and illegal drivers. Please help us make our neighborhood safer for all of its residents - including children, elderly, and disabled. Give us the opportunity to have a neighborhood not a highway.  
Flag

69

Name: Rozann Kraus on Apr 8, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: Please support TROMP  
Flag

70

Name: Anonymous on Apr 12, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:  
Flag

71

Name: Bill August on Apr 25, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:  
Flag

72

Name: Nell Beram on Apr 25, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:  
Flag

73

Name: Lee Montgomery on Apr 25, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: 108 1/2 Kinnaird St.  
Flag

74

Name: Kristen Palma on Apr 25, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:  
Flag

75

Name: Anonymous on Apr 25, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:  
Flag

76

Name: Michael Higgins on Apr 25, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:  
Flag

77

Name: Anonymous on Apr 25, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: there is very little enforcement of traffic rules. i watched a large truck make an illegal turn on Mass ave. there was a policeman present and he did nothing to stop the truck or otherwise enforce the law. when i asked why he just shrugged. thats

why the laws are flouted continuously  
Flag

78

Name: Elron A Yellin on Apr 25, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: 34 Howard St  
Flag

79

Name: *Anonymous* on Apr 25, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: As someone who is both a pedestrian and a driver in Cambridgeport, I support these requests.  
Flag

80

Name: *Anonymous* on Apr 25, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: I recall that the reason the speed limit was dropped to 25 mph about three decades ago was a result of neighborhood outrage in response to the vehicular death of a child on Western Avenue. To this day most drivers seem to think the speed limit is a choice. Making the Avenue look prettier is nice but making it 2-way, a proven deterrent to speed, would make it safer.  
Flag

81

Name: *Anonymous* on Apr 25, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: 96 Prospect Street  
Flag

82

Name: Brandy Barents on Apr 25, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: Let's keep our neighborhood safe.  
Flag

83

Name: Helene Bank on Apr 26, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:  
Flag

84

Name: Deidra Cooke on Apr 26, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:  
Flag

85

Name: Wilma Nathanson on Apr 26, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:  
Flag

86

Name: *Anonymous* on Apr 26, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:  
Flag

87

Name: Bette Denich on Apr 26, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:  
Flag

88

Name: Kate Anderson on Apr 26, 2012  
Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: 1 Percy Place, Cambridge, MA 02139  
Flag

89

Name: Julia Cai on Apr 26, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

Flag

90

Name: Polly Wynn Allen on Apr 26, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it: 202 Erie Street, Cambridge 02139

Flag

91

Name: Joshua Flax on Apr 26, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

Flag

92

Name: Janet Crystal on Apr 26, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

Flag

93

Name: Susan Harrison on Apr 26, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

Flag

94

Name: Catherine Scott on Apr 26, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it: 201 Pearl Street, 02139

Flag

95

Name: Sylvia Rozwadowska on Apr 26, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it: Please improve the condition of a bike lines and pedestrian crossings in Cambridgeport area.

Flag

96

Name: Jennifer Malin on Apr 26, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it: Please pay special attention to the intersections at Putnam avenue at Western Ave and River Street. Both of these intersections seem especially dangerous to pedestrians, and the crosswalk/traffic signals are EXTREMELY slow to respond to pedestrian requests! This must change! I've seen intersections in Cambridge that have much better crosswalk stop response times. Please put people first at these intersections! Also, please allow people at these intersections a little extra time to cross the roads. The signals are too short at these intersections.

Flag

97

Name: Olivia Fiske on Apr 26, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!

Flag

98

Name: Elie Yarden on Apr 26, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it: I am hesitant about having this addressed to anyone other than the elected City Councillors who claim to represent me. I have been lied to by both Ms Clippinger and Mr Healy too often to be able to sincerely include either. To begin with, Ms Clippinger is not only not a traffic engineer, but in her penchant for hiring staff who will say whatever she wishes, but some years ago she had one of her 'expert' employees explain that timed signals on one way main streets are not put up for the purpose of controlling the speed of cars. (And have the opposite effect of causing drivers to speed faster -- to beat the lights.) Immediately afterwards a traffic engineer explained to me the main purpose of timing lights at close intervals is to maintain flow while limiting speed. Mr. Healy would never wish the expense adding four or more additional traffic signals on Western Ave and another four on River to the tax burden of the city. He has other

(preferred) uses for the revenue. It remains the task of the elected City Council, to see to it that a traffic engineer be appointed to head the Traffic & Parking Department of the City. Or perhaps some group of citizens might find out whether or not this is required by Commonwealth Law. And if not, see to it that this is made mandatory. Elie Yarden 143 Pleasant Street  
Flag

99

Name: Bill on Apr 27, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!: 18 Laurel Street  
Flag

100

Name: Robert Riman on Apr 27, 2012

Comments - Add address if you feel OK with it!:  
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