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CAMBRIDGE BICENTENNIAL PARK AND RIDE PLAN

Prepared by

Maurice V. Dullea, Principal Planner  
Cambridge Community Development Department

for the

Cambridge Bicentennial Corporation

June 10, 1974

CAMBRIDGE  
BICENTENNIAL  
CORPORATION

5 Story Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138 617-354-5300

July 10, 1974,

To the Members of the City Council:

The accompanying report entitled Cambridge Bicentennial Park and Ride Plan was prepared for the Cambridge Bicentennial Corporation by Maurice V. Dullea of the Community Development Department, who at the request of the Corporation and through the cooperation of the City has reviewed with a subcommittee of the Corporation on logistics all existing and proposed state and local plans and programs for bicentennial transportation and parking. Mr. Dullea's conclusions can be summarized as follows:

(a) The ambitious program for peripheral parking areas during the bicentennial period proposed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Works last January seems unlikely to be implemented.

(b) A parking area near the Allston interchange of the Massachusetts Turnpike, with shuttle service to the Harvard Square area, would be an ideal solution to parking problems associated with the bicentennial as well as the proposed Kennedy Library, but such a project is not within the exclusive control of Cambridge and seems unlikely to occur within the bicentennial time period, which will peak in the summers of 1975 and 1976.

(c) The opportunity exists to provide peripheral park-and-ride facilities at the Dump and/or Kendall Square during the bicentennial period which, while not perfect solutions to anticipated parking problems, would undoubtedly help some. Specific proposals for these facilities are included in Mr. Dullea's report.

We are transmitting Mr. Dullea's report to the City Council with a request for an expression of opinion as to whether either or both of his proposals should be implemented. If the Council and the City Manager respond with a direction and a commitment to go forward, every effort will be made to complete the facility or facilities by the summer of 1975.

*Robert P. Moncreiff*

Robert P. Moncreiff  
Chairman

RPM:ms  
Enclosure

## **CAMBRIDGE BICENTENNIAL PARK AND RIDE PLAN**

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## I. Introduction

The Cambridge Bicentennial Corporation has been investigating the feasibility of providing Bicentennial visitor parking at various locations in the City. Two areas remain under serious consideration: the land bank portion of the Cambridge Dump and vacant C.R.A. land in Kendall Square. In order to help coordinate its work, the Corporation's Logistics Committee has met and been in communication with Mr. Robert Sloane, Mass. Bicentennial Transportation Coordinator.

The parking being considered would become available as of the opening of the 1975 tourist season and would remain available for this purpose until the end of the tourist season in 1976. The parking areas would be connected with major Bicentennial visitor attractions via either existing or new means of mass transit. In order that it not become simply pools of general commuter parking, they would not be available until after 9:00 or 9:30 a.m.

## II. Purpose and Operation of the Sites

### The Dump Site

The purpose of park and ride at the dump would be to provide an outlying location for Cambridge visitors to store their cars for a day or more while they visit the historical and cultural attractions of the community. This might be particularly convenient for Boston-based tourists planning a day trip to Concord and Lexington, and wishing to visit Cambridge on the way. All would stand to benefit, as these cars would then not be circulating on narrow and already overcrowded streets looking for parking spaces nor travelling along these same streets while visiting sites better reached by public transportation.

Access to the proposed dump parking area would be off of Fresh Pond Parkway via New Street, which is currently utilized as a secondary

entrance to the Fresh Pond Shopping Center, and which also provides access to several businesses which front upon it.

Access to the Harvard Square area would be by MBTA shuttle busses. The MBTA has indicated that such bus service could be made available on six-weeks notice. In addition, the MBTA is willing to consider a Buddliner stop at the Dump so that visitors parking there could travel by train to Boston or to Concord.

### Kendall Square

The Kendall Square site would provide an alternative to Boston parking for visitors wishing to come to the Harvard Square area by subway. According to Mr. Robert Whidden of the property management section of C.R.A., there would appear to be no problem in making vacant land available. A 1,000-car lot is being prepared for the use of Draper Lab employees. When the new Draper Lab parking garage is completed -- in about a year -- most of this lot could be made available for the bicentennial. Other vacant sites might also be available. At this time C.R.A. does not want to commit itself to promising specific sites, as some of these might become utilized by new development.

## III. Reactions to the Plan

### Neighborhood Organizations

In contemplating a project of this size and nature, the feelings of the residents of the nearby area must be considered. The Logistics Committee has been in contact with representatives of several neighborhood groups including: Mr. A. Topliff Sawyer, president of the Neighborhood 9 Association; Ms. Chris Hanley, president, North Cambridge Planning Team; Ms. Elaine DeRosa, C.E.O.C.; and Ruth Connors, president, Jefferson Park Tenants Association. Ms. Connors subsequently solicited opinions from other members of her organization and

encountered no opposition. Mr. Sawyer hoped that if parking were developed at the Dump, it might be located so as to speed up the compacting of the portion designated for recreational development.

Ms. Hanley invited Mr. Dullea to a meeting of the North Cambridge Planning Team on May 7 to discuss the matter further. At that meeting there was a general air of skepticism over the plan, the feeling being that there would be benefits accruing only to persons visiting Boston and Cambridge, and not to residents of North and West Cambridge. People in that area have been long seeking a pedestrian overpass over the railroad tracks. It was asked that if a platform were to be built to accommodate persons who would be riding the train, could not an overpass be provided as part of this project. At a second meeting attended by Mr. Dullea on May 22, the Planning Team continued this approach. As the Alewife overall development plan might place the construction of a permanent overpass at this location several years into the future, and given the reasonable assurance of a profitable parking business for a couple of years, the urge for an overpass, even a temporary one, seems to be within reason. With a safe means of crossing the tracks, residents of the Rindge Avenue area could benefit substantially from the reduced isolation and increased transportation opportunities which the park and ride lot could offer.

Mr. Cudahy suggested bringing this up in any correspondence the City might have with MBTA on the matter of transit connections.

Cambridge Community Development Office

Mr. Richard Easler, Chief Planner/Transportation, feels that 1,700 spaces must be considered the maximum possible size of the lot. He prefers that such parking be located close to the tracks, where it would provide optimum convenience to lot users. Mr. Richard Lockhart would prefer to see parking used to expedite the compacting of the recreational portion of the Dump. Mr. Easler, as well as Traffic Director

George Teso, are in favor of any parking constructed on the dump remaining available until the Alewife Station is built.

#### Cambridge Traffic Board

The Board supported the idea of Bicentennial parking at the dump as well as in Kendall Square.

#### Cambridge Transportation Forum

The Forum is not opposed to 2-year Bicentennial parking, but opposes any extension beyond this time period.

### VI. Projected Costs and Revenues

There would be development costs of approximately \$400,000 at the Dump site, and virtually no costs for Kendall Square other than operational costs. The Dump lot would be created by grading it, laying a layer of earth where necessary for compacting, followed by layers of gravel, sand and oil. After a short period of compacting through usage as a parking lot, the surface takes on the characteristics of asphalt. Fencing, limited lighting and landscaping costs are also included in this figure, which was provided by Mr. Teso and Mr. Preston.

Projected gross and net revenues on the following table, and are based on the following assumptions:

5 months of Bicentennial parking per year, 7 days per week,  
for two years

7 months of commuter parking per year, 5 days per week,  
for the period between the two Bicentennial visitor seasons

75% average occupancy year round

A \$1.50 flat parking charge for any amount of time up to a day

The issuance of a bond to cover the costs of development

Two persons on the lot around the clock to take money, direct parking operations, and to provide limited security (security watch needed only during Bicentennial months. During commuter months only a four-hour morning shift of two people is recommended)

#### IV. Projected Costs and Revenues

Combined Gross Income \$1,366,875

##### Expenses

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Development Costs | \$400,000      |
| Interest          | 30,000         |
| Wages             | 93,400         |
| Unanticipated     | 20,000         |
| Total             | <u>543,400</u> |

Net Income \$ 823,475

The projected volume of revenues from the lots indicates that the City could benefit economically from their presence, and that the erection of a temporary overpass across the railroad tracks is a reasonable consideration.

#### V. Implementation Schedule

1. Favorable indication for the projects from the City Council
2. Bicentennial Corporation requests assurances in writing from MBTA that bus and train connections will be provided
3. The Corporation requests City Council's authorization of a bond issue to implement the Dump project.
4. A survey of the property designated for parking and related development is prepared, probably by Mr. James Rice of the Cambridge Engineering Department, with assistance from Mr. Preston
5. A detailed design of the lot is prepared, including plans for surcharging where this is necessary. This probably would be performed by Mr. Preston with assistance from Haley & Aldrich, Inc.
6. The job is advertised and put out for bidding by interested contractors. Contractor is selected. (Total: about 5 weeks)
7. Surcharge the area where this is necessary. This could be done anytime before the winter.
8. Contractor undertakes, completes work. Depending upon when City Council approves the plan and the bond, the actual work could be performed either this summer of fall or next spring.
9. Traffic and ~~Parking~~ Department acquires staff to operate the lot or arranges for a contractor to perform this work.

# City of Cambridge

## Bicentennial Corporation Park and Bike Plan

In City Council,

July 24, 1974

7/24/74

Referred to

Trans. Comm.

Motion of C. Beckmann

NA ~~Trans~~  
Comm  
For  
Hearing  
OK