



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Beth Rubenstein, ^{BR}Assistant City Manager, Community Development
Department

Robert C. Haas, Commissioner, Cambridge Police Department

Date: May 28, 2008

Re: Council Order #11 dated March 24, 2008

With respect to the above-referenced council order, we would like to report the following.

Promoting and enhancing conditions for bicycling in Cambridge requires a multipronged approach including education, enforcement, engineering, and encouragement of cycling.

Education and Awareness

All road users benefit if they are mindful of the rules of the road and are considerate of other travelers.

The Cambridge Police Department, School Department, Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, Community Development Department and the Cambridge Bicycle Committee all participate in educational efforts around bicycling. These include:

"How to Get Around in Cambridge" maps. This free map/educational/promotional piece is geared toward promoting non-automobile transportation and includes safe bicycling information.

"Be Bright: Use a Light" reflectors. Periodic campaigns to promote using lights and reflectors at night include handing out free blinking red lights and literature about safe biking at night.

Magnets, bumper stickers, hang tags, etc. Items with safety information printed on them are distributed at community events.

Bicycle registration material. The Cambridge Police provide safety information when people register their bikes. They encourage registration to help them return stolen bicycles.

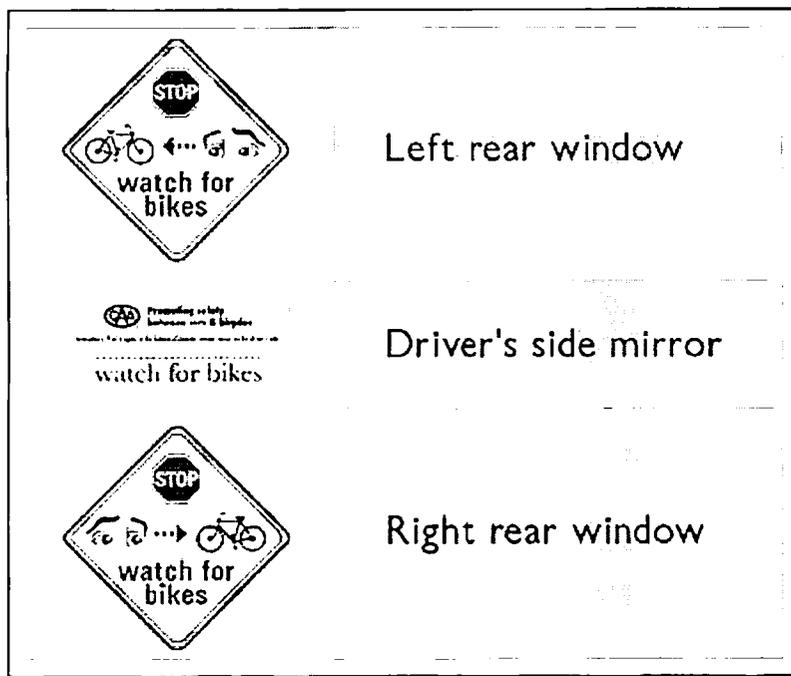
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Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department information. A section devoted to motorist, pedestrian, and bicyclist safety is included with material provided when people get their resident parking permits.

“Watch for Bikes” mirror decals. Small decals saying “Watch for Bikes” are distributed to motorists. They are installed on the side and/or rear view mirrors to remind motorists to look for cyclists before opening a car door. These are distributed at various venues and have been included in the Traffic, Parking & Transportation Brochure that is given to everyone receiving a parking sticker or visitor permit.

In 2008, a new program is being implemented to install specialized “Watch for Bikes” stickers on the passenger windows of taxi cabs in Cambridge. The stickers are intended to heighten passengers’ attention to the need to look before opening car doors. This program was borrowed from a successful program in Toronto, Canada.



Education in Cambridge Public Schools

In 2006, the Cambridge Public Schools’ Physical Education Department successfully piloted the Cycle Kids program, a Cambridge-based non-profit educational organization that teaches children bike riding skills, safety, mechanics and health. The program is co-led by Cambridge Police Department’s bicycle patrol officers and is being expanded annually, with the goal of being established at all K-8 schools in Cambridge.

When class curricula allow, officers visit the younger classes and conduct Bike Safety Presentations educating students on the importance of helmets and also identify children who need helmets. Helmets are given out to children through the Commonwealth of Mass. Executive Office of Public Safety Helmet Distribution Program.

Public Events

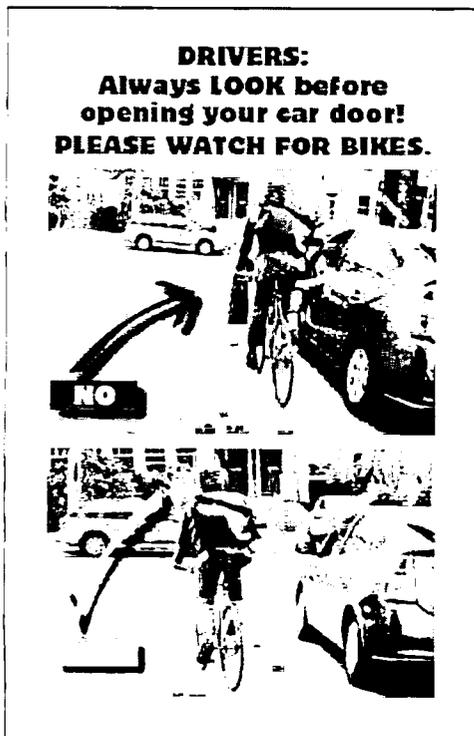
There are many opportunities for reaching the public in Cambridge at various events in the city: the Cambridge River Festival; Danehy Park Family Day; Fresh Pond Day; and tabling events during Go Green month. City staff and bicycle and pedestrian committee volunteers run these tables, handing out information and discussing the programs and efforts with attendees.

2007-2008 Bicycle Safety Campaign: Bus Shelter Ads, Flyers, and OnLine Information

In 2007, a safety campaign focused on critical bicycle safety issues was developed. Large ads were installed on bus shelters throughout the city; flyers were distributed at events and public buildings; information was put on the web and distributed through email newsletters and information. The messages are continuing to be disseminated through these various media.

The targeted messages were:

- Drivers Watch for Bikes when opening car doors
- Drivers Watch for Bikes when turning
- Drivers Don't Park in Bike Lanes
- Bicyclists Use Lights at Night
- Bicyclists Follow Traffic Signals
- Bicyclists Wear Helmets



One of the safety messages being advertised on flyers, bus shelters and on-line.

Enforcement

In Cambridge, the head of the bicycle patrol unit is a member of the bicycle committee, attends the monthly meetings and provides members with information of reported crashes involving bikes. The bicycle patrol unit also participates actively in promotional and educational events.

Cambridge police are trained on bicycle laws and enforcement during their annual in-service training. The Cambridge Police Bicycle Patrol unit has specific responsibilities for enforcement against bicycle offenders as well as offenses of motorists that make bicycling unsafe such as opening car doors into traffic, stopping in bike lanes and failing to yield when turning.

The Cambridge Bicycle Committee and Police Department developed a warning ticket that includes safety information. Citations that carry \$20 fines are also issued. The Cambridge Police enforce key infractions such as bicyclists running red lights, wrong-way riding, not using lights at night, and inappropriate sidewalk riding.

Bicycle Patrol Officers are engaged with the community in many ways promoting bicycle safety. They accompany the Bicycle Committee on its twice-yearly community rides; escort children around Fresh Pond on Fresh Pond Day and talk about bicycle safety tips; conduct bike rides and bike maintenance classes at various youth centers and are directly involved with the Cycle Kids Bicycle Training in the public schools. The officers also attended meetings with MBTA police and personnel to work on a program to educate bus drivers to be more aware of bicyclists and sharing the road with bicycles.

Encouragement

Promoting bicycling is an important way for creating awareness about bicycle issues and alerting others to the benefits of bicycling and the ways that bikeable places foster healthier, more livable communities. These are a few of the ways that bicycle promotion has been done in Cambridge.

Marketing campaigns

Campaigns get people thinking about bicycling and give the message that the community is a place for biking. Cambridge has had several ways of promoting bicycling through marketing, including an extensive campaign using posters, billboards, and postcards with celebrities bicycling entitled "Express Yourself."

Celebrate bicycling

May is GoGreen month and there are many activities happening all around Cambridge to promote bicycling and celebrate the fun of bicycling. The Cambridge Bicycle Committee leads rides around town each spring and fall that offer the perfect opportunity for people to try riding who may not normally do so. This year's May ride for GoGreen month was held on May 17 and highlighted Cambridge's transportation history.

Children Bicycling to School

The City is working on several fronts to make bicycling to school an appealing option. The School Wellness Policy states, “The Cambridge Public Schools will support walking and biking by providing resources, including information about safe walking and biking to school...” The Healthy Children’s Initiative of the Cambridge Health Alliance promotes physical activity of children and works with the school department on informational and promotional material for children and adults. On a community initiative level, the organization GreenStreets Initiative encourages children and families to walk or bicycle to school, particularly by focusing them to “go green” on the last Friday of every month (“Walk/Ride Days”). The Police Bike Unit also assists with the Walk/Ride Days and has escorted parents and children riding their bikes to school. As noted above, Cycle Kids and the Cambridge Police are teaching bicycling skills to children in physical education class.

Engineering

Well-designed roadways enhance safety for all users. By providing facilities for bicyclists such as bicycle lanes, a message is given to cyclists that they are welcome and to motorists to expect and watch for bicyclists.

Bicycle lanes have been shown to improve safety throughout the US and internationally. Bike lanes have reduced crash rates for all users – bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists. Bicycle lanes also have been associated with safer bicyclist behavior – less wrong-way and sidewalk riding and more obedience to traffic control devices (e.g., stop signs and signals). In Cambridge, a major study found that when bike lanes were present, bicyclists traveled further away from parked cars than when no markings were present. Bicyclists traveling further away from parked cars reduces the likelihood of them being “doored.”

In surveys everywhere, bicyclists overwhelmingly favor bike lanes. In the Cambridge study, over 90% specifically preferred bike lanes on Hampshire Street and motorists surveyed were highly likely to identify the bike lanes as a reason they noticed bicyclists.

Traffic Calming

Cambridge has had a substantial traffic calming program for over a decade, to reconstruct roads and intersections in such a way as to reduce traffic speeds and make the environment more conducive for bicycling and walking. The projects have been successful in reducing speeds, which is safer and more comfortable for all users.

Increasing bicycling

Annual counts in Cambridge have demonstrated a tremendous increase in the number of cyclists. Between 2002 and 2007, the numbers of people bicycling increased 70%.