

Save Our Neighborhood

November 8, 1994

The Cambridge City Council
City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

To the Honorable, the City Council:

We hereby forward to you the attached self-explanatory letter to Cambridge Hospital, regarding their "final" Traffic & Parking Report for the Hospital expansion.

Among the many problems, we call to your particular attention:

- 1) Bogus and unconvincing solutions for problems on both Cambridge and Somerville sides of the neighborhood.
- 2) The lack of the absolute minimum necessary to even consult with the City of Somerville on traffic and parking issues.

All of this guarantees unnecessary problems and even liabilities for the City of Cambridge.

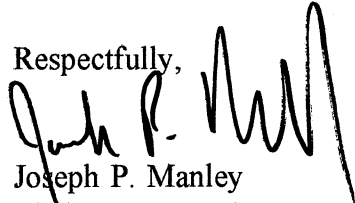
We also request that you take due note of unprofessional behavior by Hospital staff and VHB consultants in the above regard.

Finally, the Report's proposal for a larger underground parking garage in the project **violates Cambridge Hospital's promise to neighbors** that the garage would be 200 spaces and 2 levels only. This is yet one more example that Cambridge Hospital breaks its promises to neighbors.

It is yet one more reason why neighbors should not and will not believe any promises about future growth. As the attorneys on the Council must know, it is never advisable to sign an agreement with a party that routinely acts in bad faith.

If this Honorable Council wishes for the City of Cambridge to be responsible about implementing its largest capital project, it will reject and send back for further work the Traffic & Parking Report submitted by the City Manager for the November 7, 1994, and charter righted at that time. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Respectfully,


Joseph P. Manley

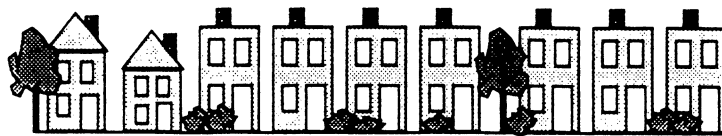
Chairman Save Our Neighborhood

cc: Cambridge City Clerk
Honorable Michael E. Capuano, Mayor of Somerville
Ann Johnson, Director, Somerville Traffic & Parking Department

19 Leonard Avenue • Cambridge, Massachusetts • 02139 • Tel. (617) 491-5122

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Fax (617) 864-1666



Save Our Neighborhood

November 8, 1994

Mr. John O'Brien
Administrator, Cambridge Hospital
1493 Cambridge Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

We are in receipt of what you term the final traffic and parking report for the Cambridge Hospital expansion project, and your call for cooperation in implementing it. Both this report and the manner in which it was formulated do not merit anyone's cooperation or implementation.

Among the problems were repeated failures to provide SON with materials promptly so that meetings could be scheduled in a timely manner, outlandish and/or ineffective recommendations, and, in general, failure to address the very real and very large problems.

Particularly outrageous is the Hospital staff's contention at the September 29, 1994 SON Traffic and Parking Committee meeting that neighbors would be to blame for the Hospital not solving traffic and parking problems, if neighbors opposed or refused to implement recommendations that in fact worsen or do nothing for the problems. This is not only irresponsible. It is bad faith. It is also on tape.

It is also only one of many provocative comments made by staff and consultants at that meeting. For but one example, a VHB consultant, without absolutely any supporting data or research, claimed that on-street parking problems on Somerville streets were due to lack of enforcement by the City of Somerville.

Ms. Chin's highly disingenuous and misleading memorandum of August 30, 1994 is typical of the lack of professionalism with which this matter has been handled by your institution. Among other things, she makes the totally false claim that we never responded to the recommendations in the third phase of the VHB--in fact, I responded for SON at my August 18, 1994 meeting with you and Ms. Chin.

SON Letter of November 8, 1994 to Cambridge Hospital

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Other problems were documented in my letter of May 27, 1994 and memo of August 30, 1994.

I also note for the record that Ann Johnson, Director of the Somerville Traffic and Parking Department, at the 9/29/94 meeting quite expressly requested a technical discussion with Hospital and VHB staff prior to the preparation of the final Traffic & Parking Report. Such a technical discussion between her office, the Cambridge Traffic & Parking Department, the Hospital and VHB is the absolute minimum that would be required for any professional effort on this issue--much less any cooperation. I certainly have never witnessed such an in-depth technical discussion during SON consultations on the subject with the Hospital. I am today advised by Ms. Johnson that such a discussion never took place, even after her express request.

It will not be difficult to identify the cause for any future problems you may have with the City of Somerville on these issues.

There are many other examples, but I personally don't have the stomach to list them all. **It is certainly a mystery to everyone just how you expect to elicit cooperation--or achieve any results-- proceeding as you have.**

What best epitomizes the Hospital's and the consultants lack of cooperation, professionalism and responsibility is the recommendation for making Springfield Street a one-way street. Consultants admit that they made this recommendation "in a void", without bothering to look at the obvious on any city map: it would create a worse problem less than a block away and eliminate a major bus route through Inman Square. They also made the recommendation without any initial consultation with the City of Somerville or neighbors, then kept it in the final report despite the protests of both the latter.

Unloading about 60 employees with residential parking stickers onto the neighborhood by closing the Line Street lot to most hospital employees will without question lead to parking meltdown throughout this Cambridge/Somerville neighborhood. The Hospital's proposal of "incentives" for employees to use remote off-site parking most have always shunned, and the toothless parking district in Cambridge are totally unconvincing as solutions that can ever address the magnitude of the problem.

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Increasing the size of the proposed underground garage is simply a device to further increase the size of the project. There is no way of ensuring that those additional spaces will be used to get employees off our streets, nor will they be sufficient to address the problem.

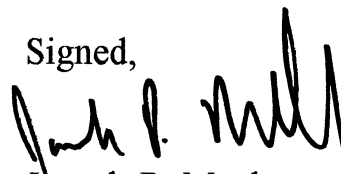
The historical record of the Hospital is to use the objective of keeping employees off the streets as an argument to create more parking, then in practice use it to boost patient enrollments and hence traffic into the area--and sharply increase the number of employees on the streets. 7 out of 10 cars parked on our streets are from outside the neighborhood, and most observably are from Cambridge Hospital.

In 1993, the Cambridge Hospital promised neighbors that the underground garage would be 200 spaces and 2 levels only. **The proposal in this report is proof positive--as if we didn't already have enough over the course of many years--that the Cambridge Hospital breaks its promises to neighbors.**

Proof positive too that any future growth agreement isn't worth the paper it's written on, if the Cambridge Hospital signs it. Even agreements that are legal and binding--which a Hospital/MCNA agreement never can be--are inadvisable if one party has such a record of bad faith.

We shall be happy to work with you at such time as you are prepared to actually deal with the traffic and parking problems caused by the Hospital expansion project in a genuine and professional manner. To date you have not.

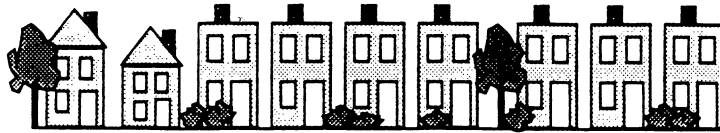
Signed,



Joseph P. Manley
Chairman

Save Our Neighborhood

cc: Cambridge City Council
Cambridge City Clerk
Honorable Michael E. Capuano, Mayor of Somerville
Ann Johnson, Director, Somerville Traffic & Parking Department
SON members
Laura Van Dam, Chairman, MCNA Traffic and Parking Subcommittee
Cambridge abutters of Cambridge Hospital



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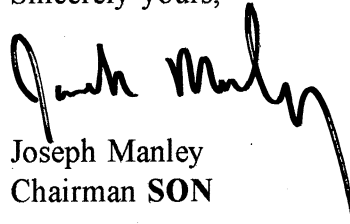
Ms. Margaret Drury
Cambridge City Clerk
City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Ms. Drury:

I hereby request that the enclosed letters be incorporated into the permanent records of the Cambridge City Council as an official communication.

As always, we appreciate your assistance and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,



Joseph Manley
Chairman SON

Attachments (2)

JPM/hd

1994 NOV - 9 PM 4:20
CITY CLERK
CITY HALL

Consent Comm. # 9

~~S-897~~ #10

Comm. from Save Our Neighborhood regarding
the Traffic and Parking Report for the
hospital expansion.

In City Council,

November 14, 1994

Charter Right
Exercised by
Councilor Walsh

11/21/94 Referred to the
Health & Hospital
Committee on motion
of Councilor Duchony.
11/25/94 Copy sent to
Health & Hosp. Comm.
(cc)