

October 19, 1995

To: The Cambridge City Council

Re: Public Hearing on Trucks Traffic, Monday, October 23, 1995

The enclosed packet represents our efforts, over a two-year period, to inform our ourselves and our neighbors on the issue of increasing truck traffic on the residential streets of Cambridge. During this time, we have spoken with neighbors, people from other neighborhoods, City of Cambridge officials, officials from neighboring towns, State officials, and traffic experts. Our goal has been to encourage our neighbors to be citizen activists. In the words of the CLF's, *Take Back Your Streets*, "Streets and roads do not exist in isolation from their surroundings. They pass through a landscape full of people who *are* somewhere rather than *going* somewhere."

Respectfully,



Annette LaMond
7 Riedesel Avenue



Susan Miller-Havens
151 Brattle Street

October 19, 1995

Dear Brattle Street Neighbors:

Upcoming Hearing

As you may know, there will be a public hearing regarding truck traffic at the City Council Meeting on October 23 at 7 pm. This meeting has been organized by Councilor Born. In addition to the City Council and the City Manager, the meeting will be attended by representatives of the Department of Traffic and Parking, the Community Development Department and the Law Department, each of whom is expected to make a presentation. Members of the public will have an opportunity to testify based on a sign-up sheet which will be available at City Hall from 9 am to 3 pm on the day of the hearing and then again when the hearing begins. Mayor Reeves will preside over the meeting.

Background

We first raised the issue of increasing truck traffic on Brattle Street in the fall of 1993 in a series of letters to the neighborhood. The impetus for our first letter about truck traffic came from the chance discovery that the State Highway Department had authorized a ban on heavy commercial vehicles on Brattle Street and Mason Street over 20 years before. The news of this authorization was never shared with the neighborhood and the ban was not posted due to the concern of Councilor Duehay that Brattle Street truck traffic would merely be diverted to other streets. However, we believe that truckers using Brattle Street would not be likely to find other streets (e.g. Mount Auburn Street or Huron Avenue) as attractive because they have more traffic lights and offer less direct routes. Given Councilor Duehay's opposition, asking that the existing truck ban be posted is an argument that probably cannot be won. One final note about our discussions two years ago: We were advised that the fact that Brattle Street is one of the oldest and most beautiful historic streets in the United States carries no weight in discussing the merits of a truck ban.

Our initial focus was on truck traffic on Brattle Street because it is the main street through our neighborhood and we walk and/or drive along it several times each day. Nevertheless, we spoke of our concerns in a city-wide context. We urged that the City Council move to ensure that traffic regulations, particularly speed limits and truck bans on the 46 city streets where they are posted, be strictly enforced in order to make the residential streets of Cambridge less tempting shortcuts for truckers who do not have a destination within the city. We also urged that the City move to lower speed limits to 25 miles per hour on some of the streets where the standard urban limit of 30 miles per hour is too high (e.g. Craigie Street) as well as to impose speed restrictions in front of schools. (Cambridge is an exception among neighboring towns in not having school-zone speed restrictions.)

What Has Happened Since Fall 1993

Over the past two years, Councilor Duehay has repeated his belief that action on controlling truck traffic in Cambridge must await a regional truck study and the construction of a truck route connector near M.I.T. Both measures have been mentioned as mitigation measures by the State in return for the city's acceptance of the Charles River Crossing bridge design; both would require substantial funding and neither is any closer today than two years ago. Indeed, the City is involved in litigating against the State's over-scaled proposal for the Crossing.

Although Councilor Duehay is opposed to establishing a truck ban on Brattle Street, he did arrange for us to meet with representatives of the Traffic Department and the Police Department about concerns with traffic safety. One of the subjects we discussed was the overly wide section of Brattle Street at the junction of Sparks and Craigie Streets with Brattle Street. In March 1994, the Traffic and Community Development Departments offered a plan which involved restricting the direction of traffic on Craigie Street. This plan was met with strong neighborhood opposition, but an alternative (developed by Michael Jolliffe of Buckingham Street with the backing of a neighborhood group) was accepted. The new island at the intersection is currently in place, and has made crossing the streets there much safer for pedestrians.

Since 1993, the Police Department has increased its enforcement of speed limits on Brattle Street as well as other Cambridge streets where excessive speed is a problem. While increased enforcement is welcome, it has not been done on a regular enough basis to change driver behavior. (In some other areas of the country, people are careful not to exceed speed limits on residential streets because, if they do, they almost certainly will be ticketed.) We hope that the City will increase its efforts to improve safety by enforcing speed limits. A number of communities in Washington State and California have undertaken some interesting approaches to speed limit enforcement. We recommend that the City Council encourage the Police Department to study all the options.

What Can Be Done

We recommend that the City Council – and other Cambridge residents – review the work of the Conservation Law Foundation on “traffic calming.” In May 1995, the CLF published a book entitled: *Take Back Your Streets: How to Protect Communities from Asphalt and Traffic*. This report describes traffic calming techniques that have been used successfully in other cities on arterial as well as residential streets. The objectives of these measures are to slow down traffic as well as to make traffic flow at a steady pace (thereby minimizing the need for frequent acceleration and deceleration) and to bring greater predictability and courtesy to the streets. The City of Portland, Oregon has been in the forefront of efforts to calm traffic. The City Council should direct the Traffic and Parking Department to review Portland's experience.

Another direction for the City Council to pursue in reducing truck traffic is to work with the City of Boston on tanker transportation routes. In the early 1980s, Boston's Fire Marshal banned tankers carrying hazardous materials from tunnels in the city, e.g. South Station tunnel. (The Mass Turnpike Authority also prohibits tankers from traveling under the Prudential Center, which means that tankers must exit the Mass Pike in Cambridge.) Boston has banned tankers from the new tunnels in Charlestown, though according to the Central Artery Project's Public Information Office these tunnels are state-of-the-art in terms of the emergency backup (closed circuit TV, communications, ventilation, fire suppression systems) needed to respond to an accident. According to the Boston Fire Marshal's current policy, tankers will be banned from the new Central Artery tunnels.

The result of Boston's prohibition on tankers carrying flammable materials is that they must use residential streets to travel through Cambridge. Five residential streets take the brunt of this burden: Western Avenue, River Street, Brattle Street, Mason Street and Kirkland Street. Boston's policy means that Cambridge residents are subject to unnecessary dangers. Furthermore, Cambridge roads are subject to far higher maintenance expenses than they would otherwise be. (Although heavy trucks are responsible for most road maintenance expenses, truckers do not pay user fees in proportion to their use.) Our City Council should assign the greatest urgency to removing tankers from residential streets. If tankers are not to be allowed through Boston tunnels, then the highest priority should be given to finding funding for the often-mentioned truck connector as well as to find ways to encourage such hazardous cargo onto the railroads which can transport it most safely and economically.

Neighbors, Speak Out!

Since the fall of 1993, we have talked with people in all parts of Cambridge who are concerned with increasing truck traffic. We have attended a number of community meetings where truck traffic have been discussed. In the past two years, more people have begun to speak out. Until recently, the response of city officials has too often been one of passive acceptance, that heavy truck traffic is just an inevitable fact of urban life. We do not agree. We encourage people to be citizen activists, to speak up and to do so repeatedly. Make it clear that that truck traffic is a city-wide issue – not just on Brattle Street. In the past, it has been easy to pit one neighborhood against another. If the City Council keeps hearing from us, we think they will begin to listen and to take steps to improve the safety of our streets. Monday's hearing is just a beginning.

Sincerely,

Annette LaMond

Annette LaMond

7 Riedesel Avenue (492-8348)

Susan Miller-Havens

Susan Miller-Havens

151 Brattle Street (576-2206)

October 1, 1993

Dear Neighbor,

Over the past several years there has been a steady increase in the use of Brattle Street as a trucking route. Day and night, trucks weighing as much as twenty tons, some carrying hazardous products and some appearing to be traveling beyond the speed limit, are using Brattle Street rather than the City's designated trucking route through the commercial streets of East Cambridge.* (Please see the attached sheet for a partial listing of truckers using Brattle Street as a route.) Brattle Street is a winding residential street with parking allowed on both sides, considerable automobile traffic and, during commuting hours, many pedestrians, including school children seeking to cross. Brattle Street is not an appropriate route for heavy truck traffic and was not constructed to withstand such traffic.

Out of concern for public safety, noise and structural damage to the street and homes, we have spoken to the City's Traffic and Parking Department to see how this traffic might be restricted. We learned the following:

- In 1972, the Commonwealth Department of Public Works granted the City's Department of Traffic and Parking a permit to restrict truck traffic on Brattle Street to a weight limit of 2-1/2 tons (about the size of a pickup truck).
- Brattle Street was never posted, and therefore, the restriction of truck size has never been enforced.
- The 1972 regulation has never been rescinded.

We are circulating this letter (with a post card reply) to neighbors who live either on Brattle Street (or within one block) to ask that Frank Duehay, the City Councilor who lives in our neighborhood, work with the Cambridge City Council to do the following:

1. Request the City Department of Traffic and Parking to post truck restriction signs on Brattle Street;
2. Request the City Police Department to enforce the restriction on heavy truck traffic on Brattle Street and to enforce speed limits on Brattle Street and other major streets through West Cambridge; and

* Ironically, if Brattle Street were part of an actual designated trucking route, trucks would be prohibited from using the street at night and on the weekends since it is residential. Both Western Avenue and River Street are so restricted.

3. Work with the surrounding towns of Belmont, Somerville and Arlington to prod the Commonwealth's Secretary of Transportation & Construction to conduct a regional truck study to ensure that truck traffic diverted from residential streets in Cambridge does not merely shift to residential streets in other towns. It is critical that measures to regulate truck traffic are in place before the central artery project construction begins in earnest.

If you would be willing to add your name in support of this letter, please return the enclosed postcard. If you have any questions, please contact Susan Miller-Havens at 576-2206 or Annette LaMond at 492-8348.

Sincerely,

Susan Miller-Havens & Leston Havens
151 Brattle Street

Annette LaMond & Joseph Moore
7 Riedesel Avenue

Audrey & David Cayne
26 Craigie Street

Florence & Mason Hammond
153 Brattle Street

Alexandra & David Harrison
183 Brattle Street

Beth & Jack Meyer
155 Brattle Street

Ruth & Daniel Morley
148 Brattle Street

Deborah & Paul Walker
237 Brattle Street

October 10, 1993

Dear Neighbors,

Thank you for your responses to our letter concerning truck traffic on Brattle Street. As of October 9, we had received 58 postcards and letters of support (out of 120 distributed). A complete record of your comments (without names or addresses) is attached. The comments underscore the issues of safety, noise, structural damage to homes, and historical significance of the street – eloquently so. As truck traffic has intensified in recent years, Brattle Street has become, to quote one respondent, a “dangerous thoroughfare.”

On October 9 City Councillor Frank Duehay took the time to discuss the issue of truck traffic on Brattle Street, and through Cambridge in general, with us. We reviewed our letter of October 1 and shared your responses with Councillor Duehay. We told him that we would like to see the Department of Traffic’s regulation of truck size on Brattle Street posted and enforced.

Councillor Duehay told us that he could not support the restriction of truck size on Brattle Street if it came at the price of diverting truckers to other West Cambridge streets.* He said that he would press for a study of truck traffic patterns in order to assess the likely diversion impact of restricting truck size on Brattle Street.**

A study of truck traffic cannot be commissioned until after the election. In the meantime, Councillor Duehay said that he would arrange within ten days for us, plus Rene Little of the Cambridge Historical Society, to meet with the City Manager, the Director of the Traffic Department, and the Police Commissioner to discuss other measures that would improve traffic safety on Brattle Street. Among the improvements we discussed are: regular and reliable enforcement of the speed limit, equipping the foot patrolmen assigned to our neighborhood with speed guns; pedestrian crossing signs; accelerating the installation schedule for a traffic island and light planned at the intersection of Craigie and Sparks Streets; and the possibility of applying to the State Highway Department for a 25 mph speed limit on the entire length of Brattle Street.*** We told Councillor Duehay that we are willing to commit our energy to working with him and the City in this way for traffic improvements. At the same time, we stated that we believe the ultimate answer is to restrict heavy truck traffic on Brattle Street and other residential areas.

Now that so many of us have spoken out about dangerous truck traffic on Brattle Street, we believe that Councillor Duehay will help us work with the City to find a solution. We would like to emphasize that we do not view this as an issue concerning just Brattle Street or West Cambridge. It is an area-wide problem, and state action is needed to ensure that heavy truckers stay on the highways rather than taking short cuts through our cities. We will keep you informed of our progress. If you have any questions or suggestions or if you would like to work with us, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Annette LaMond
7 Riedesel Avenue
492-8348

Susan Miller-Havens
151 Brattle Street
576-2206

OVER

- * In response to Councillor Duehay's fears about traffic on other West Cambridge streets, we pointed out that truck traffic diverted from Brattle Street is not to use Huron Avenue (as described in the Department of Traffic's 1972 regulation). As for Mt. Auburn Street and Concord Avenue, we believe that both streets are far less desirable to truckers than the wide open spaces of Brattle Street with its two traffic lights. Traffic on both streets moves at slower average speeds than on Brattle Street (according to the Traffic Department), both have bus traffic to slow a trucker down, more stop lights, and bottlenecks. Further, we believe that traffic improvements could be made on both Concord Avenue and Mt. Auburn Street which would make them still less desirable to truckers. Among the improvements we suggested: a pedestrian-operated light on Concord Avenue at Tobin School field (justified by the opening of Danehy Park), a 20 mph speed restriction on Concord by the Tobin School and by St. Peter's School, and a speed restriction on Mt. Auburn in front of the hospital.
- ** We believe that restricting heavy truck traffic on Brattle Street would have a direct and positive impact on Kirkland Street in both Cambridge and Somerville. Kirkland Street, which has also been suffering from an increase in truck traffic, is part of the Brattle Street short cut through Cambridge and Somerville favored by some truckers.
- *** The Department of Traffic applied to the State Highway Department in 1977 to reduce the speed limit on Brattle Street from the standard urban zone limit of 30 mph. The State granted the City authority to reduce the speed limit on Brattle Street to 25 mph only from Mason Street to Appleton Street.

Responses to Letter on Truck Traffic

Postcards and Letters of Support

(received as of 10/20/93): 74

Comments from Postcards and Letters: 49

Noise – all night.

As a composer, I find the truck noise significantly intrusive. Trucks also mar the beauty of the street – and rob us of our sleep. I strongly support your effort. Thank you.

Go To It!!!

The midnight – 5 am truck traffic is the worst!

Cracked walls and ceilings!

We have been very aware of an increase in the noise of heavy trucks early in the mornings.

We live in the vortex formed by Craigie, Sparks and Brattle. Passing trucks often cause our house (135 yrs old) to shake. Some trucks don't slow down; when they do breaking and accelerating are very noisy, sometimes rattling windows. UPS tractor-trailer gets my vote for the noisiest, chugging by several times a day. The amount of traffic drivers must watch for means less courtesy and attention for pedestrians.

Heavy trucks set off our security system and have cause cracks in our walks.

We support your letter. Brattle St. has become a dangerous thoroughfare.

Teacups fall out and smash from corner cupboard. Large structural cracks all over house.

I constantly see truckers driving at unsafe speeds that could make it impossible for them to respond to pedestrians or animals crossing the street – even at marked street crossings.

Truck traffic on Brattle has increased noticeably over the past year. I have seen convoys of trucks – 3, 4, 5 – in a row – traveling at high speeds – 40 to 45 mph – at all hours of the day and night. These trucks clearly are not doing business in Cambridge. They are simply passing through, taking advantage of a residential street with few traffic lights. Our house actually shakes when these monster truck thunder by.

Last year we repaired severely cracked walls and ceilings, and we rebuilt chimneys. We complained to the city department to no avail. We also called the Police Station twice about fast and noisy trucks racing down the street. No response.

This is great! The traffic is much worse – I've even thought to move.

We shall help you in any way we can.

Pollution and destruction.

We now have young grandchildren living with us and are concerned about their safety.

Increase in use by heavy trucking has been notable in the last few years! There is an imperfection in Brattle St. about opposite my house. In the early morning when the heavy truckers roar across this the whole house shakes.

With thanks to you for your initiative and effort. Can I help defray any expenses involved?

Noise – lots and at all hours. & Thanks for doing this.

I'm delighted action is being taken – All conversation has to stop in my living room while the trucks go by.

I called Coun. Duehay last year to ask about truck restriction and was told Brattle and Mt. Auburn were "designated routes." I complained about the speeding trucks and he did arrange for a policeman to be posted, but that lasted about 2 days. With 2 babies under the age of 2-1/2, I am petrified of even walking on the sidewalk when those things are barreling down the road, let alone crossing the street with the carriage! Would love to help in any way with the effort!!

Excellent proposition. Brattle Street cannot and should not accommodate heavy truck traffic.

My condo is having the masonry loosened by heavy traffic. The noise – and diesel fumes – are very bad. Let me know if I can help. Mr. Duehay, when I talked to him, assumed nothing could be done; but he didn't mention the 1972 restriction.

The building has structural cracks, plaster cracks – noise is a major nuisance. And excessive speed – trucks and cars – is an issue. Thanks for taking this initiative!

Artifacts have been knocked off shelves. Noise level is increasing – interrupting sleep – even normal conversation – horrendous! Safety concerns getting in and out of our cars – particularly in evening traffic. Thank you for your time, effort and thorough work on our behalf!

Not to mention the added stress of noise pollution! I find it very unnerving! Also we need to organize a graffiti "task force". ... have found that the curator at the Longfellow House has experience in this. If I can help, please call.

Thank you! Thank you!

There is a definite noise and safety problem!

Craigie St. is used as a short-cut to Concord Avenue. The speed at which these trucks travel is our biggest concern. A neighbor's dog was killed a couple of years ago. We fear for our son and other children.

1. The noise of commercial vehicles is such that it often rattles glass in our house.
2. Commercial vehicles use Brattle – Craigie Streets as a thoroughfare – exceeding speed limits routinely and ignoring the residential nature of the neighborhood.

Sleep-disturbing noise at night and bulldoze-like driving by day, inspire our strong support of this petition.

Have you sent letters to folks on Mason Street?

I have a legal "permit" to walk and/or ride my bicycle on Brattle St., without endangerment from big trucks. Even if the law permits trucks to use Brattle St. In a competitive usage situation the preference should be given pedestrians and bike riders; as they are "endangered" while not endangering trucks – 24 hrs. per day!

How terrific of you to mobilize the effort to do something about this. I have been in the house for 24 years and the traffic, noise and shaking increases yearly.

If we can be of assistance, please call.

(From a letter to Susan Miller-Havens and Annette LaMond)

I am thrilled you are concerned and doing something about the truck traffic on Brattle. It is getting worse and worse and amazingly, it is all on Brattle...

Brattle has become a highway and the noise can be amazing, especially very early morning. There is some truck I can hear shift 6 or 7 times before it finally gets going. ...Thank you for your effort.

(From a letter to Frank Duehay,
cc. Susan Miller-Havens)
October 4, 1993

Dear Frank,

I enclose some documents [letter of October 1] which you've probably seen. Two years ago I questioned you on the truck traffic on Brattle St. and your answer to me was that nothing could be done about it other than to route it to Mt. Auburn or Huron Ave. both of which were unacceptable to these neighborhoods. ...at least explain what's wrong with the enclosed document. I hope to hear from you before the Oct. 15th fund-raising meeting.

All these regulations should be enforced. Cambridge is a city – not a highway.

Congratulations!

Street vibrations caused by large trucks can be felt in the street-side rooms of the house. The noise has, at times, been severely intrusive.

Many, many thanks for taking this on – We have been disturbed for years by the noise caused by these vehicles, some of which are speeding – Our section of Brattle has no signs posting speed limit. Please call if you need help.

With two children under the age of two, we are very concerned about the heavy traffic and excessive speed on Brattle. What can we do to help make Brattle a safe road for our kids? Thanks for organizing this!

All of the above. God awful noise, killing trees, "historically incorrect."

Building shakes when heavy trucks go by. cracks in plaster wall. Too much noise, especially during night. Trucks speed turning onto Brattle from Mr. Auburn.

Cement trucks have dropped residual cement and noise as trucks shift going from Mt. Auburn St. to Brattle St. Most bothersome.

We have large cracks in walls; we awaken each morning between 4 and 6 when huge trucks thunder by crashing into a large pothole; cars travel much too fast; and NEVER stop for pedestrians in crosswalk.

Thanks for all the time and effort you've put into this.

Some Heavy Truckers Using Brattle Street as a Route*

A. M. I. Leasing	METRO
APA	Mobile Oil
APC (auto carrier)	Monarch
Auto carriers transporting crushed autos	Nazero (flat bed truck loaded with cement blocks)
BFI	New Penn Express
Baxter	Northeast Bulk Transportation
Beulojois	Old Neighborhood Foods
Boston Disposal	Overnite
Boston Sand & Gravel Co.	Parker Express
Brewer Oil	Pierce Tank Cleaning
C. C. I. Express	Puglia Trucking
C. O. D. Oil (Revere)	Quirk
Casey	RDI (disposal)
Cetrus, Inc.	Red Star Express
Charles Contracting	B. Rothstein
Clark	A. Russo & Sons Co.
Coan Oil	Star Market (tractor trailers)
CF (Consolidated Freight)	STOW Naturally
Clean Environment Co.	Sun Oil
Crystal Transport	SYSTO
Ferrara & Sons (Canton)	UPS (tractor trailers)
Fleet (Chelsea)	Waste Management
Holland Oil	Yellow Freight
Jet-A-Way (disposal)	Unmarked tractor trailer and flat bed trucks (many trucks using Brattle Street are unmarked)
La Longo	Food company tractor trailers:
Lawrence Ready Mix Concrete [seen barrelling by a double-parked car in front of 92 Brattle Street into oncoming traffic, 10/12/93, 11:45 am]	Pepsi,
Lyons Corporation (disposal contractors)	Diet Coke
McNamara Concrete	Columbo Yogurt
Macleod & Moynihan	Garelick Farms
	Goya
	La Ronga Bakery
	Hood

*List prepared by Annette LaMond and Susan Miller-Havens. It includes the names of heavy truckers whom they observed using Brattle Street from mid-September through mid-October. It is a partial list rather than a complete record of heavy truckers using Brattle Street.

October 20, 1993

Dear

Over the past several years increasing numbers of heavy truckers, some carrying hazardous products and some traveling beyond the speed limit, are using the residential streets of Cambridge as regular routes. We are writing to ask you as a candidate for City Council to be part of a city-wide effort to strengthen and enforce traffic regulations in Cambridge. A lack of posted speed restrictions, e.g. at schools and on densely populated streets where they are needed, and a lack of enforcement of existing speed limits have made the residential streets of Cambridge tempting short cuts for truckers who should be on the highways. This is not an issue involving only a few streets in Cambridge. It is an area-wide problem that requires coordinated action across the city.

Kirkland Street, Brattle Street and Brookline Street (among others) have become short cuts for truckers. We represent people living near Brattle Street who are concerned about the huge tractor trailers and tankers speeding through the residential streets of Cambridge. On Brattle Street, for example, many school children are placed at risk each day, particularly at the intersection of Craigie and Sparks Streets which has become especially hazardous.* Although the Department of Traffic issued a regulation in 1972, restricting heavy commercial traffic on Brattle Street, this regulation has never been posted, and therefore, never enforced.

When we asked our neighbors for comments on the issue of truck traffic, we received 74 replies within two weeks (representing over 150 voters) describing the increasing volume and danger of truck traffic. Please see enclosed report. We have spoken with residents of Brookline and Kirkland Streets who have also been keeping logs of heavy truck traffic.

The increase in dangerous truck traffic, which we have documented on Brattle Street, reflects a city-wide problem. We do not want piecemeal solutions which merely shift truck traffic from one residential street to another. We want the city, by enforcing all regulations, to encourage truckers to use the highways, even if it involves an extra toll and makes the trip longer. As a city-wide issue, the enforcement of traffic regulations should be coordinated within the city and with surrounding towns and the state. Accordingly, we are asking you to go on record with your views. In return, we will circulate your statement to our neighborhood before the election.

Sincerely,



Annette LaMond
7 Riedesel Avenue
492-8348



Susan Miller-Havens
151 Brattle Street
576-2206

* On October 18, a typical day, Karen Trainor, the crossing guard at the intersection of Brattle, Craigie and Sparks Streets, helped 209 people (49 children and 160 adults) across the street between 7:45 am and 8:40 am and 187 people (86 children and 101 adults) across between 3:20 pm and 4:00 pm.

Name:

Do you favor:

More vigorous enforcement of speed limits:

Lowering speed limits by schools to 20 mph:

Lowering speed limits to 25 mph on densely populated residential streets:

Posting pedestrian crossing signs at all crosswalks on major streets:

Designating zebra crossings at more crosswalks:

Installing pedestrian-operated traffic lights at more locations, e.g. on Concord Avenue to improve the safety of children crossing from Tobin Field to Fern Street on their way to Danehy Park:

Posting the existing truck restriction on Brattle Street:

Reapplying to the State for a truck restriction on Kirkland Street. (The Traffic Departments of Cambridge and Somerville recently applied to the State for authority to restrict heavy commercial truck traffic on Kirkland Street, but were turned down. The outcome might have been different if the application had been received political backing from elected officials.):

Other Suggestions/Comments (General or Specific):

Please return your comments in the enclosed envelope by October 25.

October 31, 1993

Dear Neighbors,

After sending out our truck update letter of October 10, we met with former City Councillor and Mayor, Barbara Ackermann, to ask her guidance on how to ensure that the issue of truck traffic in residential neighborhoods gets and holds the attention of the City Council. She advised us to go to all 29 candidates for City Council and ask them whether they would be part of a city-wide effort to strengthen and enforce traffic regulations in Cambridge. She told us that, in doing so, it would be unwise to refer to the historical character of Brattle Street. She said that our neighborhood's case must be based on the threat to public safety posed by unenforced traffic regulations, in other words, that school children crossing Brattle Street are as much at risk as school children on other streets in Cambridge.

We delivered a letter and questionnaire to all candidates for City Council. Twelve candidates responded. A report, including our letter and the candidates' replies, is enclosed. Although some of the candidates are in favor of posting the existing truck restriction on Brattle Street, the political reality is that it cannot be posted without the backing of our neighborhood councillor, Frank Duehay.

Councillor Duehay does not favor restricting truck traffic on Brattle Street unless it can be demonstrated that such traffic will not be diverted to Mt. Auburn Street or Huron Avenue. Although Councillor Duehay has opposed posting the street with a heavy truck restriction (and has done so for 21 years), he has now heard our neighborhood's concerns. He has proposed a Council resolution that would ask the City Manager to devise and implement a major truck traffic origination-and-destination study of trucks in the region (involving nearby communities and the state) with the objective "of finding a solution which would bar major truck traffic on all Cambridge residential streets."

On October 26, we attended a meeting, organized by Councillor Duehay, with the Deputy City Manager, representatives of the Traffic Department and the Police Department and the Director of the Historical Commission. We discussed various measures that would improve traffic safety (e.g. zebra stripes, pedestrian signs, enforcement of the speed limit) on Brattle Street as well as the dangerous intersection at Sparks and Craigie Streets. (The Traffic Department developed plans for a light at the intersection two years ago, but has not submitted them to the Historic Commission or the neighborhood.) We were interested to learn that the state "promised" two years ago to conduct a comprehensive truck study as a "mitigating" measure connected with the Central Artery project's Charles River crossing. This study is slowly moving into a start-up phase.

At our October 26 meeting, we gave the Traffic Department's representative an updated list of truckers who appear to be using Brattle Street as part of a short cut through Cambridge. He told us that he will contact these companies and ask them to use the

highways. Although this approach will not solve the problem of truck traffic, we hope that it may reduce it. We also asked that two more 25 mph signs be posted on the westbound side of Brattle Street so that the police can enforce the speed limit in that direction (as well as in the eastbound one).

The representative of the Police Department who attended the meeting on Tuesday has spent some time stopping speeders on Brattle Street since then. According to his observations, Brattle Street has one of the worst problems with speeding in Cambridge. We will continue to ask that the Police Department develop a program of consistent enforcement which would raise the probability that speeders will be ticketed. The police told us that citizens can report speeding truckers to the Department. Information on how to do so will be forwarded to us.

To sum up, the neighborhood has now defined truck traffic and traffic regulation as an issue. (When we started speaking to representatives of the Traffic Department, we were told that they just did not believe that there was that much truck traffic on Brattle Street.) City officials have taken notice of our neighborhood's comments and seen our documentation (photographs and logs of truck traffic). We must keep the momentum going. As a neighborhood, we have a reputation in the City for not speaking up, for polite silence. Let's change this image. We can still be polite, but we have been silent for too long. Press your neighbor City Councillors for help. Call the City Manager. Ask for updates on the promised "comprehensive" truck study. Report speeding truckers. If we stay active, solutions will be found.

We have a meeting scheduled on November 4 with an aide to State Senator Michael Barrett to go over measures that the state might take to ease the problem of truck traffic in residential neighborhoods. We will meet again with Councillor Duehay, the Deputy City Manager, the Police Department and the Traffic Department on November 16. We will inform you of our progress. Please feel free to call us if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Annette LaMond

Annette LaMond
7 Riedesel Avenue
492-8348

Susan Miller-Havens

Susan Miller-Havens
151 Brattle Street
576-2206

P.S. The cost of our campaign for enforcement of traffic regulations has gone beyond \$200. Contributions of \$10 (or more) toward our copying budget would be appreciated.

Letter Sent to Candidates for City Council

October 20, 1993

Dear

Over the past several years increasing numbers of heavy truckers, some carrying hazardous products and some traveling beyond the speed limit, are using the residential streets of Cambridge as regular routes. We are writing to ask you as a candidate for City Council to be part of a city-wide effort to strengthen and enforce traffic regulations in Cambridge. A lack of posted speed restrictions, e.g. at schools and on densely populated streets where they are needed, and a lack of enforcement of existing speed limits have made the residential streets of Cambridge tempting short cuts for truckers who should be on the highways. This is not an issue involving only a few streets in Cambridge. It is an area-wide problem that requires coordinated action across the city.

Kirkland Street, Brattle Street and Brookline Street (among others) have become short cuts for truckers. We represent people living near Brattle Street who are concerned about the huge tractor trailers and tankers speeding through the residential streets of Cambridge. On Brattle Street, for example, many school children are placed at risk each day, particularly at the intersection of Craigie and Sparks Streets which has become especially hazardous.* Although the Department of Traffic issued a regulation in 1972, restricting heavy commercial traffic on Brattle Street, this regulation has never been posted, and therefore, never enforced.

When we asked our neighbors for comments on the issue of truck traffic, we received 74 replies within two weeks (representing over 150 voters) describing the increasing volume and danger of truck traffic. Please see enclosed report. We have spoken with residents of Brookline and Kirkland Streets who have also been keeping logs of heavy truck traffic.

The increase in dangerous truck traffic, which we have documented on Brattle Street, reflects a city-wide problem. We do not want piecemeal solutions which merely shift truck traffic from one residential street to another. We want the city, by enforcing all regulations, to encourage truckers to use the highways, even if it involves an extra toll and makes the trip longer. As a city-wide issue, the enforcement of traffic regulations should be coordinated within the city and with surrounding towns and the state. Accordingly, we are asking you to go on record with your views. In return, we will circulate your statement to our neighborhood before the election.

Sincerely,

Annette LaMond
7 Riedesel Avenue
492-8348

Susan Miller-Havens
151 Brattle Street
576-2206

* On October 18, a typical day, Karen Trainor, the crossing guard at the intersection of Brattle, Craigie and Sparks Streets, helped 209 people (49 children and 160 adults) across the street between 7:45 am and 8:40 am and 187 people (86 children and 101 adults) across between 3:20 pm and 4:00 pm.

Replies to Traffic Questionnaire

Posting the existing truck restriction on Brattle Street:

Favoring: Kathleen L. Born, Vivian Kurkjian, Randolph L. Lowet, James J. McSweeney, George A. Spartichino, Sheila Russell (if Huron Avenue were restricted), Michael A. Sullivan, Katherine Triantafillou, Alice Wolf

Opposing: John Pitkin (not until a satisfactory alternate is found), Thomas P. Weed

More vigorous enforcement of speed limits:

Favoring: Born, Kurkjian, Lowet, McSweeney, Pitkin, Spartachino, Russell, Sullivan, Triantafillou, Weed, Wolf

Lowering speed limits by schools to 20 mph:

Favoring: Born, Kurkjian, Lowet, McSweeney, Spartachino, Russell, Sullivan, Triantafillou, Weed, Wolf

Opposing: Pitkin

Lowering speed limits to 25 mph on densely populated residential streets:

Favoring: Born, Kurkjian, Lowet, McSweeney, Spartachino, Russell, Sullivan, Triantafillou, Weed, Wolf

Posting pedestrian crossing signs at all crosswalks on major streets:

Favoring: Born, Kurkjian, Lowet, McSweeney, Pitkin (not all, but many more than now), Spartachino, Russell, Sullivan, Triantafillou, Weed, Wolf

Designating zebra crossings at more crosswalks:

Favoring: Born (marked with signs to stop for pedestrians), Kurkjian, Lowet, McSweeney, Pitkin, Spartachino, Russell, Sullivan, Triantafillou, Weed, Wolf

Installing pedestrian-operated traffic lights at more locations, e.g. on Concord Avenue to improve the safety of children crossing from Tobin Field to Fern Street on their way to Danehy Park:

Favoring: Born, Kurkjian, Lowet, McSweeney, Pitkin (if better signage and enforcement don't do the job, yes), Spartachino, Russell, Sullivan, Triantafillou, Weed, Wolf

Reapplying to the State for a truck restriction on Kirkland Street. (The Traffic Departments of Cambridge and Somerville recently applied to the State for authority to restrict heavy commercial truck traffic on Kirkland Street, but were turned down. The outcome might have been different if the application had been received political backing from elected officials.):

Favoring: Born, Lowet, Russell, Spartachino, Sullivan, Triantafillou, Weed, Wolf

Opposing: McSweeney

Our questionnaire was hand delivered to all 29 candidates for City Council as well as to retiring Councillor Alice Wolf. Councillor Wolf and ten candidates (Born, Kurkjian, Lowet, McSweeney, Pitkin, Russell, Spartachino, Sullivan, Triantafillou, Weed) returned our questionnaire plus comments. Two candidates (Duehay and Galluccio) sent letters, but did not return the questionnaire.

Questionnaire Comments

Kathleen L. Born

Traffic Department should be ordered to assess impact of Artery Construction on truck traffic in Cambridge.

The City's management and elected officials must consistently put the needs of pedestrians ahead of auto traffic efficiency and the needs of the residents ahead of the demands of big business. I would introduce a Council order directing the Traffic Department in concert with the Community Development to prepare a "Through Trucking Policy Statement," identifying currently used trucking routes and recommending how to relieve the truck problem on Brattle St. Concord Ave. and Kirkland Street, to name a few. This would include a strategy to reroute truck traffic onto the state highways where it belongs.

Francis H. Duehay

Dear Annette and Susan:

This is in response to the letter to City Council candidates. As you know I have asked that your agenda be the topic of a special meeting at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, October 26 with Deputy City Manager Richard Rossi, Traffic Commissioner George Teso, Historical Commission Director Charles Sullivan, you and me. This meeting will take place in Mr. Rossi's office.

In addition I am presenting the enclosed resolution on Monday evening which asks the City Council to approve a comprehensive study, traffic improvements, and better enforcement. I am also calling for the creation of a citizen advisory committee to monitor the study closely.

I hope the results of the study will provide usable information about the patterns of truck traffic throughout the city. I assure you that I am very concerned about the heavy truck traffic on Brattle Street and will do everything I can to mitigate it. But other streets carry heavy burdens too, and I cannot support any immediate solution which may unintentionally shift the problem from one residential street to another. Please circulate this letter together with the resolution as my response to your inquiry.

Sincerely yours,

Councillor Duehay for City Council Meeting of Monday, October 25, 1993

Whereas residents of Brattle and Mason Streets have suffered increasingly burdensome, dangerous and speeding heavy truck traffic in recent years; Whereas the intersection of Brattle, Sparks and Craigie Streets has become

very hazardous for pedestrians and children with speeding trucks even ignoring the warnings of the school crossing guard;

Whereas this dangerous truck traffic situation also exists on other major Cambridge Streets like Kirkland and Brookline;

Resolved that the City Manager be and hereby is requested immediately to devise and implement a major truck traffic origination and destination study of trucks in the region and involve officials and residents of nearby communities and the state in establishing that study, with the view in mind of finding a solution which would bar major truck traffic on all Cambridge residential streets;

Resolved that the City Manager be and hereby is requested to establish an advisory committee of concerned Cambridge residents who would monitor this study as it is proceeding; Resolved that the City Manager be and hereby is requested to take the following additional traffic safety steps in the Brattle Street/Concord Avenue/Mt. Auburn Street area;

1. Vigorously enforce existing speed limits

2. Lower speed limits by schools to 20 mph

3. Install pedestrian-operated signal lights on Concord Avenue to improve the safety of children crossing from Tobin Field to Fern Street

4. Accelerate the installation of the already approved traffic signal lights at the intersection of Craigie, Sparks and Brattle Streets [*Lights have not been approved or budgeted - AL*]

5. Add zebra stripes to the unsafe pedestrian crossing at Brattle and Mason Streets

6. Apply to the state for 25 mph speed limits on the entire length of Brattle Street, Mt. Auburn Street and Concord Avenue

7. Provide up-to-date marking and posting of pedestrian crossing signs at all crosswalks on Brattle, Mt. Auburn and Concord Avenue

Anthony Galluccio

Thank you for bringing your concerns about truck traffic near Brattle Street to my attention. I have heard similar concerns from residents in the eastern part of the city. I'm sure it is possible to encourage flourishing business community without large vehicles traveling on our residential streets. Electing a neighbor to the City Council who shares your concerns is the first step in addressing these issues.

Vivian Kurkjian

1. Reckless bus drivers on Concord Avenue

They sometimes use excessive speed, passing up passengers in favor of reaching end of their scheduled route. Evident also by their driving in the middle of the road.

2. Traffic at Harvard Square

Buses, trucks, automobiles constantly ignore stop signs. Rarely is there a police officer there to enforce regulations; ticket or direct traffic.

3. Inform corporations and companies whose trucks regularly traffic our streets of our policy.

Ask the city to use meter maids to help with this problem. Begin by documenting the problem, posting signs and enforcing the law.

4. Uncovered trucks with polluting cargo.

Dust, dirt and debris pollute our city because rubbish and other materials removed at renovation and construction sites are not contained properly. Sometimes the material can be very hazardous (insulation). Harvard police could notify Cambridge police since Harvard police patrol the Observatory Hill area.

If nothing else is immediately available for enforcement, use the litter laws and ticket offenders. "Improper disposal of hazardous material" can be used in case of accidents due to negligence.

Randolph L. Lowet

In addition to the above, just as one should oppose the implementation of "Scheme Z," one should also impose some truck restrictions because people's safety, especially children, should not be sacrificed for commercial enterprises! Furthermore, trucks frequently ruin the street pavement which causes a needless waste of the city's monetary budget which could be used on more important social programs!

James J. McSweeney

Re more vigorous enforcement of speed limits:

I do understand that the police department is currently in the process of training additional officers on radar equipment. This training will take a few months. Once that training is completed we can get more cops out enforcing the speed limits.

Re lowering speed limit by school to 20 mph:

I support the 20 mph limit in school zones. State law already mandates 20

mph limit in school zones. I support expanded posting and enforcement of this law.

Re lowering speed limits to 25 mph on densely populated residential streets

I support the 25 mph limit on densely populated residential streets. State law already mandates 25 mph limit on densely populated residential streets. I support expanded posting and enforcement of this law. Furthermore, the Fundamental Speed Law of Massachusetts mandates that all speed must be reasonable and proper, having regard for the traffic use of the way and safety of the public.

Posting pedestrian crossing signs at all crosswalks on major streets:

Federal mandates are already moving us toward posted pedestrian crossings. I favor accelerating this move.

Designating zebra crossings at more crosswalks:

Distinctively marked crosswalks have proven to be much safer.

Pedestrian-operated lights:

Installing pedestrian-operated traffic lights:

...I support increased pedestrian-operated traffic lights

Reapplying to the State for a truck restriction on Kirkland Street:

Without that route trucks cannot get to the freight yards in Charlestown. I do support expanded posting and enforcement of speed limits and other existing restrictions on Kirkland and all other truck routes.

John Pitkin

One of my first involvements in Cambridge affairs was as a foot-soldier in HALT (Humans Against Loud Trucks), whose purpose was to remove hundreds of heavy trucks per day from Prospect and River Streets and Western Avenue, in the early 1970s. Our efforts included a blockade of truck traffic one day on Prospect Street and an amount of research on and lobbying for alternatives. Eventually an alternate was created, approved by the state and, again eventually, enforced by the city.

In part as a result of this involvement, I have served on the Board of Traffic and Parking for 19 years, six of them as Chair.

I offer two further suggestions/comments.

A truck restriction on Kirkland Street should be pursued. To be workable, however, further study will be needed to establish how many of the trucks are there simply for the purpose of avoiding the toll on the Mass. Pike. If, as I believe, many of them are doing this, then it may

be possible to design an enforceable restriction that would keep these trucks off of most residential streets.

Changing drivers' behavior through better enforcement is essential to improving safely. The Police and Traffic Departments need to work more closely together on this and the Police Traffic Division needs to be adequately staffed. On many days only one or two officers are assigned to traffic enforcement and never more than three for the whole city.

Sheila Russell

When the truss bridge on Alewife Brook Parkway is reconstructed, many of the traffic problems that we are encountering will be alleviated. The reason that Brattle Street is not posted for "No Heavy Trucking" is that it would only re-route the traffic to Huron Avenue and Mt. Auburn Street. This would not be fair to the residents on those streets who are already contending with their share of not only truck traffic, but also bus and trackless trolley traffic.

I have been responsible for the repainting in zebra stripes of many crosswalks, both on Concord Avenue, and on Huron Avenue. I have been an advocate for the Pedestrian crossing signs on all intersections where they can be installed safely. For some reason the Traffic Department resists the installation of these markers. They put two test signs on Huron Avenue, in the vicinity of the stores. They work fine, however, the size they installed was much too small, causing them to be removed easily, either by being struck, or by vandals. I have constantly pushed for the larger, more visible crossing signs, and will continue to do so.

Recently, as part of my campaign for City Council, I have been standing on corners in various intersections throughout the City. This, in itself, is enough to see that there is a serious problem with speeding in this city. The problem is not unique to Brattle Street. Every intersection, especially during peak traffic hours is the same. Pedestrian safety should be our prime adequate time to get across, speed enforcement should be set up in a more consistent manner. If this is done, perhaps we can slow people down.

Before the Truss Bridge is complete, we should be planning our course of action for diverting trucks from our residential neighborhoods. I would be willing to work with any neighborhood group to see that concerns are addressed.

George A. Spartichino

I am a member of the Alewife Steering Comt. We have recommended

lighting the rotaries to allow pedestrian crossings. Columbia, Concord, Huron, Brookline and other.

Open MDC Road on River and other locations to force truck traffic to bypass city.

Michael A. Sullivan

We need to work harder to enforce moving traffic violations.

Katherine Triantafillou

All of these seem to be reasonable solutions to the problem and I have no problem stating my support for them. However, I'm concerned about whether the last one [applying to the state for a truck restriction on Kirkland Street] will just shift the traffic to other neighborhoods. We need to look at the City as a whole and devise better plans. The Community Development Department should be more proactive as an agency involved with planning and development in regard to traffic issues.

Traffic is a problem in all neighborhoods. In North Cambridge, I've learned of a similar problem with heavy trucks coming through the neighborhood at very early hours. The problem will also be exacerbated by the "Big Dig" in Boston and the various permutations of "Scheme Z" River Crossings. Thirty percent of all vehicles traveling through the City don't stop in the City. The need to comply with the Federal Clean Air Act must be addressed as well.

You deserve a great deal of credit for your perseverance in addressing this issue. Please feel free to contact me at 492-0502 if you have further questions.

Thomas P. Weed

Rigorous enforcement of moving violations is part of my platform. Only \$600,000 [in tickets for moving violations] were collected over the last fiscal period, whereas approx. \$12,000,000 were collected in parking fines by 30 meter persons. A similar force of 20 to 30 could not only recover their own cost, but increase revenues as well. I do not favor using (sic) the regular police to further enforce (sic) violations.

Alice Wolf

1) State legislation for truck restrictions on the Mass. Pike Inside 128.

2) Lights at Brattle/Sparks. The Traffic Department keeps saying the neighbors don't want them. Nonsense. This is safety.

Two neighbors respond to article on Brattle Street trucks

As the neighbors named in your Nov. 4 article, "Neighbors raise ruckus over trucks on Brattle Street," we would like to correct several inaccuracies in your account of our work:

1. We have never characterized the volume of truck traffic on Brattle Street as being more or less than that on any other street in Cambridge. Our concern was a noticeable increase over the past year in large trucks using the street.

In early October, we wrote to our neighbors to ask them to give their observations of pedestrian and traffic safety on Brattle Street. Within two weeks, we received 74 replies (out of 120 letters distributed).

These replies speak to an increasing volume of heavy truck traffic, with some truckers speeding and/or refusing to stop for pedestrians attempting to use crosswalks. We also recorded the names and schedules of some of the truckers using Brattle Street on a regular basis.

We went to these lengths to document truck traffic on Brattle Street because the director of the Cambridge Department of Traffic and Parking told Susan Miller-Havens that he did not believe that there was much truck traffic on Brattle Street. (We further learned in the course of speaking to various city officials that the traffic department has no data on truck traffic on any

street in Cambridge.)

2. We have never said that trucks banned from using Brattle Street would not be diverted to other streets in West Cambridge. However, as a relatively wide street, with only two traffic lights along its one-mile length and no MBTA bus traffic, Brattle is a far more appealing short-cut through the western part of the city than any other street. Further, traffic moves at higher average speeds on Brattle than on Mt. Auburn Street, Concord Avenue or Huron Avenue (this according to the Traffic Department).

3. We differ from the view implied in the article (and the Chronicle's cartoon) that traffic regulation

is a kind of hopeless zero-sum game. A lack of posted speed restrictions at schools and on densely populated streets where they are needed, and a lack of enforcement of existing speed limits have made the residential streets of Cambridge tempting shortcuts for truckers who should be on the highways.

We would like the city, by enforcing all regulations, to encourage truckers to use the highways, even if it involves an extra toll and makes the trip longer. Indeed, stricter enforcement could be financially beneficial to a city which currently collects an annual \$12 million in parking ticket revenues, but only \$600,000 in fines on moving viola-

tions.

As a citywide issue, the enforcement of traffic regulations also should be coordinated within the city and with surrounding towns and the state. One suggestion is to introduce legislation at the state level to require that truckers stay on the Mass Pike if they do not have business within the Route 128 area.

4. We think it strange that citizens who speak up about a dangerous traffic situation in their neighborhood are described as making a "ruckus." Indeed, our efforts (which consist of three letters to our neighbors, a letter and questionnaire to candidates for city council, two meetings led by City Councilor

Frank Duehay and assorted conversations with the traffic and police departments) would more accurately be described as quiet inquiries.

Our focus has been to make the main street through our neighborhood safer. But in doing so, we have taken a citywide traffic perspective. We have taken pains to state that we do not want piecemeal solutions which merely shift truck traffic from one residential street to another.

ANNETTE LAMOND
Riedesel Avenue
SUSAN MILLER-HAVENS
Brattle Street

March 24, 1994

Dear Neighbors,

Since our last newsletter regarding Brattle Street truck traffic, we have had three meetings with Deputy City Manager Richard Rossi, City Councilors Frank Duehay and Sheila Russell, Charles Sullivan of the Historical Commission, and representatives of the Police and Traffic Departments. We have discussed truck traffic patterns, enforcement of speed limits and designing a safer intersection at Sparks, Craigie and Brattle Streets. This letter is to update the neighborhood on the Brattle Street traffic situation before the public meeting scheduled for March 30.

City Actions on Traffic

1. Documentation of Truck Traffic on Brattle Street Versus Mount Auburn Street¹

Regarding the question of how much heavy truck traffic uses Brattle Street versus Mount Auburn Street, the Traffic Department conducted a count of truck traffic on the two streets in November. During a two-day period on November 16 and 17, 1993, heavy trucks accounted for 7.8 percent of total vehicular traffic on Brattle Street, i.e. one out of twelve vehicles is a truck weighing 2-1/2 tons or more. Lauren Preston of the Traffic Department told us that, even allowing for a small margin of error, he was surprised by the volume of heavy trucks on Brattle Street. Another finding of the study was that truck traffic was substantially greater in the eastbound direction – 12.4 percent of eastbound traffic was accounted for by heavy trucks, while only 3.0 percent of westbound traffic was accounted for by heavy trucks.

A traffic count on Mount Auburn Street on November 22 and 23 showed less heavy truck traffic on that street – 5.7 percent on Mount Auburn Street versus the 7.8 percent on Brattle Street. Further, the average size of the trucks using Mount Auburn Street is smaller than on Brattle Street. Although Brattle Street had 30 percent more single-unit trucks than Mount Auburn, it had 67 percent more tractor-trailer trucks.

In contrast to the predominance of eastbound truck traffic on Brattle Street, truck traffic was heavier in the westbound direction on Mount Auburn Street – 8.6 percent of westbound traffic was accounted for by heavy trucks compared with 2.9 percent in the eastbound direction. We wonder if some of this pattern of heavier eastbound traffic on Brattle and heavier westbound traffic on Mount Auburn represents a pattern of deliveries to businesses in Harvard Square (into the Square on Brattle Street, out on Mount Auburn). If so, we recommend that the City work with Harvard Square businesses to encourage the use of smaller delivery trucks to provide supplies. It seems ridiculous to have an 18-wheeler deliver supplies to Sage's on the corner of Church and Brattle Street – yet we have observed such deliveries.

The finding that the volume of trailer-truck traffic on Brattle Street is two-thirds greater than on Mount Auburn supports our hypothesis that Brattle Street is used as a short cut for truckers from western points to points northeast of Cambridge. As we noted in our fall newsletters, Brattle Street is a far more desirable shortcut through Cambridge than any other street through West Cambridge: It is wider, has fewer traffic lights and fewer buses, and traffic moves at higher average speeds. We remain skeptical of the argument that any heavy truck traffic diverted from Brattle would simply move to Mount Auburn Street or Concord Avenue.

2. Requests for Cooperation from Truckers

In the fall Traffic & Parking Department Director George Teso sent a letter to truckers (from a list provided by us) asking that they seek alternative routes.² (For example, the Traffic Department knows that Puglia Trucking is using Brattle Street as a route between work sites in Boston and a dump in Waltham.) Unfortunately, Mr. Teso's letter seems to have had little effect on Brattle Street regulars such as Puglia and Lawrence Ready Mix Cement. Deputy City Manager Richard Rossi contracted the Star Market and BFI to ask that they vary their routes rather than using Brattle Street for the bulk of their deliveries. Mr. Rossi's efforts seem to have had some success.

3. Enforcement of Speed Limits

Since we began to speak up in the fall, the police have begun more surveillance and vigorous enforcement of speeding violations. Three hundred fifty citations for speeding on Brattle Street and Huron Avenue were issued from the end of October through December. The icy snow banks at the side of the roads have halted regular surveillance, but we expect that the police will begin an even more vigorous program of enforcement this spring.³ We believe that it is more important for our neighborhood to have frequent speed traps and enforcement of traffic regulations than it is to have an officer on footpatrol walking up and down Brattle Street between 9 and 10 am. We urge you to support us in our call for better enforcement of traffic regulations – in our neighborhood and throughout Cambridge – at the public meeting on March 30. (We understand that a representative of the Police Department will be at the meeting.)

4. Redesign of the Intersection of Brattle, Craigie and Sparks

In November, we attended a meeting in the City Manager's office where Mr. Teso of the Traffic Department discussed installing traffic lights at the intersection of Sparks, Craigie and Brattle Streets. We expressed questions about the wisdom of installing a light (which would slow traffic but bring other problems in the form of pollution, noise and drivers racing to get through before the light turns red). We asked the Traffic Department to provide an alternative to lights in the form of narrowing a dangerously wide area of blacktop. (According to Charles Sullivan, Brattle Street was widened over a hundred years ago.)

As you know from the City Manager's recent mailing, the Traffic Department has produced a plan which narrows the intersection with the object of improving pedestrian safety and encouraging drivers to move through the intersection at a slower speed. The plan features an extended triangle from the fountain at Craigie and Brattle which restores an area where there was once a granite horse watering trough.

A controversial feature of the plan restricts the direction of traffic on Craigie Street between Brattle and Buckingham Streets. On the positive side, this restriction would eliminate a dangerous turn,⁴ discourage some commuter traffic seeking to shortcut through our residential neighborhood, eliminate eastbound truck traffic on Craigie and allow for a more orderly flow of pick-up and drop-off traffic at BB&N. On the negative side, restricting the direction of traffic on Craigie Street would cause inconvenience to neighbors and also increase traffic on Appleton Street. These positive and negative considerations need to be discussed at the public meeting. We encourage all neighbors to come and offer their comments.

Need for a Heavy Truck Ban on Brattle Street Continues

A design for a safer intersection at Brattle, Craigie and Sparks does not eliminate the need to post the existing restriction of heavy truck traffic on Brattle Street. We are continuing to work on this subject from a legal point of view. We have obtained a list of Cambridge streets on which truck traffic is restricted (partial or entire length). The enclosed list underscores the unfairness of the lack of consideration accorded to our neighborhood by the city.

Traffic Regulation Is A City-Wide Issue

This newsletter is focused on traffic issues in anticipation of the upcoming neighborhood meeting. If you come to the meeting, please remind the Deputy City Manager and the representatives of the Traffic and Police Departments that traffic regulation is a city-wide issue. The Council should work to improve dangerous intersections and increase the enforcement of traffic regulations through the city. Encourage the City Manager to select a new Director of Traffic & Parking who will make traffic regulation enforcement a priority and who will work with surrounding communities to rationalize truck traffic within the metropolitan area.

Sincerely,

Annette LaMond

Annette LaMond
7 Riedesel Avenue

Susan Miller-Havens

Susan Miller-Havens
151 Brattle Street

- 1) The Traffic Department did not conduct traffic counts on Huron Avenue or Concord Avenue, but we hope that they will later in the spring when the ice has disappeared from the streets.
- 2) Incidentally, Director Teso will retire on July 1. A panel of Cambridge residents will be named to help in the search for a replacement. Let's continue to stress the importance of traffic regulations – particularly the goal of keeping heavy truck traffic on the highways. (Our preference is that the City look for a new director from a well-run medium-size city in the Mid West.)
- 3) On the question of speeding violations, Officer Robert Ahern has told us that the license number of speeding vehicles can be reported directly to the Department of Motor Vehicles. Such reports should be sent (in writing) to Registrar Jerold A. Gnazzo, 100 Nashua Street, Boston, MA 02114. Violators will be asked to appear at the Registry for a hearing – a request which would be irksome to truckers and alert trucking companies to the need to drive more carefully on Brattle Street.
- 4) As we have all seen, some drivers turn left onto Craigie from Brattle Street without stopping, slowing their speed or using their turn indicators (whether out of a mistaken belief that they have the right-of-way or out of an avoid-eye-contact-with-oncoming traffic bluff.) Meanwhile, drivers approaching behind the left-turning vehicle will often swoop to pass on the right without reducing their speed. (Because of its width, drivers are lulled into the feeling that Brattle Street is a parkway.)

Cambridge Streets on Which Heavy Commercial Vehicles Are Prohibited (Partial or Entire Length)

<i>West Cambridge</i>	Seagrave Road	<i>Mid-Cambridge</i>	<i>East Cambridge</i>
Blanchard Road	Columbus Avenue	Irving/Scott/Byrant Streets	Gore Street
Coolidge Avenue	Beech Street	Oxford Street	Winter Street
	Russell Street	Prospect Street	Third Street
<i>North Cambridge</i>	Chester Street	Columbia Street	Sciarappa Street
Walden Avenue	Day Street	Windsor Street	Fifth Street
Rindge Avenue	Dover Street		Sixth Street
Edmonds Street	Cameron Avenue	<i>Cambridgeport</i>	Seventh Street
Magoun Street	Washburn Avenue	Green Street	Eighth Street
Madison Avenue	Clarendon Avenue	Franklin Street	
Harrison Avenue		Bay Street	
Kimball Street		Western Avenue*	
		River Street*	

*All day Saturday & Sunday, 7 pm – 7 am Monday – Friday, except trucks carrying hazardous materials.

Truck Traffic Update

Consent Communication #10

S 328

Communication was received from Annette LaMond, 7 Riedesel Avenue and Susan Miller-Havens, 151 Brattle Street, enclosing a packet informing neighbors on the issue of increasing truck traffic on the residential streets of Cambridge.

In City Council October 23, 1995

*Referred to the 7:00 p.m.
hearing*