



City of Cambridge

Committee Report #4

IN CITY COUNCIL

May 24, 1999

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to instruct the Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation and the Commissioner of Police to provide the latest truck violation report, including speeding, and to make this report available to the Truck Advisory Committee.

In City Council May 24, 1999.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of eight members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. Margaret Drury".

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

Ms. Susan Miller-Havens, 151 Brattle Street, stated that this presentation was made to the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee, the East Cambridge Planning Team, and the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood. The issue in North Cambridge was with trucks getting off of Massachusetts Avenue and using streets such as Beech Street. Aberdeen Avenue, she stated, is part of Route 16.

Mr. Bob Johnson, 326 Concord Avenue, stated that North Cambridge residents were concerned with extra traffic on side streets. Traffic calming and curb widening have alleviated the concerns of the business community.

Ms. Miller-Havens stated that when Kirkland Street was dug up it was a free traffic study. The tankers were gone. They traveled on major highways, but when Kirkland Street was reopened, the trucks were back. There is no proof that trucks will move to abutting cities and towns; if truck traffic is alleviated, it is a benefit to all towns.

Councillor Davis asked what is the daytime truck traffic on Massachusetts Avenue. Mr. Lee responded that this information is dataless. Mr. Johnson asked when the next cordon count will be conducted. Ms. Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, responded that the next cordon count should take place this month. She stated that trucks destined for Cambridge are not affected by this count.

Mr. Bob Travers, 54 Fulkerson Street, stated that the police are stopping trucks early in the morning and have been active in weighing the trucks. Mr. Johnson stated that when Kirkland Street was shut down, there was a significant difference in truck traffic. Councillor Davis stated that the increased amount of tickets could be checked.

Ms. Miller-Havens stated that trucks are on a schedule. They are annoyed that they have to deal with school crossings.

Mr. Lee asked what are the truckers cited for. Mr. Rossi stated that this information has been given many times.

Mr. Johnson stated that the Department of Transportation inspects trucks bumper to bumper. Lights, brakes, tire pressure and mirrors are inspected. Truckers do not want to go through a Department of Transportation inspection, he said.

Mr. Lee asked how many times are trucks stopped. Ms. Clippinger responded that this report has been issued previously. Councillor Davis made the following motion:

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to instruct the Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation and the Commissioner of Police to provide the latest truck violation report, including speeding, and to make this report available to the Truck Advisory Committee.

The motion carried on a voice vote.

Ms. Vicki Casana, 87 River Street, asked where are the tickets given and what is the proportion. Councillor Davis stated that the city needs to monitor this information.

Councillor Born asked if this plan will go to the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) for approval. Ms. Miller-Havens asked if permission is needed to implement this plan on a trial basis. We need to collect data. Trucks participating in the trial plan is voluntary. Councillor Born asked how would trucks be required to participate. Ms. Miller-Havens responded that trucks will be included who use the routes. These routes can be signed "Truck Route" without MHD approval.

Councillor Born stated that alternate truck route signs are needed. Neighborhood meetings need to be held in the Massachusetts Avenue/Aberdeen Avenue area. A report is needed from Somerville, she said. Ms. Miller Havens informed the committee that the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee wants a trial period with this plan. Councillor Davis stated that she does not think that Aberdeen Avenue residents will be happy if they are told that their street is a truck route. Ms. Miller-Havens responded that an assumption is being made that trucks will go to Aberdeen Avenue. The point is, she said, is to see if trucks take major routes. Councillor Davis stated that she did not think that Somerville will go for this. How does Cambridge convince Somerville. Ms. Miller-Havens stated by data collection.

Councillor Born asked how is this plan implemented. Before signs are posted on Aberdeen Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue, Somerville Avenue and Land Boulevard, a community meeting process must take place, she said. She urged that the most difficult constituency be selected. Ms. Miller-Havens stated that the North Cambridge Community is the most difficult. Mr. Rossi stated that the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee is not representative of the consensus of the residents in North Cambridge. The Aldermen in Somerville are not in favor of this issue, he said. Somerville thinks that truck traffic will be dumped on their streets, Ms. Miller-Havens said. Councillor Davis stated that Cambridge should have a meeting with Somerville.

Mr. Rossi suggested that the sign at Aberdeen Avenue say "Suggested Route" not "Restricted Route." Truckers, he said, will not take this route because it is a hassle. Fresh Pond construction will be underway for three years. Somerville has no incentive to try this and Belmont sent a letter of opposition, he said. Mr. Rossi further stated that this Committee is assuming the majority of the city wants this plan.

Councillor Born suggested taking this case to the new Somerville Mayor and urging Somerville to agree to implementation on an interim basis.

Councillor Davis asked when the American Trucking Association meeting is scheduled. Ms. Clippinger responded this month. She further stated that she cannot convince Somerville that a trial will benefit them, she does not think it will. She does not know how to put the plan in place because it will be difficult to receive approval from MHD for these restrictions. The truck route does not say you do not have to use this, she said, Mr. Rossi stated that it has been the city's contention that MHD will not approve this plan. He stated that the enforcement done by the Police Department is a deterrent; it is different than four years ago. Ms. Miller-Havens stated that she does not feel like dealing with the City of Somerville without the cooperation of the Traffic Director. Mr. Rossi stated that this is a regional and a Commonwealth problem.

Mr. Travers asked if approval was received from other cities and towns will MHD approve. Ms. Clippinger stated that it is a question of what the strategies are.

Councillor Davis stated that this is a regional problem; Cambridge cannot act alone. Cambridge cannot make Somerville accept this plan. Mr. Rossi stated that abutting cities and towns need to be convinced to join this strategy.

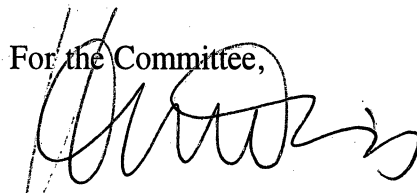
Ms. Casana stated that she wants support from the city. This is a trial. If Cambridge has a negative attitude, it will be difficult for other cities and towns to join this strategy. Ms. Clippinger stated that she has tried hard to work with Somerville. Ms. Casana requested Ms. Clippinger to suspend judgement. Ms. Clippinger stated that she is not convinced that this is workable.

Mr. Johnson asked when will the second count be done. Ms. Clippinger responded that counts will be done in interim locations in the next couple of weeks. The counts will be done in Porter, Central and Harvard Squares, she said.

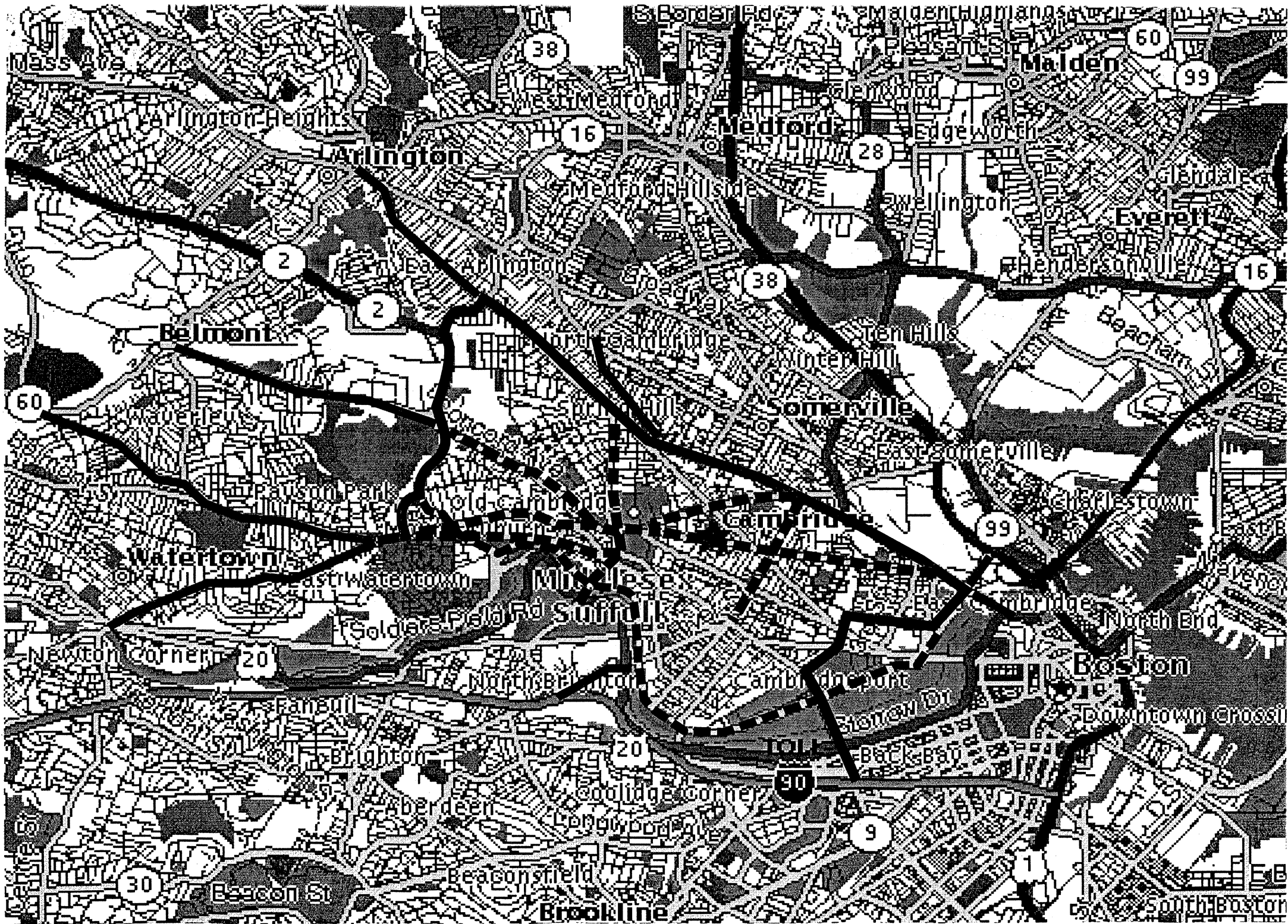
Councillor Davis stated that truck issues are frustrating to all.

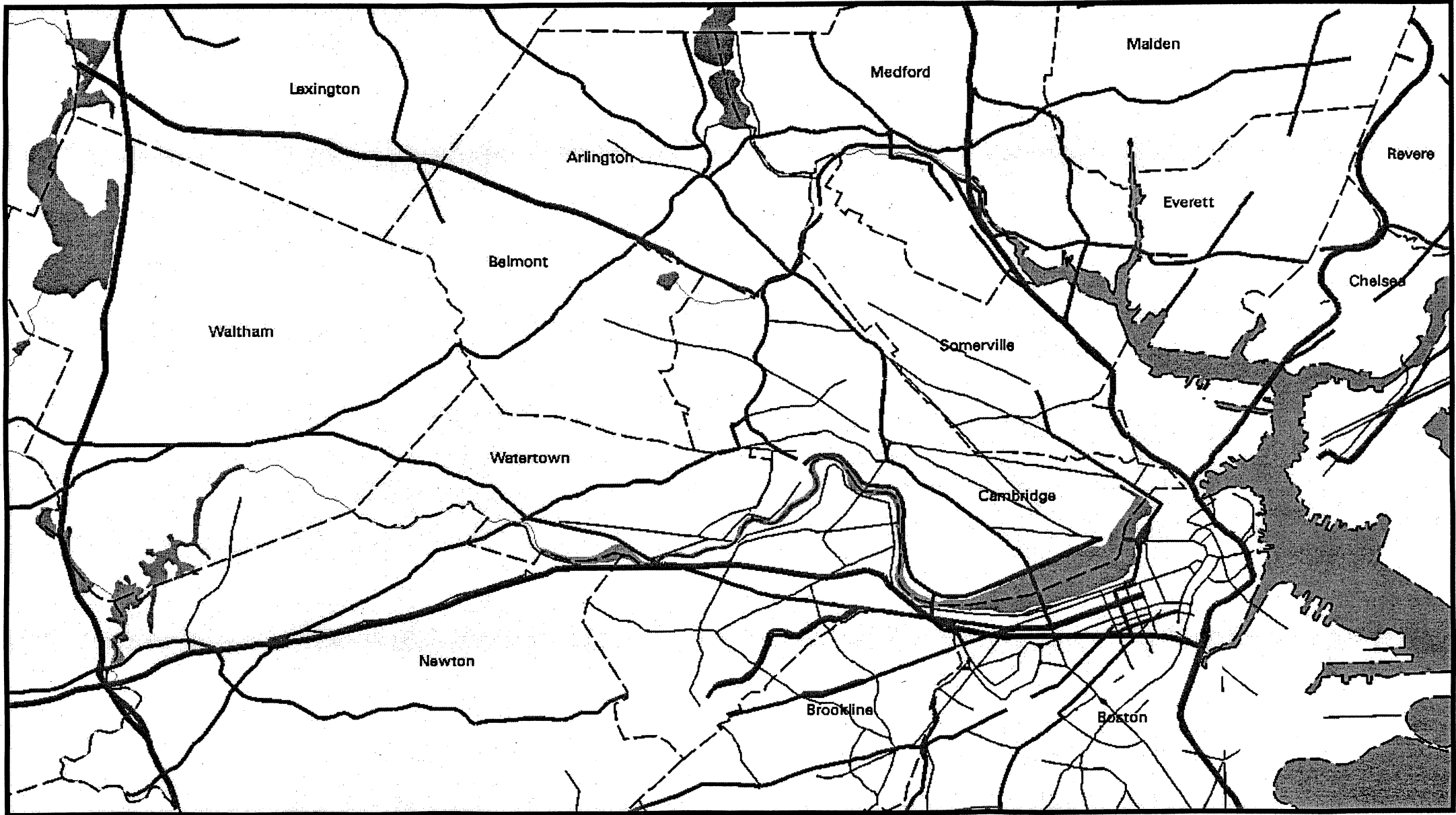
The meeting adjourned at nine o'clock and twelve minutes p.m.

For the Committee,



Councillor Henrietta Davis
Chair





Designated Through Truck Route in Cambridge

Tom Bracken, Vici Casana, Bob Johnson, Doug Lee, Susan
Miller-Havens, Bob Travers

Truck Restrictions

- Some already exist
 - Memorial Drive
 - some not posted, some not enforced
 - piecemeal
- Mass Ave and Somerville Ave are already designated as an “alternative routes”

Mitigation of Negative Impacts

- Traffic calming on North Mass Ave
- Restrictions on curb cuts and auto-oriented strip development
- Landscaping, sidewalks, furniture to enhance pedestrian environment
- Deal with trucks off Mass Ave (Beech, Porter Rd)
- Prevent shortcuts through North Cambridge

City of Cambridge

In City Council May 24, 1999

The Traffic and Transportation Committee conducted a public meeting on Wednesday, May 5, 1999 at seven o'clock and fifty-five minutes p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber.

The purpose of this meeting was to receive a presentation from members of the Truck B Report of the Truck Advisory Committee on the issue of a day-time truck ban and any other matters relating to trucks.

Present at the meeting were Councillor Henrietta Davis, Chair of the Committee, Councillor Kathleen Born, Don Drisdell, Deputy City Solicitor, Sue Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, Lauren Preston, Deputy Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, and Donna P. Lopez, Deputy City Clerk. Present also from the Truck Advisory Committee were Doug Lee, Susan Miller-Havens, Vicki Casana, Bob Johnson and Bob Travers.

Councillor Davis opened the meeting.

Mr. Doug Lee, 33 Lexington Avenue, made the presentation to the Committee. He outlined the truck route around the city and routes that trucks use to enter the city from Watertown, Arlington, Massachusetts Avenue and Trapelo Road, outlined on the enclosed map. (ATTACHMENT A). The Regional Map includes Route 2, Mass Pike, Route 93 and the Expressway.

He outlined the principles of the presentation as contained in the document entitled "Designated Through Truck Route in Cambridge." (ATTACHMENT B).

He stated that if the pace was changed, traffic will change. If truck traffic is allowed to move faster, there will be more traffic, he said. He stated that there is a 24 hour problem on Prospect Street. Concord Avenue, he said, is a bad street for trucks to travel on because it is narrow. Truck Report B recommended wider streets and better pavement, he said. Trucks that get off of Massachusetts Avenue are the problem, he said.

Councillor Born asked what is the next step. Mr. Lee responded that consensus around neighborhoods is needed, assuming there is agreement of support by the city. Then a truck route can be designated. Councillor Born stated that this plan looks good.

Councillor Davis asked where do trucks end up going. She asked how do people on these other routes, such as Aberdeen Avenue, feel about this matter.

Committee Report #4

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A report from Councillor Davis,
Chair of the Traffic and
Transportation Committee, for
a hearing held on May 5, 1999
for the purpose of receiving
a presentation from members
of the Truck B Report of the
Truck Advisory Committee on the
issue of a day-time truck ban
and any other matters relating to
trucks.

In City Council May 24, 1999

*Report Accepted
Order Adopted
Placed on file*