

May 28, 2022

Dear Cape Cod Commission Members,

While there are many valid reasons not to pave over the last open space in Hyannis, including water quality, impact on climate change and its affect on our health and that of our natural habitat and wildlife, my main purpose today is to talk about transportation and traffic issues.

As you know, the traffic and safety around the West End Rotary is a huge concern. As a former resident of Betty's Pond, my husband and I often walked downtown. Each time we did, it was nerve wracking, to say the least, crossing over from West Main, Stevens and over to North Street. Most cars breezed through the stop sign and didn't pay attention to pedestrians as there are no crosswalks. Many drivers from out of state (and many from in state) don't even know the rules regarding the right of way when entering a rotary.

Fast forward. My husband and I now live off of Greenwood Ave., and rarely walk\* to downtown anymore because of the distance. So driving is the norm for us. Our main route is to head down Scudder.

### **West End Rotary**

The rotary traffic is very challenging in and of itself — and then add 3 intersections, 6 businesses, the Conference Center, Melody Tent and school traffic from Sturgis and Barnstable High School. I can't count the number of times I have narrowly escaped getting into an accident as cars dash over the intersection excessively fast to access the liquor store. Now add 1.5 vehicles per 312 units. That's a *minimum* of 468 vehicles. While adding traffic lights could certainly help the matter of safety, they will greatly add to traffic congestion.

### **Walking vs. Driving to Work**

One of Emblem's amenities is its proximity to downtown so residents could walk to work. We live in a society that love their cars even though walking is healthier and reduces our carbon footprint. Most people won't even take public transportation never mind walk to work!

Even if some of the residents did walk to work, how many people do you think that would be? 15, 20, 30?

Cars are still the king of transportation. Commuters say that commuting by car is easier, more convenient and allows them more flexibility. A Google survey\*\* in 10/21 noted that a third of Americans **would** opt to drive than **walk a five-minute distance**. Another survey\*\*\* by Bloomberg showed that only 13.4% of Bostonians take public transportation to work and only 5% walk to work, and less than 3% of Americans walk to work. Another survey in May, 2022, by Statista\*\*\*\*, notes that 76% of Americans prefer using their cars to commute to work.

With the rents “currently” (and I say currently, because I suspect they will increase) at \$1500 for a studio apartment, how many downtown service workers could afford to live there? At the least, most tenants paying \$1500 a month would have to make at least \$4,000 / month *after* taxes when you figure in utilities, health insurance, car and home insurances, food and other living expenses. Better paying jobs will most likely be further away — maybe even “over the bridge”.

And, yes, housing is a critical problem here as well as in most of the country. If it is “affordable housing that we need, let’s build affordable housing. There are so many other locations — vacant buildings, vacant lots — in Hyannis and in the town of Barnstable in which a development of this size could thrive.

**Are residents going to bring more business downtown?** Maybe. But if you take a walk downtown during the summer, you will find that 75% of the people there are tourists — not residents.

Our economy is closely tied into our environment. Whether we like it or not, Cape Cod is a resort area where tourists come from all over the world to enjoy its natural beauty and spend time by the sea. Let’s give tourists a reason to keep coming back to Hyannis and capitalize on our natural resources and protect them for future generations.

I do hope you carefully perform your due diligence and make the right decision for the village of Hyannis.

Thank you.

Angela Rutzick

\*(We are both very active, love to walk, play tennis 4-5x a week - so it isn't because we physically can't. We don't often walk downtown because we want to utilize our time more efficiently.)

\*\* <https://barbend.com/new-survey-americans-walking-vs-driving/>

\*\*\* <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-01-22/how-americans-commute-to-work-in-maps>

\*\*\*\* <https://www.statista.com/chart/18208/means-of-transportation-used-by-us-commuters/>