

City of Cambridge

MEMORANDUM TO: Cambridge City Council

FROM: Barbara Ackermann
Chairman, City Council,
Committee on Transportation

SUBJECT: Boston Transportation Planning Review
Northwest Corridor Progress Report

DATE: December 20, 1971

Last Tuesday, the Boston Transportation Planning Review delivered a set of findings and questions to those who have been participating in the northwest corridor meetings, and asked for our response by December 23, 1971.

As this is too soon for a considered response to be developed by the City, I propose to send the attached informal response. If you have any suggestions for changes in wording, I would appreciate having these by Wednesday evening, December 22, 1971.

To assist in developing the City's formal response, I would suggest that we hold a thorough briefing shortly after the first of the year.

City of Cambridge

December 20, 1971

Mr. John G. Wofford
Study Director
Boston Transportation Planning Review
100 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Jack:

We can respond positively and applaud several of the decisions in the BTPR Phase I Report because Cambridge policy is well-established. However, it will take us more time than available before December 23rd to establish a community concensus and Council approval on the remainder of the issues. The questions on which we can respond are:

- #1-a. Dropping the Inner Belt
- #1-b. Dropping the Route #2 Extension
- #2-c. The Red-Line Extension (deep-bore direct to Alewife).
- #2-e, f and g. Greatly improved public transit, especially coverage transit.

On all other questions I can only give you my reading of the situation:

1. Cambridge will not wish to consider any new road-building within city limits until better public transit is planned and working. Our desire is to discourage commuters from bringing their cars into and through the city (by making other types of transportation more attractive).
2. Although truck traffic is a major problem in many neighborhoods, we would deplore the suggestion that one solution should be studied before we understand the full scope of the problem, have developed a variety of alternatives, and know how much relief each alternative would offer. We certainly would not want to transfer a bad situation from one neighborhood to another.
3. We would put top priority on Red Line and other transit improvements out toward Route 128.

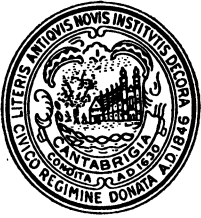
The City Manager and the City Council will be communicating with you

further as we get deeper into these matters.

Cordially,

Barbara Ackermann, Chairman
City Council Committee on
Transportation

cc: Cambridge City Council
Cambridge City Manager
Alan Altshuler, Secretary of Transportation and Construction



CAMBRIDGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CITY HALL
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
Tel. 876-6800

George A. McLaughlin, Sr.
General Chairman

Paul J. Frank
Executive Director

Memorandum

TO: The Members of the Cambridge Advisory Committee
FROM: Paul J. Frank, Executive Director
DATE: December 16, 1971

CAMBRIDGE RESPONSE ON TRANSPORTATION PLANNING REQUESTED BY STUDY GROUP BY NEXT THURSDAY

Cambridge, along with all the other communities in the Northwest Region of the Governor's Transportation Planning Review, is expected to respond to various transportation proposals some of which have been discussed for the past few months at numerous small neighborhood meetings, workshops, steering committee sessions, and other gatherings in Cambridge.

John. G. Wofford, Director of the Review, has set next Thursday, December 23, as the date by which these responses should be sent to the Boston Transportation Planning Review, 100 Boylston Street, Boston, 02116. He also invited telephone inquiries directed to Sima Osdoby at 423-2672 in that office. Governor Francis W. Sargent will then bury the Belt and Route 2 Extension.

Mr. Wofford want to know whether you:

Agree or disagree with:

Plans to construct the Inner Belt, (a dead issue)
Plans to construct Route 2 Extension, (a dead issue)
Plans for the Green Line Extension

The Green Line Extension which is not approved by the Study Group itself would have rapid transit from Alewife Brook on the surface over the Fitchburg Division of the railroad towards Somerville and Boston. The Cambridge City Council unanimously favors a deep bore tunnel only for rapid transit to Alewife.

The Study Group supports the Harvard-Alewife subway Extension. The Study report says the Extension " Can better accomodate Cambridge-bound users as well as Boston destined users" and recommends the Green Line be dropped from further study. So these three issues have been prepared for burial.

But one new question which has been raised in this Transportation Review is the proposed highway along which trucks would travel the Grand Junction Railroad right of way from the Boston University Bridge, then adjacent to the industrial plants and MIT to East Cambridge residential area before entering Somerville. In the opposite direction, trucks would use Portland and Albany Streets until joining the railroad close to the BU Bridge.

Although Cambridge residents were told repeatedly that they would be informed well in advance of any plans and proposals before they were announced publicly, this proposed truck route was announced at a meeting of professionals in Pier 4 Restaurant by the State Secretary of Transportation and reported in the press. Persons at a meeting in Cambridge who requested the Secretary to announce the "demapping" of the Belt and Route 2 Extension, a foregone conclusion by then of this Study anyhow, were miffed when he refused to consider their request yet he didn't hesitate to announce a new highway through Cambridge without even letting the City Council or City Manager know about this plan in advance.

Since the Study Group has \$3.5 million in Federal funds for improved transportation planning, residents of the River Street-Prospect Street districts in Cambridge, upon invitation of the Study Group, requested that serious attention be given to the problem of 1200 trucks passing daily over these residential streets. Many ideas on this were discussed informally at meeting held with various Cambridge groups but the announcement at Pier 4 had the effect of placing a top-level stamp of approval on the railroad-Portland-Albany Street proposal. Now the difficult task is to remove the stigma of this "official" approval from the minds of many persons who don't trust planning because of their Belt-Route 2 experiences in Cambridge.

What disturbs many persons is the fact that this Grand Junction-Portland Street proposed truck route is one of the identical routes that was proposed for the Belt Highway.

What disturbs some people equally is the text of the official preliminary findings of the Study Group which states:

" The possibility of a cross-Cambridge truck route along the Boston and Albany rail right of way should be considered further to determine whether appreciable numbers of truck trips could thereby be removed from local streets.

" The truck route study should be closely coordinated with a study of Regional Goods Movements and existing and anticipated needs and locational preferences of both truckers and their clients.

" Such a route would give priority to trucks, but might also be opened to buses, taxis, and, during off-peak hours, auto traffic, if controls could be devised to assure its proper use.

" This work should be given high priority during Phase 2."

The map accompanying this statement clearly shows that Portland Street and Albany Street would be included in this truck route. Further, the proposal to have buses, taxis and auto traffic move along this route, even under controlled conditions, seems to many to be a converted version of the Belt Highway which will require land taking and for the introduction of trucks in a residential area.

Anyone who has been engaged in this Cambridge battle against the highways for many years has reason to question every single proposal as well as the conditions under which the proposals and the public announcements of them are

made. Cambridge has withstood the pressure brought on it by outside agencies to slice the city into highways and it is prepared to continue this battle if for no other reason than the Cambridge tax base has increased only about 1/3 in 12 years whereas the state, county, and city governmental costs to the Cambridge taxpayers have increased about 100 % in the same period. The city cannot afford to have homes taken, a fact which the Study Group accepts, and it cannot afford either to have its tax base decreased. The city has 24 acres of land at the so-called NASA area which the Redevelopment Authority Director assured representatives of the CAC recently will be placed on the market soon. When such development start to increase the tax base then it might be time to even consider further cuts in that base.

Also Mr. Wofford has asked for an expression of opinion on the proposed 4-lane Western Corridor Connector which would take traffic from the end of Route 2 at the Dewey and Almy traffic circle to the Massachusetts Turnpike near the Watertown Arsenal.

Under study is a proposal to have traffic from Route 2 also travel over a 4-lane Alewife Brook Parkway toward Somerville and Medford to connect with the Mystic Valley Parkway until it reaches Route 1-95, or 4 lanes to travel over a road following the B & M freight railroad near the well-known Lynch Drugstore in North Cambridge to College Avenue in Somerville and Harvard Street in Medford to connect with Route I-93 close to or at the Revere Beach Parkway.

Somerville officials and residents have already protested the College Avenue widening and it is certain that there will be a lot more said in Somerville and Cambridge about the building of highways rather than first concentrating plans on the improvement of public transportation, including better and new bus service and the development of the Rapid Transit System.

If convenience to the public is to be the guideline for a balanced transportation program then it is obvious that numerous improvements will have to be made first in the MBTA system before any new highway is built. Highways we have, good bus service we do not have, and this is the reason for the unbalanced transportation situation.

The cost to Cambridge residents for poor bus service has increased 100 % since 1960. In 1971 Cambridge paid \$3,218,500 for the MBTA or about \$10 of its tax rate. In 1972 the projected cost is \$4,559,604 or \$14 in the tax rate.

The Secretary of Transportation has it within his power to first work for an improved MBTA which will at least balance the conveniences of existing highways before new ones are constructed.

Since Mr. Wofford, the Director of the Transportation Planning Review, has set next Thursday as the deadline by which comments should be made on what is known about his transportation proposals there is far too little time left for Cambridge to respond adequately.

Rush, rush, rush and then wait, wait and wait.



City of Cambridge

Mayor Vellucci

IN CITY COUNCIL

December 20, 1971.

ORDERED:-

That this City Council go on record as being opposed to construction of any belt routes, truck routes or highways and the destruction of any houses, or business or factories through the City of Cambridge, especially as being opposed to the Elm Street and Portland-Albany routes, and be it further

ORDERED:-

That the City Clerk be instructed to notify the Boston Transportation Planning Review at 100 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116, before Thursday, December 23, 1971, which is deadline set by the Director of the Review, and that copies of Council opposition be sent to all Senators and Representatives from Cambridge, including Governor Sargent.

In City Council December 20, 1971.
 Adopted by the affirmative vote of 9 members.
 Attest: Paul E. Healy, City Clerk.

A true copy,

Attest:-

Paul E. Healy
 City Clerk.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
MASSACHUSETTS

ALFRED E. VELLUCCI
MAYOR

Ordered

That this City Council go on record as being opposed to ~~any~~ ^{construction of any} ~~new~~ ~~highways~~ ~~and~~ ~~business~~ ~~routes~~ ~~truck~~ ~~routes~~ ~~or~~ ~~highways~~ ~~cutting~~ and the destruction of any homes or business or factories through the City of Cambridge, especially as being opposed to the Elm Street and Portland-Albany Routes.

Further that the City Clerk be instructed to notify the Boston Transportation Planning Review, at 100 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass, 02116, before Thursday, December 23, 1971, which is deadline set by the Director of the Review — and that copies of Council opposition be sent all Senators and Representatives from Cambridge, including Gov Sargent.

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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
MASSACHUSETTS

ALFRED E. VELLUCCI
MAYOR

Ordered

That this City Council go on record as being opposed to any and all belt routes, truck routes or highways coming through the City of Cambridge, especially as being opposed to the Elm Street and Portland-Albany Routes.

Further that the City Clerk be instructed to notify the Boston Transportation Planning Review, at 100 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass, 02116, before Thursday, December 23, 1971, which is deadline set by the Director of the Review — and that copies of Council opposition be sent all Senators and Representatives from Cambridge, including Gov Sargent.

Tabled
Referred to the end of the
meeting



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

MASSACHUSETTS

CITY COUNCIL

MRS. PAUL KURT ACKERMANN
CITY COUNCILLOR

I am happy to report to the city council that at the last meeting of the Boston Transportation Planning Review manager Walter Hansen recommended that the Inner Belt and 8-lane Route 2 extension no longer be considered as "possible alternatives" for study.

Governor Sargent is expected to make a decision in line with this recommendation.

The BTPR still does have under study two narrower roads to carry off route 2 traffic, and a possible exclusive truck route down the Boston and Albany Branch line in the eastern part of the city. (The truck route will be discussed at a BTPR workshop this wednesday at 7:30 in St. Mary's Rectory.)

They are giving at least equal importance to transit alternatives: to the subway extension to Alewife and to much improved and expanded bus service.

Perhaps it is premature to react to these new alternatives until the affected neighborhoods have had a chance to study and discuss them. In the meantime city policy remains what it has been since the beginning of the study: that the automobile should be discouraged, and that all transportation money should be spent on improving public transit without threatening established neighborhoods.

sincerely

Barbara Ackermann
Chairman, committee on
Transportation and the Inner Belt

FINDINGS

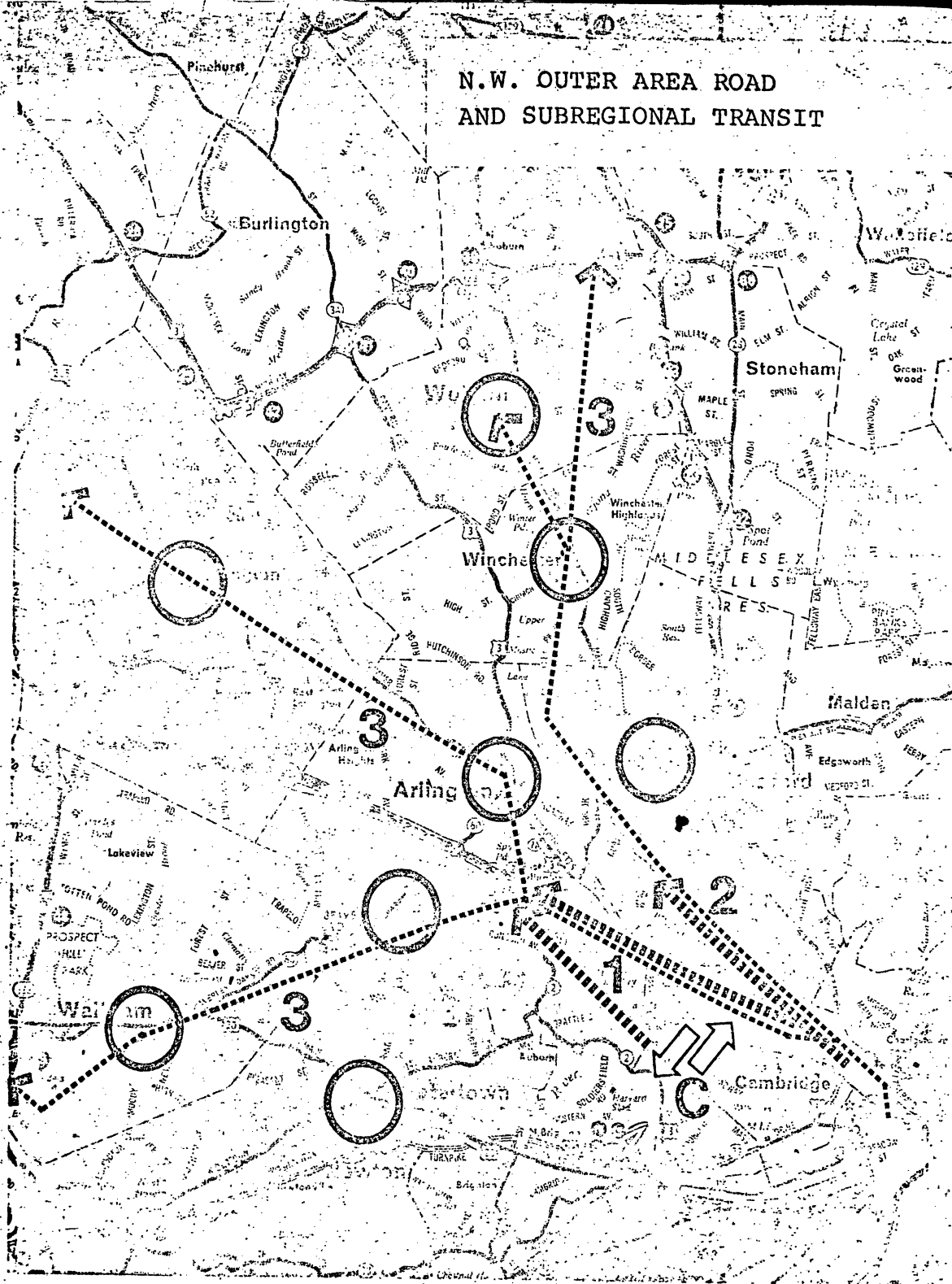
Needs

- A. Reduce congestion in outer area town centers.
- B. Poor commuter service, Bedford and Sudbury lines.
- C. Increase crosstown public transportation inner areas.
- D. No direct transit Somerville to CBD.
- E. Improve special service opportunities.

Improvements

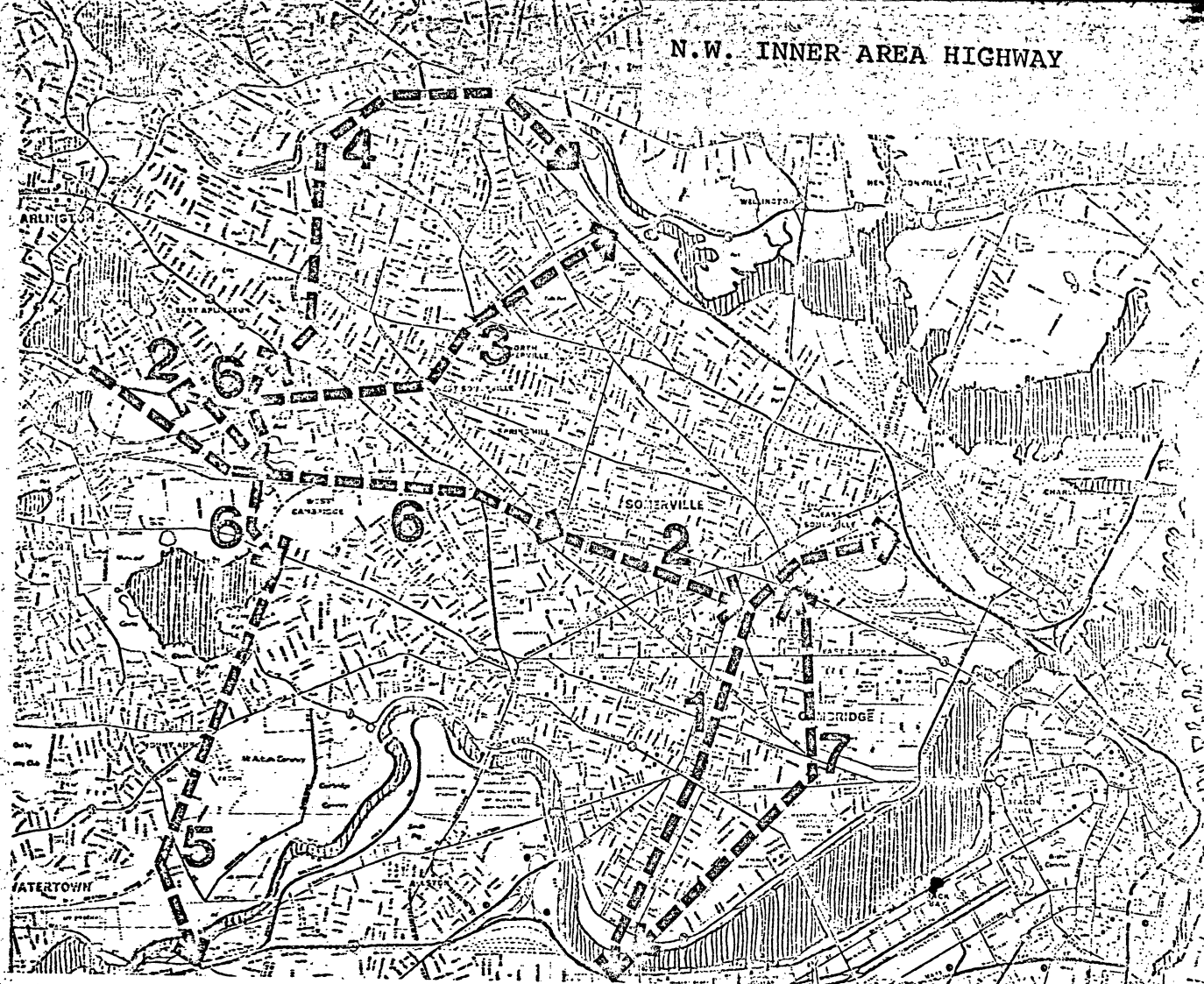
1. Extension of red line to Alewife appears better in service & cost to green line extension.
2. Green line extension to Medford would provide good service.
3. Busway extension of transit from Alewife appears more cost effective than rail shuttle or continuation of existing service.

N.W. OUTER AREA ROAD AND SUBREGIONAL TRANSIT



WORK PROGRAM

1. Investigate feasibility improving town centers.
2. Mini feasibility Alewife extension (1).
3. Location and design study for busways. Rte. 2, Railroad rights of way.
4. Feasibility study extension of green line in Somerville.
5. Study of local area public transportation services inner area and prototype systems for special needs.
6. Investigate opportunities to improve crosstown bus access.



FINDINGS

WORK PROGRAM

Major Needs

- A. Relieve end of Route 2.
- B. Relieve truck congestion.
- C. North-South access.
- D. Service development opportunities--Alewife and B & M yards.

- 4. High environmental impact.
- 5. Environmental impacts, potential relief of residential area and Storrow and Memorial Drives. Small relocation.
- 6. Combination at end of Route 2. Low relocation due to reduced roads. Relief of Fresh Pond Parkway by providing alternative route downtown. Some relief potential to adjacent arterials.
- 7. May relieve River and Prospect Street truck congestion

- 1. Investigate implications of major land use development opportunities to transportation functions and service at Alewife and B&M yards.
- 2. Location and feasibility design study of dispersal road combinations.
- 3. Location and feasibility design study of Routes 3, 4, and 5.
- 4. Analysis of truck movements and usefulness and impacts of special truck route 7

Improvements

- 1. High relocation
Marginal transportation benefit.
- 2. Ecological impact
Moderately high relocation. Traffic complications without 1.
- 3. Lower relocation, some neighborhood impact relieves Alewife Brook Parkway, and trucks.



BOSTON TRANSPORTATION PLANNING REVIEW

100 BOYLSTON STREET, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02116 TELEPHONE: (617)423-2672

MEETING NOTICE -- NORTHWEST SUBREGION

A series of workshops has been planned for the Northwest Subregion. They are to be indepth considerations of transportation related issues for Phase I. The public is cordially invited to attend, and is urged to share its concerns with members of the Planning Review Staff.

They are:

1. Problems of the Commuter
Monday, December 6, 1971, 7:30 p.m.
Cary Memorial Hall
1625 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington

Topics will include:

- Who are the commuters, where are they going now, at what times and how?
- What are future trends?
- What are alternative solutions to the problem of getting to Cambridge or Boston in the future?
- How do various means of transportation impact the inner city.

The future of commuter rail, busways, a rapid transit extension to Alewife, and improved park and ride facilities will be discussed.

2. Truck Movement
Wednesday, December 8, 1971, 7:30 p.m.
St. Mary's Rectory
134 Norfolk Street, Cambridge (near intersection of Prospect and Harvard Sts.)

Topics will include:

- Where are trucks going and why?
- What effect does location of warehouses, delivery patterns, and economic factors have on this?
- To what extent can through truck movement on local streets be relieved?

Also presented for discussion will be a special truck route through Cambridge and Somerville

3. Public Transportation in Cambridge
Monday, December 13, 1971, 7:30 p.m.
Location will be announced in our newsletter

Please call Joyce Stevens or Sima Osdoby at the Community Liaison Office (423-2672) if you have any questions.

ALL ARE WELCOME



City of Cambridge

Mayor Vellucci

IN CITY COUNCIL

December 20, 1971.

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ORDER

Opposing any belt routes, truck routes or
highways especially the Elm Street and
Portland-Albany routes

December 20, 1971

Mayor Vellucci