

The Boston Globe

Bike lanes impose hardship and risk on countless fellow travelers

January 11, 2019

I was struck by the venomous comments posted online in response to Jeff Jacoby's column "Is the bike-lane fever breaking?" None seemed to address the argument. It is unconscionable to restrict the movement of hundreds of thousands of car users in the name of making life more convenient for a few hundred bicyclists.

Let me use the street where I live as an example. On Beacon Street in Boston, the city installed a protected bike lane, reducing the number of lanes available for traffic from three to two. The result is, in fact, a single lane meandering between Uber, Lyft, and taxi drivers; UPS, FedEx, and moving vans; and various contractors' trucks blocking the lanes on either side. And this is without a flake of snow.

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The arrangement also increases risks for motorists, whose view of cross traffic is blocked by parked cars, and for bicyclists, who are not seen by right-turning vehicles and are exposed to a hit by an open door of a disembarking passenger.

Not to be outdone, the City of Cambridge installed bike lanes and bus lanes on a stretch of Mass. Ave. near MIT, creating a single auto lane in each direction. The results are not only stop-and-go traffic on Mass. Ave. but stand-still traffic on the Harvard Bridge every morning, resulting in increased emissions of pollutants.

I understand the joys of bicycling, but imposing hardship and risks on countless fellow travelers while degrading the environment? Really?