



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

Department of Public Safety
Public Safety Building, CB# 1600
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27599-1600

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Memorandum

Date: October 21, 2002
To: Kumar Nepalli, Town of Chapel Hill Traffic Engineer
From: Tim Saunders, Assistant Director of Public Safety *TS*
Subject: Traffic Flow Change on Battle Lane

cc: Bruce Runberg, Carolyn Elfland, Chief Derek K. Poarch

Background

Our office has received a memo from you dated September 27, 2002 and entitled "Traffic Flow Changes on Battle Lane". The memo seeks comment on a citizen requested proposal to restrict traffic on Battle Lane between Franklin Street and Boundary Lane to one-way. The proposal requests that traffic on Battle Lane be one-way southbound.

The UNC-CH Department of Public Safety (DPS) has reviewed the above information. UNC-CH has several properties that are located on Battle Lane or adjacent to this area. These properties include: Hickerson House, and Alderman, Kenan, and McIver Residence Halls. DPS offers the following comments

UNC DPS Comments on Southbound Traffic Flow

Three streets connect the UNC campus to Franklin Street. They are South Columbia, Raleigh Street and Battle Lane. The narrow design of Battle Lane makes it the least attractive of these roadways. However, Battle Lane remains an important access/egress to the campus for traffic and emergency services.

The Town has shared the most recent traffic count and accident information with UNC. There does not appear to be a traffic accident or traffic volume problem on Battle Lane that would support this change.

A southbound one-way will increase traffic having to exit through the Battle Lane, Boundary Lane, and Country Club Road intersection. This intersection is poorly designed and very confusing to visitors and locals.

A southbound one-way will restrict access to the three UNC Residence Halls from the rest of campus. Students will be forced to use Raleigh to Franklin to turn on to Battle or use Boundary and come back through Senlac or Hooper to reach the residence halls from campus.

If traffic flow were southbound, a large traffic back up on Franklin Street probably would occur during the move in/out and some special event periods on campus. The resulting traffic backup at these times would force DPS to allow traffic access to Battle Lane through either or both Senlac and Hooper by way of Boundary.



UNC DPS Comments on Northbound Traffic Flow

The DPS supports a change of traffic flow on Battle Lane between Franklin Street and Boundary Lane to one-way for northbound traffic.

This recommendation is based on the following DPS experience and observation.

During the regular school move-in/out period and Summer camps DPS restricts Battle Lane to one-way traffic northbound from Boundary to Franklin. This prevents traffic from backing up on Franklin Street when vehicles try to turn left across two lanes of traffic. The northbound one-way also allows DPS to screen traffic for parking permits at the entrance to Battle Lane at Boundary Lane. DPS does not allow students to enter through the neighborhood streets (Senlac and Hooper). This is in order to minimize campus traffic interruptions to the neighborhood. The northbound one-way operation is designed to separate traffic going to the three halls on Battle Lane from the Raleigh Street traffic. It also allows DPS to use intercampus signage to get students to the correct residence halls.

Battle Lane has temporarily operated as one-way northbound previously by UNC DPS without any major incidents.

It is UNC DPS recommendation that if Battle Lane changed to a one-way roadway it would operate better for the neighborhood and the UNC community as a northbound one-way.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed traffic flow changes for Battle Lane. Please keep me informed of the status of this request and any other actions that the Town may consider. Should you have questions, please contact me at 962-5028.

Kumar Neppalli

From: Carol Hogue [hogue@mail.schsr.unc.edu]
Sent: Friday, October 11, 2002 4:01 PM
To: Kumar Neppalli
Cc: jjkalo@email.unc.edu; gordon_defriese@unc.edu; eokeefe@med.unc.edu
Subject: Re: Battle Lane Traffic Proposal

October 11, 2002

Mr Kumar Neppalli, E.I.T.
Town of Chapel Hill
306 North Columbia Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Dear Mr. Neppalli:

I am writing in response to your September 27 memo informing us that a resident has requested restricting traffic flow on Battle Lane to one-way from Franklin Street to Boundary Street. While your attached map suggests two-way traffic between Boundary Street and Senlac Road, and one-way traffic, Southbound, from Franklin Street to Senlac, I wish to comment on the proposal to have one-way traffic on all or any of Battle Lane. I am opposed to one-way traffic on any part of Battle Lane because of the reasons already noted by the Kalos and the O'Keefes, my neighbors: one-way traffic will increase speeding. I think some traffic-calming device in addition to the stop sign at Hooper Lane and Battle Lane should be considered, a stop sign or speed bump at Senlac and Battle. Any traffic restructuring which would encourage more traffic on Senlac Road, where the left turn to Boundary Street is already dangerous, as noted by the O'Keefes, should not be considered, in my opinion. I like the O'Keefe's suggestion of making the left turn from Battle Lane to Franklin Street illegal; that should divert some of the traffic to either Boundary Street or Raleigh Street.

It is a somewhat separate issue, but I agree with the Kalos' suggestion that parking on both sides of Senlac be stopped, as it is on Hooper Lane, except by Residential Permit. Senlac is even more dangerous than Hooper, for the reasons explained by the O'Keefes: Senlac is curved, has a hill, and has poor visibility in both directions where it meets South Boundary Street.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal to decrease speeding on Battle Lane.

Sincerely,

Carol C. Hogue (and husband Gordon H. DeFriese)
514 Senlac Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
929-6367

Kumar Neppalli

From: Joe Kalo [jjkalo@email.unc.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, October 02, 2002 11:30 AM
To: Kumar Neppalli
Cc: Edward O'Keefe; Carol Hogue
Subject: Proposed Change of Traffic Pattern on Battle Lane

October 1, 2002

Mr. Kumar Neppalli, E.I.T.
Traffic Engineer
Town of Chapel Hill
306 North Columbia Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

RE: Proposed Change of Traffic Flow on Battle Lane

Dear Mr. Neppalli:

I am writing to you because of my concern and objection to the change of the traffic flow on Battle Lane. My concern is two-fold. First, I am worried about the impact of the change on the flow of traffic on Senlac, illegal traffic in our alley, and the potential of increased student parking on Senlac. Second, I question the necessity of the change itself.

The houses on Senlac and at 124 South Boundary Street comprise the "Battle Estate Subdivision," and are part of the historic district and perhaps is the one of the oldest subdivisions in Chapel Hill, at least according to the plat maps at the County Recorder's office. The homeowners in the Battle Estate Subdivision have worked very hard to maintain the residential character of the neighborhood despite its proximity to the university, specifically the dormitories on Battle Lane. Therefore, the potential impact of this proposed change on the character of the neighborhood is obviously of great concern.

If the Battle Lane traffic is one-way, then students, parents, and others coming from the south (Country Club Road), will start using Senlac, Hooper Lane, and perhaps even our alley to reach the dormitories on Battle Lane. (The alley to which I refer is a driveway we share with our next door neighbors, who are at 514 Senlac, and that alley/driveway extends from South Boundary to Senlac.) It is very unlikely that they will proceed all the way from Country Club, up South Boundary to East Franklin Street, make a left at the light, proceed down East Franklin Street, and turn onto Battle Lane for that purpose. Instead they will look for short-cuts to reach the dormitory area. And those shortcuts would be our alley, Senlac, and Hooper Lane. So the rerouting of traffic on Battle Lane potentially could adverse impact not only the neighboring streets but also private property.

In addition, there is a strong likelihood of increased illegal parking on Senlac with all of the discarding of trash and associated late-night noise. Because it will be more difficult for those coming from the south to reach the dormitories and more likely that such people will use Senlac for that purpose, it is also more likely that they will park cars on Senlac and walk to the dormitories from there. We already have some parking problems on Senlac, which might be alleviated by making both sides of Senlac "No Parking At Any Time, Except By Residential Permit," which I would hope you would do in any event.

Finally, is the change on Battle Lane really necessary and a good idea? It is true that the flow of traffic is restricted between Hooper Lane and Senlac, but that restriction operates as a natural traffic calming device. Cars coming from different directions are forced to slow down to pass each other. If the traffic is one-way then it is likely that drivers will drive at higher speeds and the street, especially in the dormitory area, will be more dangerous and not safer.

It is true that there were traffic problems this summer on Battle Lane, but that was due to the university's closing of Raleigh Street to the west of Battle Lane. That closure forced traffic onto Battle Lane to reach East Franklin Street. With the reopening of Raleigh Street, normal traffic patterns have returned to the area and there is considerably less traffic on Battle Lane and no real traffic related problems of which to speak.

If you decide to make any recommendations for change in the traffic direction on Battle Lane, please notify me of what the recommendation is and when it will be taken up by the Town Council. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joseph J. Kalo
124 South Boundary Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Joseph J. Kalo
Graham Kenan Professor of Law jjkalo@unc.edu
UNC School of Law (919)962-8518
CB# 3380, Van Hecke-Wettach Fax: (919)962-1277
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3380

Kumar Neppalli

From: Edward O'Keefe [edward_o'keefe@med.unc.edu]
Sent: Friday, October 11, 2002 3:27 PM
To: Kumar Neppalli
Cc: jkalo@email.unc.edu; hogue@mail.schsr.unc.edu; gordon_defriese@unc.edu
Subject: Battle Lane Traffic Proposal

Importance: High

Mr Kumar Neppalli, E.I.T.
Town of Chapel Hill
306 N. Columbia St.
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Dear Mr. Neppalli:

We are writing in response to your letter of September 27, 2002, regarding traffic flow on Battle Lane. Your letter requests opinions about restricting traffic flow on Battle Lane to one-way southbound. Your diagram of the proposed change also shows traffic two-way in the segment of Battle Lane between Boundary and Senlac. We are opposed to making Battle Lane one way partly or wholly.

We believe it will increase the speed at which cars will drive on Battle. More cars will use Battle as a "quick" way to get from Franklin Street to Country Club without a stoplight, and there will be no opposing traffic to slow them down.

Under the proposal, more cars coming north on Battle will cut down Senlac Road to get to Franklin St and will have to turn left at the Senlac Rd/Boundary St intersection, which is difficult and dangerous. Cars coming from Country Club Rd drive fast around the curve on Boundary, and visibility of these oncoming cars is restricted by the curve. It is a dangerous turn because of the lack of visibility of these fast moving cars. Increased traffic at this dangerous intersection may lead to accidents.

More cars on Senlac Road would be a problem, as was proved this summer when Raleigh Road was closed. There is parking on one side of the street during certain hours of the day. This makes the street narrow. There is a curve and a hill. People tend to drive in the middle of the road and visibility is not good. Cars also tend to drive too fast. If the change is made it will create more traffic on a curved road with a hill that is not equipped to handle traffic. This is especially dangerous at night for pedestrians, and there are many students walking on the street at night.

We realize that Battle Lane is a crowded street, but we do not believe making it one way will solve the problem. It will simply create new problems. Perhaps one way to solve the problem of accidents at Battle and Franklin that happened this summer would be to make a left turn from Battle onto Franklin St illegal.

Speeding on Battle lane might be reduced by a stop sign at Senlac.

We would be happy to work with you on how this problem can be helped, but we oppose the current suggestion. We think the severe problem of this summer was due to Raleigh Road being closed and while perhaps not ideal, things are back to normal.

Sincerely,

Shirley and Ed O'Keefe
511 Senlac Rd
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
942-6506