

David Lafferty
4.301 Public Art Project
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Spare the Road

The signs located around Boston and Cambridge each reflect some aspect of the local road use that I've found in my travels. Some signs were chosen due to specific incidents, while others are more general. The sign by Fenway Park (1) is a response to the parking lots full of SUVs at night when the nightclubs are open. At Copley Square (2), the sign is for the cyclists who participate in Critical Mass Boston, a monthly bike ride where bicycles take over the streets. The sides of Newbury street (3) are always lined with cars, and doors swing open constantly. Beacon St. (4) is primarily residential, but it seems like most of its residents commute to work by car rather than bike or public transportation. I often hear cars honking at bikers in the Central Square area (5), so I thought that deserved recognition. Finally, the piece at 77 Mass Ave (6) is likely to be seen by a lot of people I know, so I'd like them all to think twice about using a car instead of a bike. The last sign faces pedestrians, while the others face oncoming traffic (and pedestrians heading that direction).

On September 19th of this year, the Boston Globe published a series of articles about bicycling in the Boston area. The general consensus was that Boston isn't a bicycle-friendly city. Other major cities and many smaller ones have bike lanes, signs instructing cars and bikes to ride safely together, and well-paved roads. Boston is lacking on those front, so I thought I would do my part and put up some potentially useful (or aggravating) signs.

I designed my signs using graphics that are similar to those found on legitimate road signs. This way, my signs cause people to question the validity of the signs and think about their message.

Spare the road is constructed primarily of 5/6" plywood. I used homemade paper and cardboard stencils and spray paint to draw the graphics and text. I also used a brush and regular paint for touch-up work. All paint is oil-based and fairly weatherproof, so this should be able to stand up to the elements. The signs are mounted on existing signposts using carriage bolts.

I'd like the signs to stay up until the next Critical Mass bike ride, which will be the evening of Friday, the 29th of October.