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## City of Cambridge Announces Safer Truck Partnership with Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

**Cambridge, MA, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015** -- Today, Mayor David P. Maher and City Manager Richard C. Rossi announced a partnership with the [Volpe](#) National Transportation Systems Center to install truck side guards on city-owned trucks in order to enhance safety for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling in Cambridge. The city intends to install these side guards on heavy-duty vehicles in an effort to lead by example in Massachusetts and to encourage private entities to do the same.

These efforts dovetail with the U.S. Department of Transportation's [Mayors' Challenge for Safer People and Safer Streets](#), which was launched on January 22, 2015, by U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx.

"Cambridge has always led the way with progressive multimodal transportation options for our residents. Now we are stepping up once again to lead the charge to make our streets safer and to mitigate the deadly consequences of common traffic collisions," said Mayor Maher.



"The Mayors' Challenge was designed to help small and large cities increase the safety of all bicyclists and pedestrians," said Secretary Foxx. "These truck guards are another safety feature that can help save lives in Cambridge and other communities around the country."

"Cambridge has decided to quickly and definitively make changes to its fleet to establish a new standard for safety in our community and the private sector," said City Manager Rossi. "I'm immensely proud of how the city and federal government have come together to work to protect our residents."

Side guards, which are installed on large trucks to protect bicyclists and pedestrians from falling underneath the vehicle, helped reduce bicyclist fatalities by 61 percent and pedestrian fatalities by 20 percent in side-impact crashes with trucks in the United Kingdom after side guards became required,

starting in 1986. Side guards are devices intended to sweep aside a pedestrian or bicyclist in a side-impact crash, rather than being swept underneath the vehicle.

Volpe and the City of Cambridge are jointly working on a vehicle redesign strategy that will establish recommendations for implementing truck side guards, blind spot mirrors, and other vehicle-based technologies on the city-owned truck fleet. In addition to reviewing international best practices and safety data for developing the recommended technical specifications, operational and human factors issues will also be considered, such as:

- Installing additional blind spot mirrors, lenses, or cameras intended to increase a driver's field of view and situational awareness of bicyclists and pedestrians in the vicinity of a truck;
- Posting educational messaging inside and/or outside of large trucks intended to increase awareness of all road users about avoiding blind spots and other specific hazards; and
- Integrating the recommended safety countermeasures into the vehicle bodies and operations of the city's truck fleet, on up to 50 identified vehicles starting in the fall of 2015, to lead by example and to encourage the private sector truck fleets to follow.

"I see Volpe's first partnership with the City of Cambridge as an exciting opportunity to bring together the complementary strengths of our two government agencies," said Dr. Alex Epstein, the Volpe team lead. "Even more importantly, this partnership is likely to save lives if the side guards and other truck-based safety initiatives succeed as expected, advancing transportation innovation for the public good."

This initiative was brought to the attention of the City of Cambridge from social media. By coincidence, a member of Mayor Maher's staff was walking by the scene of a crash sometime after a bicyclist had collided with a garbage truck. Thanks to the quick response of emergency personnel, the young father who had been on his bicycle was already being treated at a local hospital. Crews had started to remove the twisted frame of the bicycle from underneath the truck when Alanna Mallon, from the Mayor's Office, walked by. She posted a picture of the bicycle frame on social media, which happened to reach Alex Epstein at the Volpe Center.

Within an hour of the picture being posted, Dr. Epstein was on the phone with the Mayor's Office to arrange a meeting about the potential to work with Volpe on installing truck side guards. Not only was a meeting arranged with the City Manager, Deputy City Manager, Commissioner of Public Works, and Police Commissioner about this effort, but Dr. Epstein also testified at a Cambridge City Council meeting shortly after speaking with the Mayor's Office to expand the dialogue about implementing truck side-guard solutions.

"Accidents between trucks and cyclists are unfortunately not out of the ordinary for urban communities in Massachusetts," said Mayor Maher. "What is unique, however, is the speed with which Cambridge was able to engage with the talented folks at Volpe and to help institute a solution for our city in record time."

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## **About Volpe**

[Volpe](#) has been helping the transportation community navigate the most challenging problems for more than 40 years. As the National Transportation Systems Center, Volpe's mission is to improve the transportation system by anticipating emerging issues and advancing technical, operational, and institutional innovations.

Part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Volpe partners with public and private organizations to assess the needs of the transportation community, evaluate research and development endeavors, assist in the deployment of state-of-the-art transportation technologies, and inform decision and policy making through comprehensive analyses.

For more information, see [Truck Side Guards: A Resource for Municipalities](#).

### **About Cambridge**

With over 107,000 people located within a 6.5-square-mile area, Cambridge is a unique community with a strong mix of cultural, demographic, and social diversity; intellectual vitality; and technological innovation. Located just across the Charles River from Boston, Cambridge is home to world-renowned educational institutions Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), as well as numerous high-tech and bio-tech companies. Cambridge has developed into an international community, with 28 percent of residents being foreign born, representing over 70 countries and speaking more than 40 different languages.

As the official leader of the city, Mayor David Maher fulfills political, ceremonial, and community leadership functions on behalf of the city and serves as the city's official receiver for visiting dignitaries and distinguished visitors. The mayor serves as the chairperson for both the City Council and the School Committee.

As city manager, Richard C. Rossi serves as chief executive officer of the city and is responsible for providing leadership to and administration of all city departments and services. The city manager also recommends policies and programs to the City Council and implements Council legislation.