



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

BETH RUBENSTEIN
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

January 22, 2008

SUSAN M. GLAZER
Deputy Director for
Community Development

Dear Cambridge Highlands Neighbors-

I am writing to update you on work planned in the neighborhood, including work at the intersection of Griswold and Sunset streets.

The Cambridge Department of Public Works (DPW) has utility work planned on neighborhood streets beginning in the summer of 2008, which includes drainage utility work at the intersection of Griswold and Sunset. The drainage work involves the separation of common manhole structures, (manholes that presently serve both the drainage and sewer systems) of which there are 15 throughout the neighborhood, as well as some drainage system rehabilitation work. DPW will be in contact with you with more details specific to this project in the spring.

As part of the project, the Community Development Department has discussed additional work at the intersection of Sunset and Griswold with neighbors. Proposed changes to this intersection were marked out in paint and barrels for residents to see and use. A meeting was held with residents on October 23rd, 2007 at the intersection to discuss the proposed changes. Most residents in attendance were not in favor of the proposed changes, saying that the layout in their view would make the intersection difficult to negotiate. Therefore, this plan will not be implemented as part of the work.

At the October 23rd meeting, several other issues were also discussed.

Peak Hour Restriction Signs

As part of the recently completed Blanchard Road project, the peak-hour restriction sign on Blanchard Road at South Normandy was removed during construction. This sign will be replaced with a 7:30-9:30AM weekday peak hour restriction. A peak hour restriction will also be posted at Griswold Street and Sunset Road, restricting left turns onto Sunset from 4-6 PM weekdays. The purpose of these turn restrictions is to prevent motorists from cutting through the Cambridge Highlands during peak hours to avoid the traffic congestion at the intersection of Blanchard Road and Concord Avenue. These restrictions must apply to all vehicles, including residents, since these streets are public and maintained with public funds, and as such, wording such as "except abutters" will not be added to signs.

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Traffic Calming

While residents were not in favor of the proposed curb extensions at Griswold/Sunset, concern was expressed about speeding on both Griswold and Sunset and city staff were asked to provide information about other traffic calming tools that could be implemented at the intersection of and further down Griswold Street. After further review of the streets and sidewalks, additional site observations by city staff, as well as comments received from residents, we have decided not to include other traffic calming features in the work currently planned by DPW. The lack of substantial pedestrian activity and the desire of many residents to see the streets remain substantially the same means that constructing raised devices, pinch points or other tools which would dramatically alter the look and use of the neighborhood streets to slow traffic would not be the best use of limited traffic calming funds.

As many residents have expressed, the traffic volumes in the neighborhood outside of peak hours are very low and most residents drive at reasonable speeds, making the exceptions very visible. We will request that the police department do additional enforcement in the neighborhood.

New peak hour restriction signs will be fabricated and posted by the end of January 2008. When work is being considered in the future at the Concord Avenue/Blanchard Road intersection, the signalization of Griswold Street will be reviewed. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any further questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.P. Avendano', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Juan P. Avendano
Project Manager

cc: Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager