

Public Comment – Select Board Meeting

Brenda Hefter

653 Chestnut Hill Ave

March 25, 2025

Good evening. My name is Brenda Hefter, and I am a lifelong resident of Brookline. I have lived with my family on Chestnut Hill Avenue for nearly 40 years. I have serious concerns about the proposed Chestnut Hill Avenue Renovation Project and the significant implications for our and our neighbor's daily lives.

The proposal to remove curb-side parking and install flex posts along the bike lanes will create major challenges for residents who rely on parking accessibility for visitors, home health aides, contractors, landscapers, repair services, delivery drivers, and our Postal Service vehicles who park at intervals along the curb to deliver the mail.

Many driveways in our area are tandem style, meaning curbside parking is essential. Eliminating these spaces that have safely and peacefully coexisted with existing bike lanes for decades will create significant disruptions for residents and service providers alike.

As a street with over 15,000 vehicles transiting daily, traffic is already backed up at peak times, particularly between 7–9 AM and 3–6 PM, and plans to narrow the roadway will only both increase congestion and driver frustration.

To my knowledge, there has never been a bicycle-vehicle collision of any type along this stretch of Chestnut Hill Avenue. Bicycles utilize the existing bike lanes alongside vehicular traffic on both sides of the street without compromising on-street parking or the natural flow of traffic. It is disruptive and discouraging to see such drastic changes being proposed when the current system has functioned safely for decades.

The reality is that there are very few bikers using Chestnut Hill Ave. I spend a lot of time outside my home and walking along the street, and bike traffic is minimal, even with the existing accommodation.

The proposal negatively impacts daily life in many ways. For example, Warren Field is a hub for baseball games in the spring, summer, and fall—where will visitors park? As someone who depends on rideshares for work and medical appointments, stepping into traffic to access a stopped vehicle will be dangerous and will cause backups on the road.

Elderly or disabled visitors will not be able, in many circumstances to find close parking to residents they wish to visit. This creates an equity issue as these individuals cannot reasonably reach their destinations (the street currently allows curbside parking and front-of-house access on both sides of the street).

The proposals made to our neighborhood do not reflect an understanding of this project's full impact. We have always had what we currently have, and we should be able to continue living without such a dramatic impact on our daily lives. This intrusion is overboard and affects our quality of life. With due respect to the Town and its officials, this is one more example where the needs of a small group overwhelm the needs of the greater community.

I am aware that the Engineering Department is working on the next iteration of the design. The new plan, as I understand it, does not address our issues. Any proposal needs to put us, the tax-paying residents of Chestnut Hill Avenue, first and foremost.