

Traffic Conditions on Mead St and Cogswell Ave

City of Cambridge | Traffic, Parking, and Transportation

Tuesday, June 14, 2022

Patrick Baxter, Engineering Manager

Agenda

Overview:

- History
- Existing Conditions
- Goals

Potential Interventions

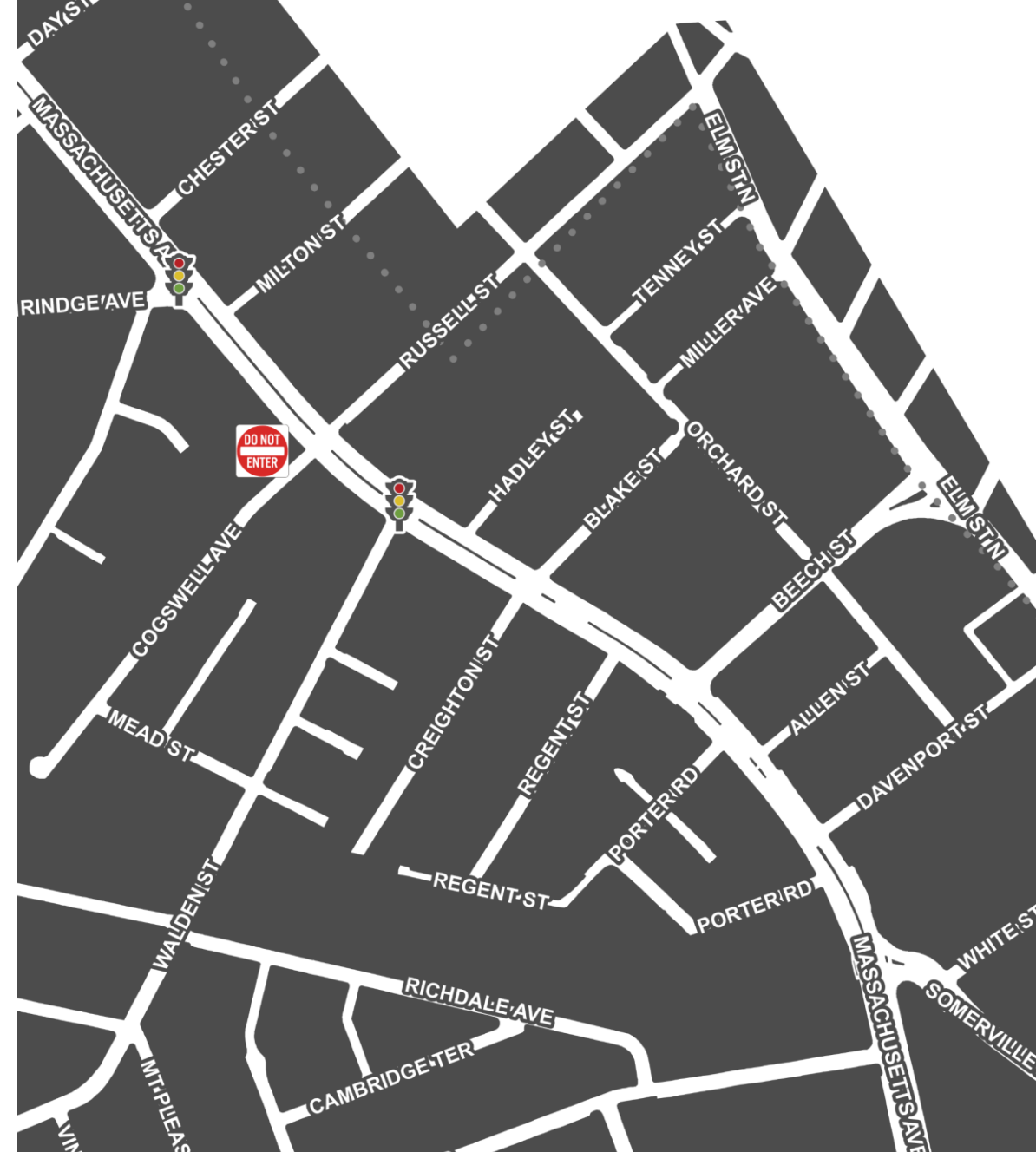
Proposed Solution

Feedback

- Throughout this presentation, please add questions through the Zoom Q&A box.
- We will have time for you to comment at the end of this meeting.

Pre-Pandemic Concerns from the Community

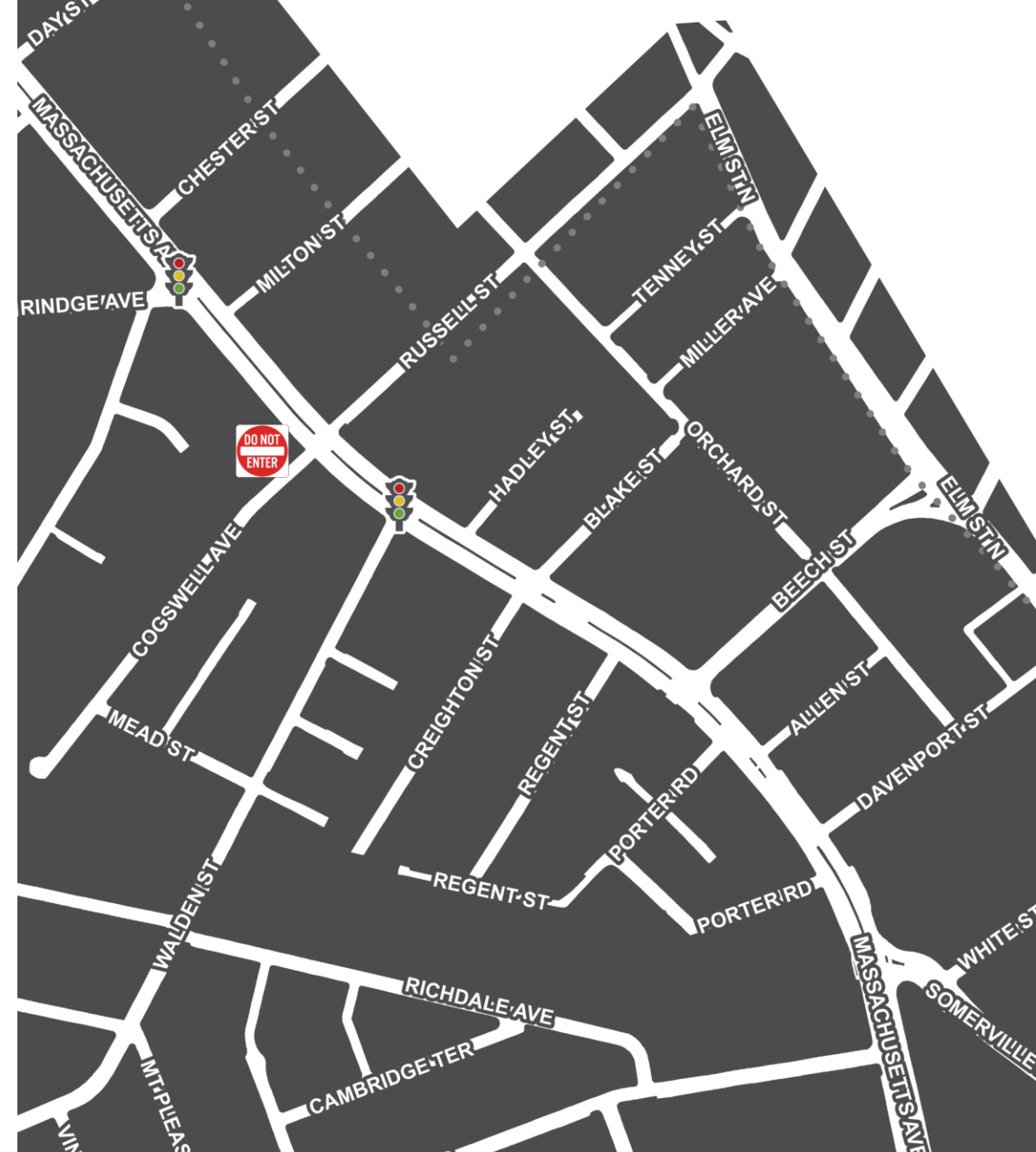
- Previous meeting on February 5, 2020
- Traffic queueing on Walden Street use Mead St and Cogswell Ave as a cut thru to avoid the signal at Walden St and Mass Ave.
- Residents report that they cannot leave or return to their homes due to congestion during the evening peak hours.
- Off-peak, cut-thru traffic speeds on Cogswell and Mead.



Pre-Pandemic Concerns from the Community

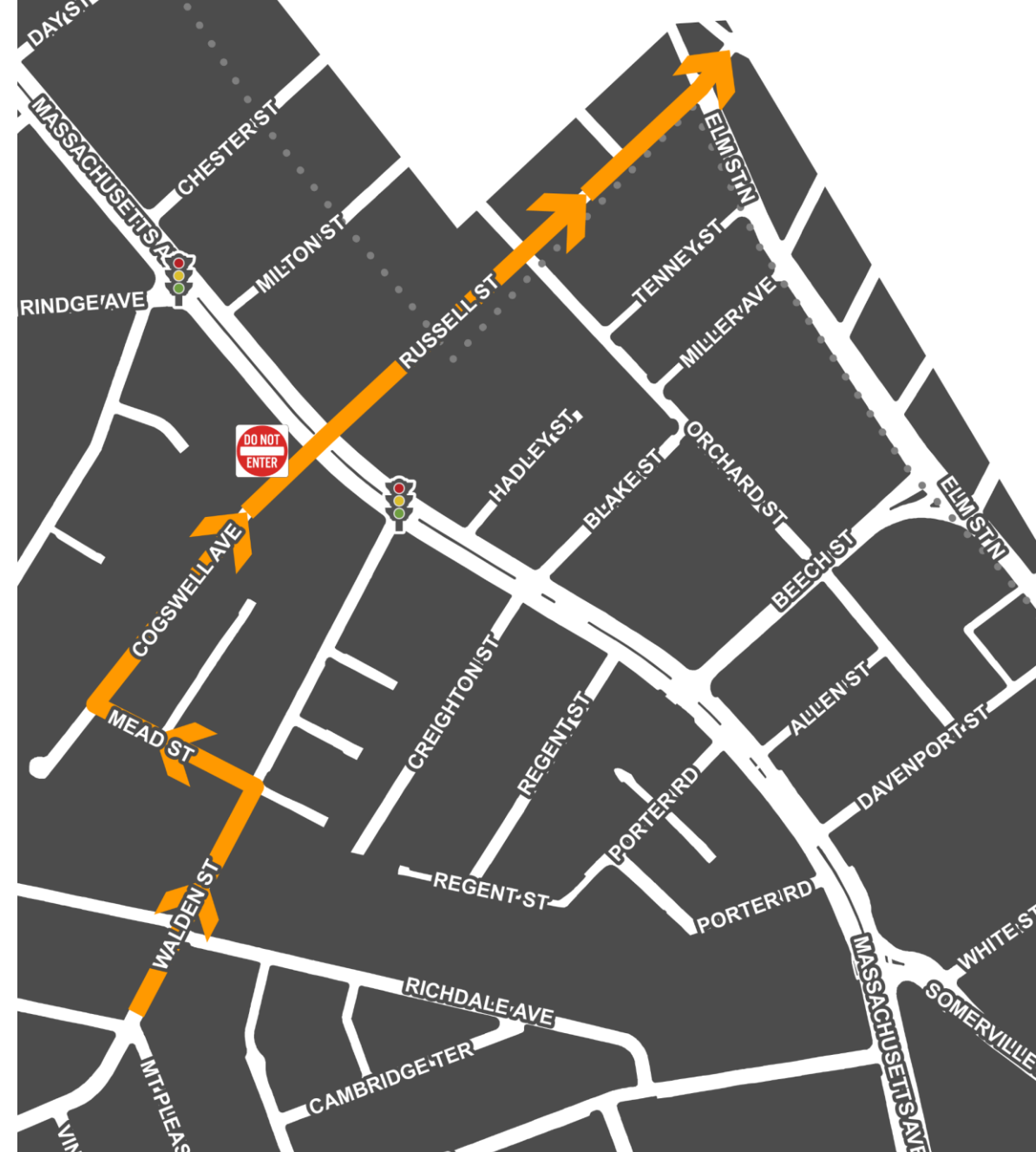
What we've heard: Issues reduced during the pandemic, but increased traffic on major streets has caused the pattern to re-emerge.

How do we address this issue before it gets worse?



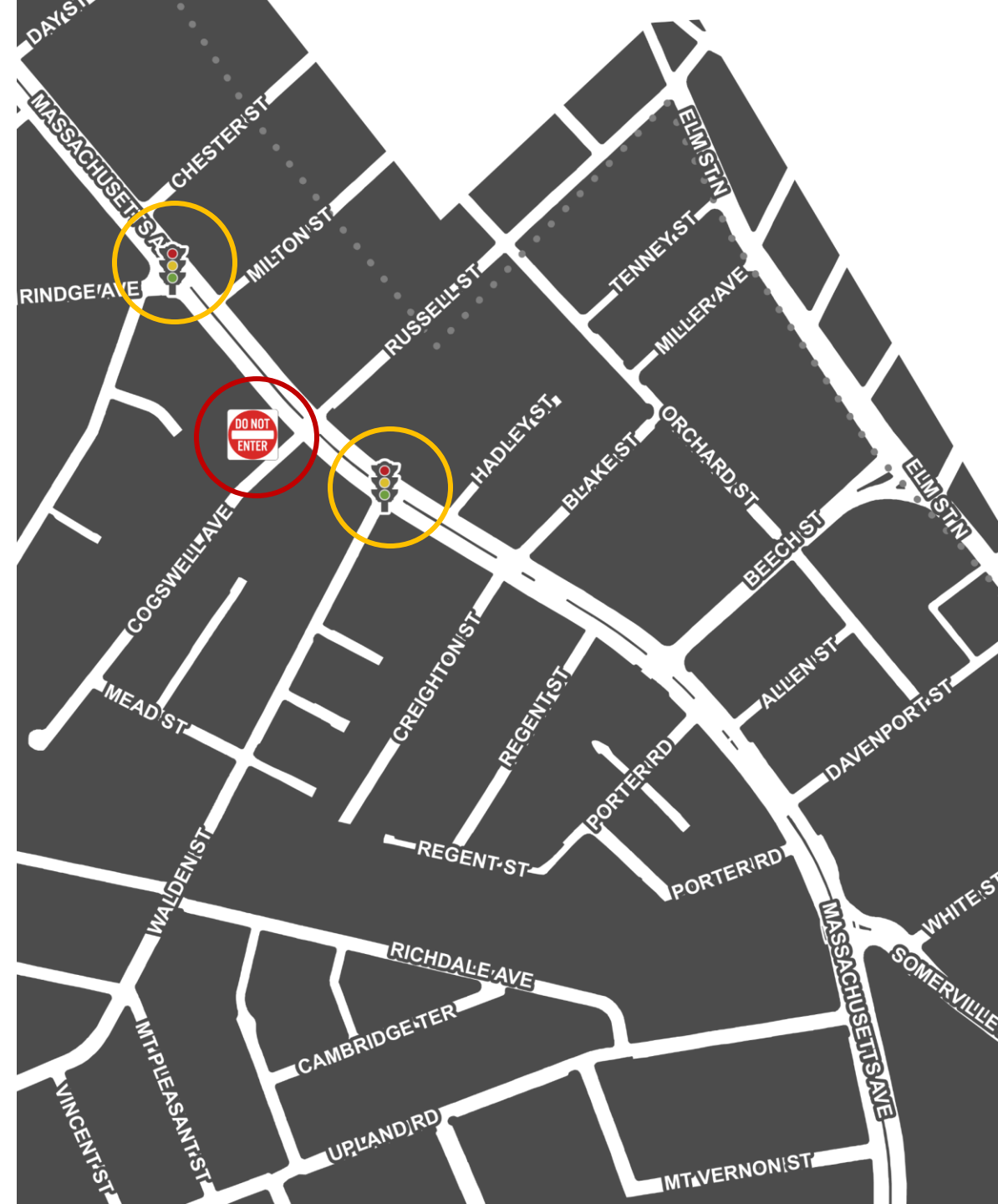
Additional Safety Concerns

- Most non-local trips on Mead and Cogswell are heading toward Davis Square.
- This trip requires people to drive across Massachusetts Ave at an unsignalized intersection.



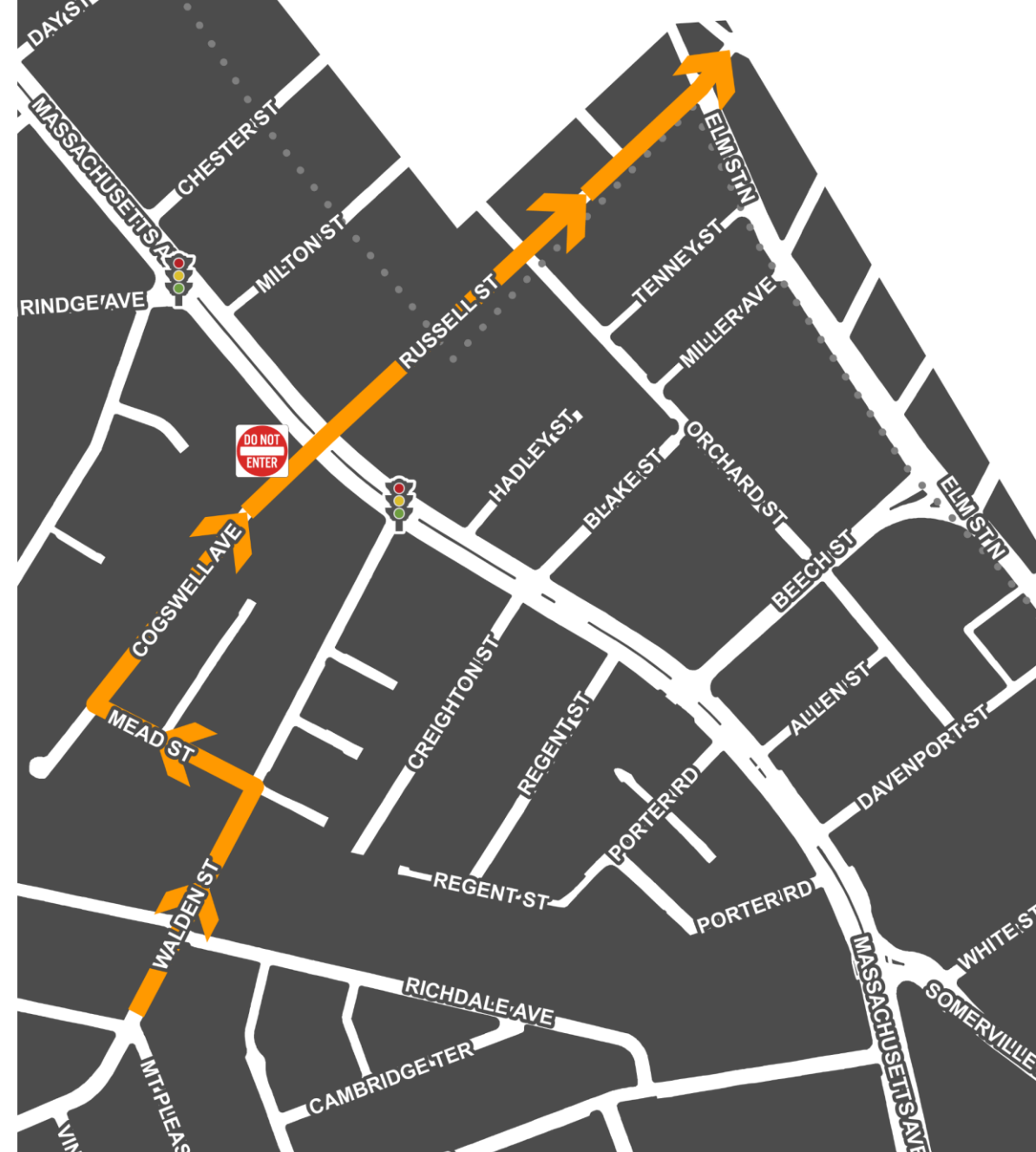
Evening Rush Hour Existing Conditions

- **Signalized intersections** on Mass Ave at Rindge Ave and Walden St.
- Cogswell Ave has a peak hour **“Do Not Enter”** restriction on the north side.



Existing Trip Along Cogswell Ave

- Creates additional traffic on Cogswell Ave.
- Saves approximately one minute for people driving to Davis Square during the evening rush hour.



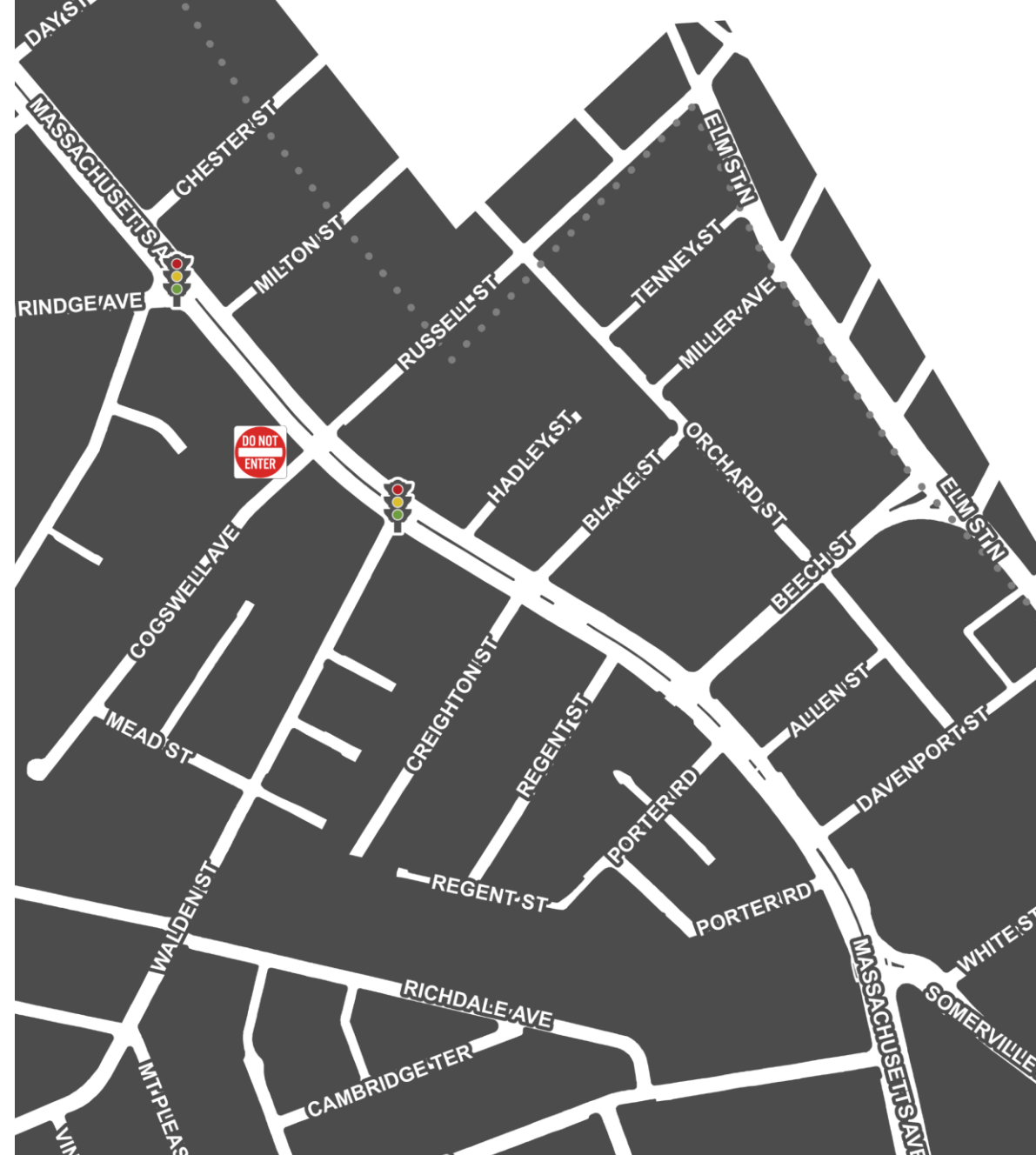
Crash History at Cogswell Ave

- Prior to the pandemic, three crashes in three years involving cars going straight or left out of Cogswell.



Goals

- Improve resident access to/from their homes during rush hour.
- Increase safety for people traveling on Cambridge streets.
- Reduce the number of people making an unsafe maneuver across Massachusetts Ave.



Evening Rush Hour Summary of Potential Interventions

Potential Change	Impact on Residents	Impact on People Traveling to Davis Sq	Safety Impact at High Crash Location
“Do not Enter” at Mead St from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.	Cannot enter the neighborhood from either direction between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.	Forced to stay on Walden Street from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.	No change
“No Left” from Walden St to Mead St	Residents must approach Mead St. from Mass Ave, resulting in increased trip length (7 to 13 minutes)	Forced to stay on Walden St	No change
“Right Only” from Cogswell to Mass Ave.	Small increase in trip length for some trips from Cogswell Ave	Cogswell Avenue no longer works as a through route	Reduces the chance of crashes at Mass Ave and Cogswell Ave and reduces traffic volume on Cogswell.

Why Resident-Only Restrictions Are Not Effective

Legal Concerns:

"...while the City would not be expressly prohibited from restricting access to public ways, this type of regulation may be vulnerable to legal challenge."

- *Response to Policy Order/Awaiting Report 18-87*

Enforcement:

Requires significant police resources and it is not possible to identify non-resident drivers.

Impact:

- Mapping/navigation apps may not remove links based on resident-only restrictions.
- Restricts necessary non-resident access (taxi/TNC pick-up, deliveries, visitors, contractors)

Proposed Solution

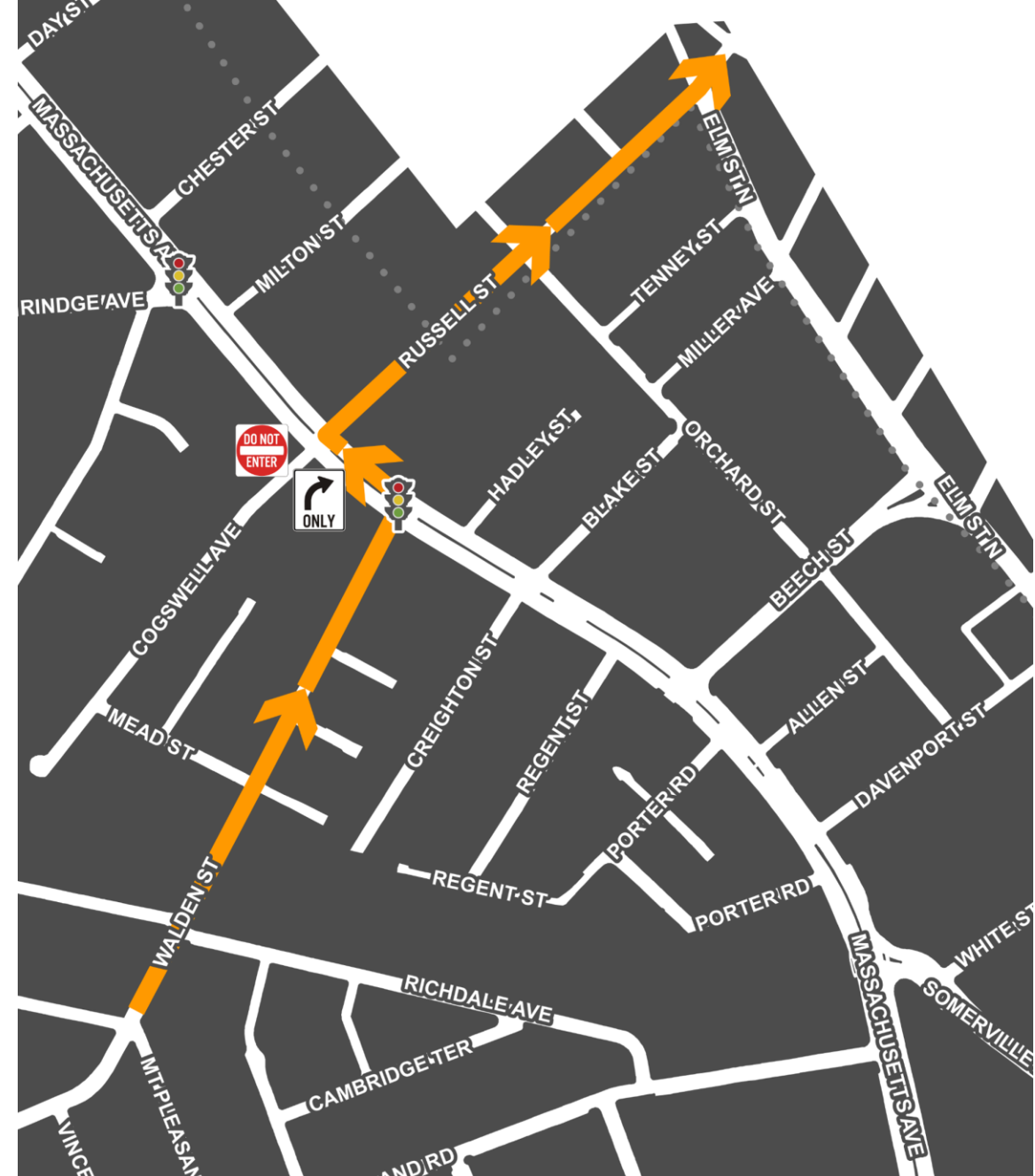
“Right Only” from Cogswell Ave

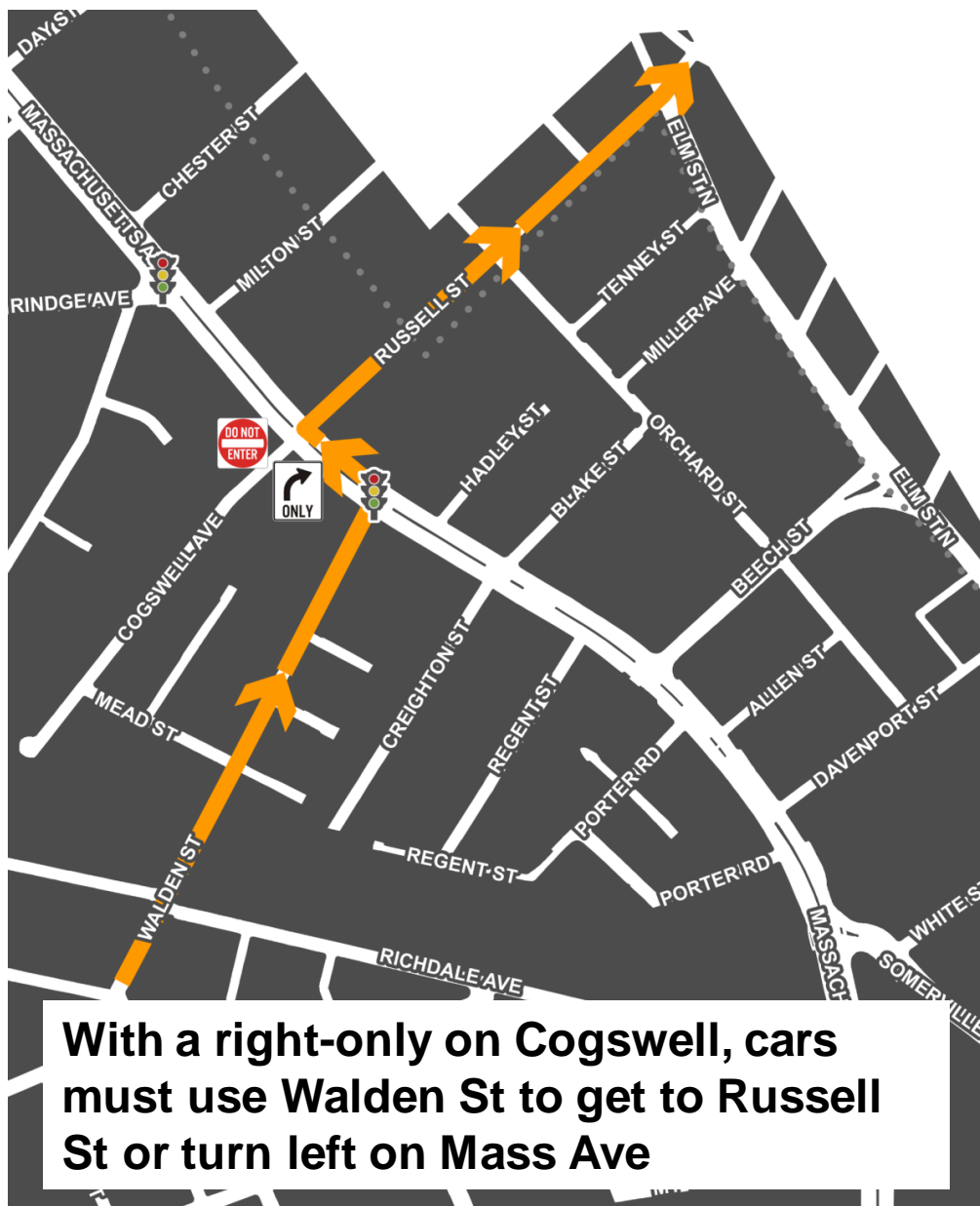
Proposed Solution: Right Only

Proposed change: Add a “Right Turn Only” restriction on Cogswell Ave at the intersection with Mass Ave

Impacts:

- Will reduce the potential for a crashes at the intersection
- Cogswell Ave no longer provides through access to Mass Ave northbound and Russel St
- Due to restrictions, we expect 90% to 100% of **non-local** trips would be removed from Cogswell Ave and Mead St
- Adds 1 to 4 minutes to the start of resident trips
- Significantly reduces the likelihood of crashes at the intersection of Cogswell Ave and Mass Ave

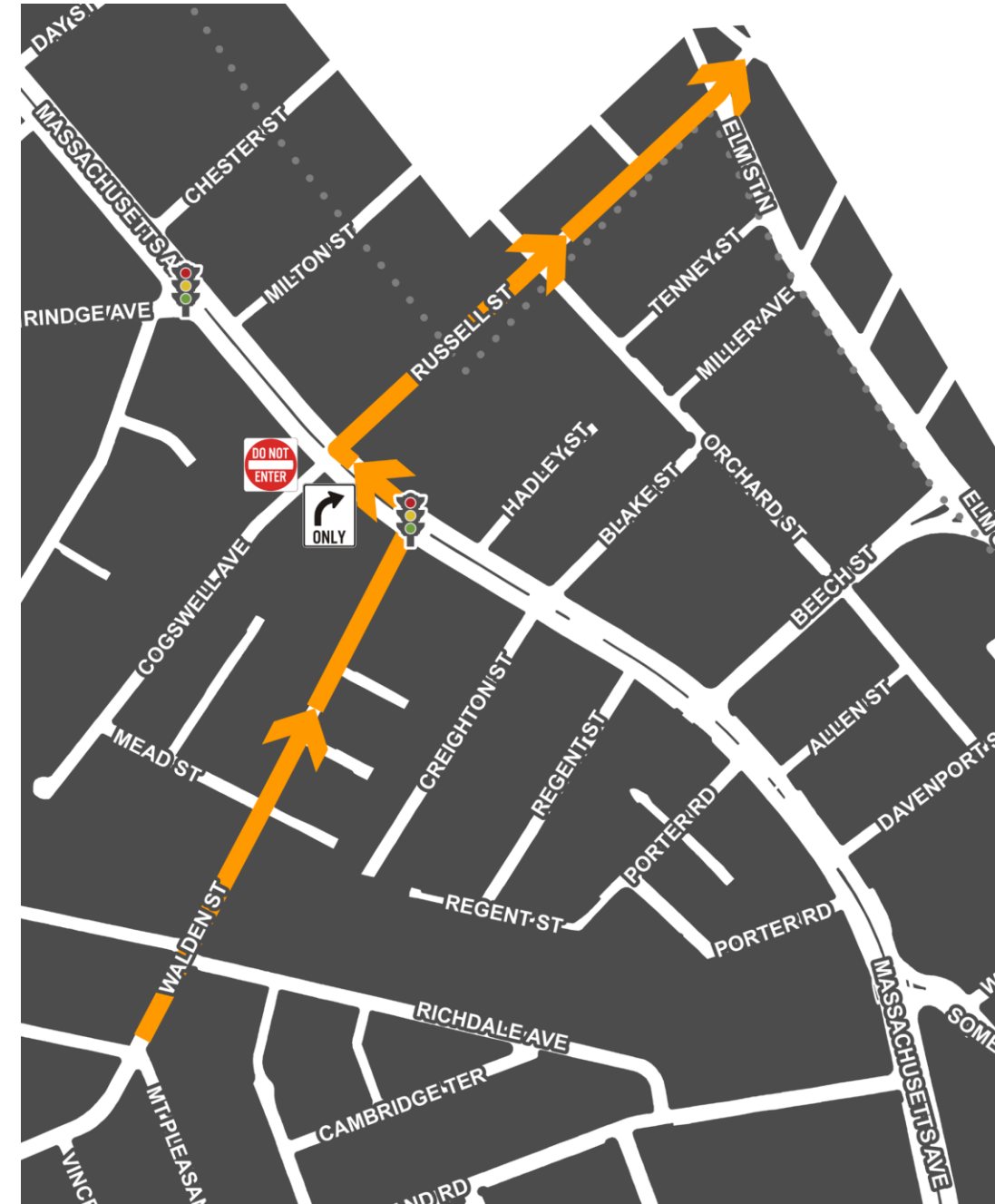




Local traffic turning left on Mass Ave or going to Russell St would use Walden St, adding 1 to 4 minutes to trips

Frequently Asked Questions

- Why are you addressing this now?
- Does this have anything to do with the City's bike lane projects?
- Does this have anything to do with the proposed development at 2072 Mass Ave?
- Can you add a new crosswalk as part of this project?



Feedback

- We will take comments and questions in the order that hands are raised. If you are calling in, dial *9 to raise your hand and *6 to unmute.
- You may also ask questions through the Q+A function.
- Approximately every 10 minutes, we will pause to answer questions.
- In order to allow everyone to speak, please try to limit your time to 1 minute.
- The meeting is scheduled to end at 7 p.m.
- You may also contact the project manager directly:

Patrick Baxter, Engineering Manager

pbaxter@cambridgema.gov or 617-349-4715

- Are you experiencing traffic-related issues on Cogswell St or Mead St?
- What do you think of adding the right-turn only from Cogswell St to Mass Ave?
- Please ask questions or share any other feedback you have!