



## CAMBRIDGE BICYCLE SAFETY

WORKING TO MAKE STREETS SAFER AND MORE ENJOYABLE FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES IN CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, USA

- FOR BUSINESSES
- RESOURCES
- GET INVOLVED
- ABOUT THE NEW CYCLING SAFETY ORDINANCE**
- FAQ
- CONNECT WITH US

### 2020 Cycling Safety Ordinance

Update: This ordinance **became law** on Oct 5th, 2020!

(Read [our FAQ](#) below for more context around this new legislation.)

The **Cycling Safety Ordinance**, passed in April 2019, made it a requirement to build protected bike lanes on streets in the Cambridge Bicycle Plan when they are being reconstructed according to the Five Year Sidewalk and Street maintenance plan. **The Amendment to the Cycling Safety Ordinance** aims to increase the rate that protected bike lanes are created in Cambridge by adding some new requirements.

With the exception of parts of Mass Ave and a few other streets, most protected bike lanes in the network will be required to be built in about **six years**, by May 1, 2026. The City Manager may extend this deadline by up to one year if the City Manager deems it infeasible to meet this deadline, and provides a rationale to the City Council.

The City Manager may propose a different timeline if COVID-19 causes financial shortfalls which would prevent the City from achieving the original timeline. However in this case, the City Council must approve the new timeline by July 1, 2022.

The City Manager may also propose extending the timeline by up to 4 months if COVID-19 causes unavoidable delays in public outreach activities. The City Council must also approve such an extension by July 1, 2022.

Either quick-build protected bike lanes, which are typically separated by flexposts, or protected bike lanes created by reconstructing the street, can be built to meet this requirement. Streets which are reconstructed will count toward this requirement as long as construction starts before May 1, 2026.

The streets which can count toward this requirement will be required to add up to 22.6 bike lane miles. A bike lane mile is one mile of bike lane per direction. For example, a 1 mile segment of a one-way street with a protected bike lane in a single direction is 1 bike lane mile, but a 1 mile segment of a two-way street with protected bike lanes on both sides will be 2 bike lane miles.

The bike lane miles must include these streets:

- Broadway from Quincy St to Hampshire St
- Cambridge St from Oak St to Second St
- Hampshire St from Amory St to Broadway
- Garden St from Huron Ave to Berkeley St eastbound, and from Mason St to Huron St westbound. Also, the connection from the intersection of Garden St and Concord Ave to the segment of Concord Ave contiguous to Follen Street will be required to be improved so that it's a safe route for all ages and abilities.

These streets must have protected bike lanes constructed on them by May 1, 2026. The City Manager's one-year extension power does not apply to them. Otherwise the bike lane miles will come from street segments described in the network of protected bike lanes from the Cambridge Bicycle Plan.

Note that some streets in the Cambridge Bicycle Plan may require reconstruction, and some of those requiring reconstruction may not be feasible to start construction within the six year timeframe. The Amendment requires that 22.6 bike lane miles are built. That number approximately represents the total remaining bike lane miles for protected bike lanes in the Cambridge Bicycle Plan. The City Manager may add protected bike lanes for other streets to make up for streets which are not feasible in the six year time frame.

Also note that some streets, like Fresh Pond Parkway, are not owned by the City and therefore fall outside the scope of the Cycling Safety Ordinance and this Amendment.

#### Massachusetts Ave

Mass Ave is Cambridge's most important street, and this amendment provides special consideration for this street due to its complexity and the urgency of implementing safe, comfortable protected bike lanes on this street.

The following sections of Mass Ave require special consideration due to their complexity:

- Between Plympton St and Dunster St (the protected bike lane to be built along this stretch must be separated from the bus stops)
- Between Waterhouse St and Roseland St
- Between Beech St and Dudley St
- And Mass Ave/Peabody St, from Church St to Garden St

The City Manager will be required to submit a block-by-block impacts analysis for these segments by May 1, 2021. If the impacts analysis says that a block should be built with quick-build protected bike lanes, the block will be required to be built by May 1, 2023. For any block which is determined not to get quick-build protected bike lanes, the City Manager will be required to get approval of a timeline from the City Council within one year of the submission of the impacts analysis. If the City Council does not approve this timeline, the City Manager will be required to build quick-build protected bike lanes on that block within three years of the submission of the impacts analysis.

The segment from Sidney St and Inman St also gets special consideration. It will need to be designed by January 1, 2023 and construction started by December 31, 2025.

All other segments along Mass Ave will be required to have protected bike lanes by May 1, 2022.

We are grateful to the City Manager and City staff for working with us towards an achievable timeline for the amendment. This amendment is a big step forward towards the city's goal of a network of protected bike lanes so that people of all ages and abilities can bike, ride a scooter, or use other alternative means of mobility to get to where they need to go safely and comfortably. The Amendment to the Cycling Safety Ordinance will help make it possible for children now in kindergarten to see most of this network built by the time they reach middle school.

### FAQ

#### How does this ordinance help Cambridge achieve its Vision Zero goal to eliminate serious injuries and deaths on our streets?

Protected bike lanes save lives by **preventing almost 40% of crashes** including doorings, side-swipes, and front and rear end collisions.

#### How does this ordinance help Cambridge achieve its mode-shift goals?

Cambridge is **on track to miss its goal** of reducing car ownership by 15% from 1990 levels. This ordinance can help reduce car use in Cambridge by making it safer and more comfortable for people to bike and use other forms of micromobility. One reason the Cambridge Bicycle Plan was created was to support **"interested but concerned"** people, who would be willing to bike but who are concerned about their safety while doing so. Protected bike lanes provide a low-stress facility for people of all ages and abilities that can make bike commuting a better option for more people.

#### How does this ordinance help Cambridge in its fight against climate change?

The **Cambridge Climate Action Plan** recommends improving bike facilities as a step in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

#### How does the City Council feel about this ordinance?

We have twice asked City Council candidates to support a network of protected bike lanes built in five years, and both times a supermajority of elected councillors have signed our pledge. The policy order which introduced this ordinance was also cosponsored by a supermajority of councillors.

#### How do Cambridge residents and voters feel about protected bike lanes?

We've collected thousands of signatures from the public in support of this ordinance.

Of the 21,239 #1 votes cast in the November 2019 election, 14,923 were cast for candidates who signed **our pledge** to do everything in their power for rapid implementation of a network of protected bike lanes. That's over 70% of #1 votes.

In the City's 2018 bi-annual resident survey, the survey directly asked residents for the first time if they agreed with the statement: "I would like to see the City install more protected bike lanes in Cambridge". Of those who expressed agreement or disagreement, 71% of online respondents and 70% of telephone respondents agreed.

#### What about the impact on businesses?

Most of the **studies** on installation of protected bicycle lanes have found no negative impact at all on businesses, or even a positive impact.

In addition, intercept studies that the City has conducted show the vast majority of shoppers do not drive to the businesses along Cambridge's busiest commercial corridors. In East Cambridge, for example, only 22% of people intercepted had driven to Cambridge St; in Inman Square, only 13% of people intercepted had driven to the square; and, in Harvard Square, only 18% of people had driven to the square. Rather than driving, most Cambridge shoppers walk, use public transportation, or bike.

Dozens upon dozens of Cambridge business—from small restaurant establishments to large employers like Google and Microsoft—have signed a pledge voicing their support for the construction of a complete network of protected bike lanes as an urgent priority. To see the complete list of businesses, click this **link**. As one local employer **put it**: "I don't want my children, my employees, or my neighbors to be involved in accidents."

In order to address the needs of businesses and other stakeholders, building protected bicycle lanes will follow the City's normal process, with public meetings gathering feedback to help the City improve their designs.

#### Won't the network get built eventually? Why do we need to go faster?

Biking in Cambridge is popular and getting more popular, with the second highest rate of bike commuting on the east coast (second to Somerville). But it is largely confident people who are biking, and who tolerate the risk and danger of our streets. We want **all ages and abilities** to see biking as a viable option, where they and their loved ones feel safe biking to school, to work, to shop at local businesses, and generally to go wherever they need to.

#### Will accelerating the creation of protected bike lanes cost a lot of money?

No. Quick-build protected bike lanes can be built very cheaply. The protected bike lane on Mass Ave from the Charles River to Sidney St, about a half mile long, cost only 0.05% of the City's budget for that year, or \$300 thousand out of \$678 million

A network of protected bike lanes is a great investment for a city. For only the cost of some planning, public process, and some paint and flexposts, Cambridge can tackle many of its transportation goals all at once.

#### Is it feasible for City staff to build the network in six years?

Yes. We have worked with City staff to ensure that the requirements in the ordinance are achievable. Most new protected bike lanes will be quick-build, and these can usually be implemented in a matter of weeks.

#### Will there still be public outreach for new protected bike lanes?

Yes. City staff will conduct public outreach as appropriate as new protected bike lanes are proposed.

#### What about COVID-19? Does this ordinance account for it?

Yes. If COVID-19 causes financial shortfalls for the City that make it impossible to meet the ordinance's deadlines, the City Manager has until July 1, 2022 to change any deadline in it so long as they get the approval of the City Council.

Also, if COVID-19 causes public outreach activity delays, the City Manager has until July 1, 2022 to extend the timeline for the construction of the complete protected network by up to 4 months, again, so long as they get the approval of the City Council.

There is no doubt, however, that COVID-19 makes this ordinance more important than ever. The lack of safe pedestrian, cycling, and transit options has exacerbated the current public health emergency, as well as the economic crunch that Cambridge local businesses are currently facing. Nearly 30% of Cambridge households are without a car, and now have difficulty getting to their local businesses while ensuring appropriate physical distance from others. This ordinance will help address this problem.

There is also a serious risk that due to COVID-19, transportation mode shift will halt and a **greater percentage of people will start relying on cars again to get around**. This, quite literally, cannot happen. Traffic would be gridlocked everywhere. And the impacts on equity would be profound. This ordinance is a powerful statement that Cambridge is more committed than ever to building a transportation system that works for everyone: one that is safe and pleasant for those on foot and on bike, and one with less traffic because more people have gotten out of their cars and decided to walk or bike.

Finally, we have seen how living in proximity to air pollution increases the risk of dying from COVID-19. Air pollution is often higher in communities of color, and a **report** from Attorney General Maura Healey describes how air pollution has contributed to COVID-19's horrible burden on these communities. Reducing the number of motor vehicles on our streets is critical to addressing health issues caused by air pollution.

#### This sounds great! What can I do to help? What happens next?

There is one final vote, on October 5th, 2020. After that the Ordinance will have passed.

Your help will be essential in getting this ordinance passed. Email your councillors as described above and tell them how excited you are to see this happen and happen quickly. City Council and City staff need to hear from you so they know that this ordinance is what Cambridge residents want.

### ABOUT US

We are a group of Cambridge residents interested in promoting safety for cyclists of all ages and abilities in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

Learn more about our sister organization Somerville Bicycle Safety.

### Subscribe

Sign up to receive important calls to action and news about bicycling-related policies and infrastructure.

### RECENT POSTS

Cambridge Sets Nation's First Mandatory Timeline for Completing Bike Network

Cambridge Bicycle Safety Submits Petition with 1000 Signatures to City Urging More Action on Shared Streets

DCR Plan Removes Proposed Bike Lanes from Gerry's Landing Road

Our response to the District Attorney's report on Amanda Phillip's death while biking in Inman Square

Webster Ave Needs Protected Bike Lanes

### META

Log In

Entries [RSS](#)

Comments [RSS](#)

WordPress.org

### CONTACT

Join the conversation by writing to us at [info@cambridgebikesafety.org](mailto:info@cambridgebikesafety.org)