
Fwd: Safety concerns about the Fitchburg Crossing Initiative

1 message

Ellen Shore <eshore@cambridgeredevelopment.org>
To: Ellen Shore <eshore@cambridgeredevelopment.org>

Tue, Jan 16, 2024 at 1:06 PM

From: Yinuo Wang <[REDACTED]>
Date: January 14, 2024 at 10:54:26 AM EST
To: tevens@cambridgeredevelopment.org
Subject: Safety concerns about the Fitchburg Crossing Initiative

**Brickworks Condominium Association (310 – 320 Rindge Ave)
Fitchburg Crossing Initiative**

Dear Director Evans,

Please allow me to introduce myself as a resident of the Brickworks Condominiums in Cambridge, MA, a community of 102 households located at 310-320 Rindge Avenue. I am writing to share concerns regarding the proposed “Pedestrian/Bicycle Crossing of the Fitchburg MBTA Commuter Rail Line in North Cambridge Massachusetts,” which would connect Rindge Avenue and Danehy Park areas. (More information about this initiative can be found at <https://www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/communitydevelopment/fitchburgcommuterrailinecrossingstudy>.)

My main concerns arise from the proposed use of pathways within Brickworks. The current plan calls for the creation of a multi-use path that would wind through the property, with this path serving as the only proposed entry for the public to reach the planned Fitchburg Crossing. However, as noted in the next page, there are significant concerns about whether such a pathway would be safe, ADA and MAAB compliant, equitable, practical. There are significant concerns about whether it would lead to no undue burden for Brickworks in terms of safety, liability, and maintenance for residents and those that would traverse through our property. I worry about the consequences of building a pathway to serve North Cambridge’s 14,000+ residents, in addition to residents from surrounding neighborhoods, through a development of 102 households.

To be clear, I do not oppose connecting Rindge Ave with Danehy Park so that there is easier and better accessibility across the different communities and neighborhoods in Cambridge. Connecting Rindge Ave with Danehy Park will benefit all residents of Cambridge.

My fear is that these concerns are not being properly listened to, accounted for, or addressed by the City of Cambridge Community Development Department and other groups supporting this pathway. The disregard for securing a safe means of public entry stands in contrast to the claims around accessibility, equity, and community engagement that this installation is supposed to deliver. It raises questions about the due diligence that this proposal has undertaken as the planning and design move forward.

To that end, I would like to urge you to consider whether the process for this initiative has carried out its due diligence in an equitable manner, with significant community engagement and input - especially from the Brickworks community, which stands to be disproportionately affected by the proposed pathway.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Yinuo Wang

SUMMARY OF CONCERNS

SAFETY

- Lack of a **safe** multi-use pathway that would accommodate all pedestrians, wheelchairs, dog walkers, individual and multi-use cyclists while also allowing for automobile traffic on Brickworks roadway(s) (e.g., residents, vendors, others) and in and out of Brickworks driveways
- **Lack of proper lighting for safety** of pathway via Brickworks to Rindge Ave

MAINTENANCE

- **Burden of maintaining Brickworks** property as a result of public uses due to the proposed pathway (e.g., trash / littering, snow removal, grass / landscaping upkeep, painting of signs, etc.)

FEASIBILITY & LIABILITY

- **The proposed path is a circuitous route between the bridge and Rindge Ave via Brickworks property**
 - Requires various crossing points to reach Rindge Ave:
 - 1) Intersections across multiple townhouse driveways and deeded parking spaces
 - 2) Sharp 90-degree turns around the sides and backs of buildings
 - 3) Current width of sidewalks is 3' and the sidewalks abut various buildings whereby there are zero set-backs from property spaces
 - A narrow sidewalk with two 90-degree turns that have **zero visibility around corners is hazardous and noncompliant**. Path is too narrow to accommodate and to be used as a multi-use path with no separation of users at different speeds and directions. Cargo and children bikes going through 2 abutting, 90-degree bends with blind spots are unsafe. Greater clearance is required for turns around narrow obstructions and for wheelchair turning spaces.
- **Proposed path would run over nearly 30 utility grates and covers in a very short distance of < 50 yards**. These grates are required and must be kept open and unobstructed at all times for access to drains, sewers, water, CATV, and other utilities.
- **Concern over liabilities that may arise** (e.g., injuries sustained by public while using easement, injuries or property damage sustained by residents due to public usage of easement)

DISABILITY COMPLIANCE

- **Not ADA or MAAB compliant** – Easement and proposed pathway / usage would not accommodate all users (e.g., wheelchairs, pedestrians, cyclists, dogs, etc.) on one path

- For the purpose of the uses now proposed, the easement is insufficiently sized to meet these MINIMUM STANDARDS. Also, the City of Cambridge has an “... obligation to ensure that facilities are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities”.

EQUITY OF SHARING THIS PROPOSED PATHWAY

- Brickworks (with 102 units) is the smallest of all properties / residents affected by the proposed pathway, and yet it is expected to bear the majority of the responsibility of accommodating the expected volume of traffic for this proposed pathway.
 - The other properties that would directly abut this pathway and crossing are:
 - 402 Rindge Ave: 473 units
 - 362-64 Rindge Ave: 504 units
 - Jefferson Park: 382 units