



**THE CAMBRIDGE  
BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**ECONOMIC GROWTH ASSISTANCE**

The well-being of the city's population rests on a sound and vigorous economy. In our belief that city government has an important role in improving the economic environment in which we all live, an Economic Development Cabinet was organized in February, 1978. The Cabinet was charged with the responsibility for integrating and coordinating the support resources available in both the government and private business sectors.

To provide the Cabinet with substantive support and to assure an effective avenue of communication between City government, the Cabinet and the business community, I have established a Department of Business Relations. The department is carrying out the Business Assistance Program outlined in this brochure.

It is my sincere hope that the business and industry community of Cambridge will utilize the services of the Business Assistance Program and find these services a useful tool in day-to-day operations and in planning for growth.

James L. Sullivan

City Manager

Designed to provide Cambridge business firms with a one-step access to the resources of City Government, the Business Assistance Program offers the help of an assigned Business Relations representative charged with the responsibility of establishing and maintaining a productive liaison between the companies doing business in Cambridge and the Cambridge City Government. Acting on your behalf, the Business Representative will:

- Investigate and attempt to solve problems you may have with the City.
- Provide information on, and assistance with the City procedures.
- Determine what development plans, scheduled road repairs, pending changes in City services, etc. may affect your business.
- Identify and help you take advantage of Federal, State or Local business development assistance opportunities.
- Assist you in your relationship with Federal and State Departments, Agencies and Bureaus.
- Make known to the City any concerns or suggestions you may have.

Recognizing the importance of the relationship between City Government and the City's business citizens, the City Manager has directed all Cambridge government departments and agencies to give full cooperation to the Business Assistance staff. Your representative will work through established contacts within the government to expedite the resolution of problems you may have with the City.

Working with a variety of economic development specialists, your Business Relations Representative can provide technical assistance in helping you to identify and apply for Federal, State and Local economic support programs when you wish to expand or upgrade your company operations.

This assistance could include:

**Financing:** Help in analyzing Federal, State and Local programs that might be available to you; assistance in the preparation of the necessary applications; arranging appropriate contacts for you with financing sources, such as the Cambridge Industrial Development Financing Authority, the Massachusetts Community Development Financing Corporation and the Small Business Administration.

**Manpower:** Help in recruiting, screening and training skilled manpower. The Cambridge Office of Manpower Affairs is responsible for city programs authorized under the Comprehensive Employment & Training Act and can assist you in special short and long range work force needs.

**Tax Credits:** Help in applying for various urban location and job credit incentives.

**Facilities:** Help in the identification of available space and assistance in securing necessary roadway and other infrastructure improvements.

## CAMBRIDGE IS COMMITTED TO BUSINESS GROWTH

Cambridge is an old and distinguished city with a business community that is traditionally progressive and imaginative. People throughout the world are now employed in enterprises built on concepts and technologies developed within our city limits. Innovation and growth is the hallmark of the Cambridge business and industrial community.

The Business Assistance Program represents the continuing commitment of City Government to the total community effort to maintain the vigor of the City's economy.

### The Economic Development Cabinet

James L. Sullivan  
City Manager

Robert Healy  
Assistant City Manager for Administration

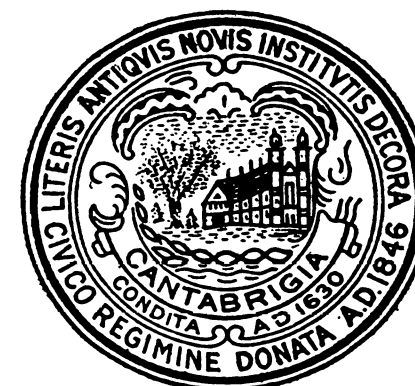
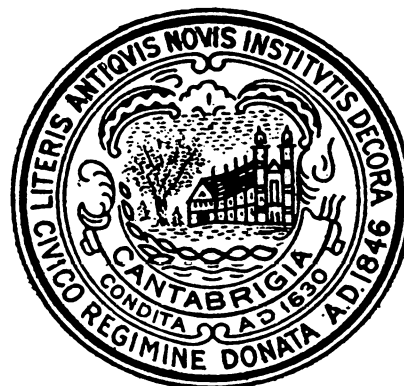
David Vickery  
Assistant City Manager for Community Development

Joseph Fischer  
Director, Cambridge Office of Manpower Affairs

Charles Nowiszewski  
Chairman of the Board  
Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

James Meikle  
President, Cambridge Chamber of Commerce

Janet Rose  
President, Cambridge Community  
Economic Development Corporation



### For further information contact:

Business Assistance Program  
City of Cambridge  
51 Inman Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
Telephone: 876-0184

## Business Assistance Program

CAMBRIDGE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

ATTITUDINAL SURVEY

NOVEMBER, 1978

City of Cambridge  
Office of Manpower Affairs  
Joseph V. Fischer, Director

In February, 1978, the Cambridge Office of Manpower Affairs instituted a Business Assistance Program as an extension of its CETA job development program and as an expansion of city government's effort to enhance the economic well-being of the community. The program was undertaken as an expression of the City's conviction that any effort to improve the employment status of the economically disadvantaged will succeed in direct proportion to that effort's relevancy to overall programs promoting business stability and growth in Cambridge.

During the period, February-July, 1978, Business Assistance Representatives made direct contact with 300 firms in the city. In making contact, Business Assistance Representatives expressed the city government's interest in the firm's well being, offered to act as an intermediary in addressing any problem the firm might be having with the city and explored with the business person opportunities for CETA participant employment.

These contacts were well received by the Business Community. The Business Representatives were able to provide assistance to over 100 concerns in resolving problems involving city government, obtained approximately 50 On-Job-Training opportunities

for CETA programs and responded effectively to a variety of information requests. However, it became apparent that the unstructured contact approach, while productive in many ways, did not generate a base of information upon which a solid communications and business assistance program could be based.

The diversity of problems and the concerns expressed tended to dilute the overall service capability of the Business Assistance staff. It was felt that program planning and service could be better accomplished with a more substantive understanding of the Cambridge Business Community. To that end, an attitudinal survey of the Business Community was initiated in July. The survey was terminated October 23. The content, results and conclusions follow.

#### Objectives

Of basic importance was an understanding of the business community's attitude toward Cambridge city government. The credibility of city government as an integral part of the total economic structure of the community would certainly be a determinant in program planning and in the city's future business support effort. Also of concern, was the determination of the existence of any significant "holes" in city services that might have a negative "halo effect" on adjunct activities.

It was thought pertinent that a parallel effort be made to assess the attitudes of the Business Community toward state and federal government business support.

Information as to the value the business community placed on services of the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce and business associations was also solicited.

Special attention was given to the Business Community's attitudes and understanding of CETA programs and the receptivity accorded the CETA effort.

It was within these broad objectives that the Attitudinal Survey was structured and implemented.

The opinions expressed and the attitudes projected during in-depth interviews mix "gut reaction" with "considered response." It is believed that these reactions and responses provide a helpful insight to the business community public which city government serves. Following is a summary of the five major areas of concern.

A. City Government

The city government receives relatively high marks from the business community of Cambridge. The city's attitude toward the business community and concern for its problems was viewed as positive by 65.8% of the respondents. Moreover, 72% stated that they were satisfied with the services provided by the city and with the way in which requests for service or

information were handled within the city government structure. It was interesting to note that of the respondents expressing a negative or qualified opinion of the city's business attitude, the opinions were based on a specific "unsatisfactory" that "haloed" the overall response.

Conclusion: It would appear that the city is viewed as a supportive public agency by a strong majority of the business leaders of Cambridge. The attitude reflects the positive approach response apparently given by most city government agencies to business firm enquiries and requests for service.

#### B. Business Associations

One half of the respondents reported that they were members of the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce and considered their membership a good investment. Non-members viewed the Chamber in general negative terms. Only 26% of the respondents were members of business associations other than the Chamber. Organization members in general considered informational services, contact opportunity and advocacy as the primary benefit of membership.

Conclusion: The Chamber of Commerce is the primary business community organization in the City. Its role as an advocate and information source is important to its membership. It does exercise a leadership position and is an obvious valuable channel of communication to a significant segment of the business community.

Other business associations appear to serve selected constituencies and provide specific or marginal services.

#### C. State Government

The Cambridge business community was almost evenly split in its opinion of the State Government attitude toward it and its problems; 40% responding with a favorable or a moderately favorable opinion and 40% responding negatively. However, a significant 20% had a mixed or "no comment" response that was basically negative. This negativism existed in spite of the fact that 64% stated that requests for help or information from State government were usually handled expeditiously.

Conclusion: The specifics of most negative responses were generally lacking. "Tax structures" and "poor management" led the complaint parade. It would appear that the overall business climate as it is affected by State government is viewed negatively by Cambridge businesses.

#### D. Federal Government

Over half of the respondents stated that they did business in one form or another with the Federal Government. One third stated that their relationship with federal agencies was favorable or moderately favorable; 22% reported an unfavorable relationship and 27% would not comment.

Conclusion: In general the business community views the federal government either as a customer or a some-

what "outside" factor with which it has routine contact. While there appeared to be an awareness of the federal impact on the business climate there was not the specific problem delineation that surfaced in response to state and local government questions.

#### E. Manpower

The business community of Cambridge is aware of CETA; 87% of the respondents expressing some degree of familiarity with the program, although 54% of the respondents stated that they had no opinion on CETA. Better than 64% reported that they had been contacted directly by the Cambridge Office of Manpower Affairs. Some were not sure of contact, but those responses reflect a minor role in personnel activity by the business chief executive being interviewed.

Of the respondents doing business with the Cambridge Office of Manpower Affairs, 62% reported a positive relationship and 23% negative. A strong 74% were positive in their attitude toward the Cambridge Office of Manpower Affairs On-the-Job-Training Program and, of those not familiar with OJT, 68% indicated a desire to investigate OJT possibilities for their businesses.

A strong 80% of the respondents indicated that they would be receptive to a Private Sector Initiative Program; only 4.7% were totally negative. It should be noted, however, that 35% of the respondents had varying degrees of reservations about PSIP.

Conclusions: Cambridge CETA programs are well received in the business community and a positive relationship exists between the community and the Cambridge Office of Manpower Affairs. OJT Programs, both as ongoing services and as concepts, strike a favorable chord in the Cambridge business community. The Cambridge Office of Manpower Affairs reputation in this area of service clearly enhances the opportunity for successful expansion of OJT activity.

SURVEY MIX

<u>Type of Company</u>	<u>Number of Companies</u>	<u>% of Survey</u>
Manufacturing	30	35.3
Health Service	8	9.4
Service	5	5.9
Banks	6	7.0
Retail	8	9.4
Education	3	3.5
Restaurants	4	4.7
Tech. Ser./R&D	5	5.9
Developers/Brokers	1	1.2
Wholesale Trade	8	9.4
Contractors	2	2.4
Business Associations*	1	1.2
Communications	1	1.2
Printers/Publishers	3	3.5
<hr/>		
Totals	85	100

\*The Presidents of two(2) other Business Associations were seen but interviewed as representatives of a specific business.

RESPONDENT COMPANY EMPLOYMENT LEVEL

a.) 100 and above	35	41.2%
b.) 50 to 99	21	24.7%
c.) 49 and below	29	34.1%
	<u>85</u>	<u>100%</u>

## Survey Structure

Within the City of Cambridge there are approximately 2,200 firms classified by the Dun & Bradstreet Market Survey of December, 1977. However, of these 2,200 firms some 1,400 are 0-9 person organizations which taken individually have a relatively transient or minimal impact on the base business community and economic climate of Cambridge. The remaining 800 firms could be classified as substantive to the objectives of the survey because of economic strength, employment level or other community impact factors inherent in their structure. A total of 116 firms were contacted and 85 were successfully surveyed, 9.4% of the 800 were higher impact employers.

88% of these companies interviewed were represented by chief executive officers. Contact was made by letter with telephone follow-up to arrange interview appointment.

The survey instrument consisted of 18 questions covering 5 major categories:

- a) City (services and perception of attitudes)  
5 questions
- b) Business affiliation--2 questions
- c) State--4 questions
- d) Federal--2 questions
- e) Manpower--5 questions

COMPANIES SURVEYED

<u>Contacted</u>	<u>Refused to Participate</u>	<u>Other Impediment</u>	<u>Total Surveyed</u>
116	10	21	85

The contact and survey program was somewhat impeded by the interruptions of the summer season. Those refusing to participate were usually "too busy" or expressed a strong negative attitude toward "anything and everything that is government!" Other impediments were conflicts in schedules or a prolonged unavailability due to out of city travel. Parenthetically, 54.1% of the companies surveyed were seen previously under the Business Assistance Program. This prior contact appeared to improve access to the desired respondents, although it required 3.5 telephone calls per contact, to firm up an appointment.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

SURVEY QUESTION #1

What is your experience in dealing with City government in Cambridge?

<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>N/A</u>
10.5%	50.5%	20.0%	5.8%	12.9%

Comment:

Response was frequently based on a specific experience either positive or negative within a suprisingly lengthy time frame. Occasionally, incidents of each went back several years. The lasting effect of good or unsatisfactory service or problem response was clearly evidenced.

SURVEY QUESTION #2

Is there any one department of City government with whom you are in frequent contact - if so what department(s)?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
61.1%	38.8%

Comment:

Respondents viewed "frequent" quite subjectively, but in general agreed that 3 or more contacts per annum would be considered "frequent." While some respondents mentioned more than one department contact, those most frequently mentioned were:

SURVEY QUESTION #2 (CONT'D)

Police	-	18
Public Works	-	16
Traffic	-	12
Community Development	-	11
Building	-	8

Others mentioned ran the full gambit of city offices and officials.

SURVEY QUESTION #3

When you have occasion to seek information from City Government what steps do you take?

<u>Go Direct</u>	<u>Go Indirect</u>	<u>N/A</u>
76.5%	17.6%	12.9%

Comment:

Six respondents stated that they would employ both methods of contact depending upon the nature of their interest or problem. Of those going through a third party, 5 stated that they go to the City Manager and 6 said that they go through the Chamber of Commerce for advice. In general, most feel that contact made directly to the City service department involved in their concern was effective.

SURVEY QUESTION #4

Are your requests for information/assistance answered promptly and fully?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Qualified</u>	<u>N/A</u>
71.8%	10.5%	10.5%	8.2%

Comment:

The "qualified" response reflects the nature and complexity of the particular request.

SURVEY QUESTION #5

What is your overall assessment of the City government's attitude towards the Business Community of Cambridge?

<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Moderately Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>No Comment Neutral /Mixed</u>
49.4%	16.4%	15.2%	18.8%

Comment:

65.8% had a positive assessment of the city's attitude toward business. Of those making an unfavorable assessment, most frequently the assessment was based on such specifics as lack of parking facilities, and such generalities as "city doesn't care," "hurts business," "bidding procedures," etc.

SURVEY QUESTION #6

Are you a member of the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce?  
If so, what useful information or business support service  
does the Chamber provide?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Uncertain</u>
48.2%	45.9%	5.9%

Comment:

Most members of the Chamber felt that they received benefit from membership. Informational services of both general and specific nature, advocacy and business contact opportunity were considered as Chamber "plus" services.

Non-members were critical of the Chambers services in broad generalities. "Lack of leadership" comments frequently surfaced.

SURVEY QUESTION #7

Are you a member of a business or industry association that has a Cambridge base? If so, does the association provide you with useful business development information?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Uncertain</u>
26.0%	69.4%	3.5%

Comment:

Of the 26% responding "yes" most stated "advocacy" as the prime benefit as well as the provision of needed information of a specific or general nature.

The memberships or affiliations encountered

Harvard Square Business Association	-	5
Central Square Business Association	-	4
Inman Square Business Association	-	2
Kendall Square Business Association	-	2
Rotary	-	4
Lions	-	1
Kiwanis	-	1
Cambridge Community Services	-	1
Cambridge Property Owners	-	1
Alewife	-	2
Middlesex Hospital Association	-	3

SURVEY QUESTION #8

Is there any one department of State government with whom you are in frequent contact - if so, what department(s)?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Comment</u>
50.5%	45.8%	3.5%

Comment:

Of the 50.5% responding yes:

D.E.S.	-	8
Health	-	6
Department of Commerce	-	6
Banking Commission	-	5

Also mentioned: State Police, Corp. & Taxation, Welfare, Governor, Education, MDC, Environment, Attorney General, Purchasing, Public Utilities Bureau, Building Commissioner, MBTA, DPW.

SURVEY QUESTION #9

When you have occasion to seek information from State government what steps do you take?

<u>Go Direct</u>	<u>Go Indirect</u>	<u>N/A</u>
57.6%	15.2%	29.4%

Comment:

Almost 30% had no recall of involvement with the State government. A relatively small percentage (15%) went through channels other than directly to State House General Information or to the State department of immediate concern.

SURVEY QUESTION #10

Are your requests for information/assistance answered promptly and fully?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Qualified/ Depends on Situation</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>No Comment</u>
54.1%	1.2%	10.5%	29.4%	4.7%

Comment:

The N/A response reflects a "never have occasion to contact" answer.

SURVEY QUESTION #11

What is your overall assessment of the State government's attitude toward the business community of Massachusetts?

<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Moderately Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>No Comment/ Mixed</u>
15.2%	24.7%	40%	20%

Comment:

The "no comment" and "mixed" opinion reflected a basically negative attitude. Of the specifically unfavorable responses; the courses cited were:

Tax structure	-	58.8%
Poor management	-	23.5%
State doesn't care about business	-	14.7%

Other negative responses were based on a variety of individual experiences with "too much paperwork" and "not responsive" surfacing frequently.

SURVEY QUESTION #12

What departments/agencies/bureaus of the federal government do you contact on a fairly regular basis?

<u>Regular or Frequent</u>	<u>Infrequent or Never</u>	<u>No Comment</u>
54.4%	44.7%	1.2%

Comment:

If regular contact the departments cited were:

F.D.A.	-	19.5%	<u>Others mentioned</u>
O.S.H.A.	-	19.5%	EPA, HUD, GSA, DOT,
H.E.W.	-	17.3%	SBA, FCC, FTC, NSA,
I.R.S.	-	17.3%	Corps. of Engineers,
D.O.L.	-	10.5%	Postal, Speakers Office,
Treasury	-	10.5%	SEC, DOE, NASA
Department of Commerce	-	10.5%	

SURVEY QUESTION #13

What is your overall assessment of your federal government relationship?

<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Moderately Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>No Comment</u>
21.2%	11.8%	22.4%	17.6%	27.0%

Comment:

The "no comment" response was a considered response in most instances.

SURVEY QUESTION #14

How do you recruit employees?

a) Advertising

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
85.9%	14.1%

b) Private Employment Agency

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
20%	80%

c) Massachusetts Division of of Employment Security

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
41.2%	58.8%

d) Other

Word of Mouth	-	66 companies
Walk-Ins	-	7 companies
Schools	-	5 companies

Also mentioned were COMA, CEOC, Unions, COPA, SPAL.

SURVEY QUESTION #15

Are you familiar with the CETA program?

<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Moderately Familiar</u>	<u>Unfamiliar</u>
42.4%	44.7%	12.9%

Comment:

This question refers to the overall CETA program, not the specific of COMA.

SURVEY QUESTION #15a

What is your overall opinion of CETA?

<u>No Comment</u>	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Moderately Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>
54.1%	14.1%	16.5%	15.3%

Comment:

Referring to the base question #15, it is worth noting that although 87% of the respondents stated that they were familiar with CETA, 54% state that they had no opinion of the program, indicating that the familiarity is cursory at best.

Beyond the "no comment" response, the 30.6% positive response reflected either direct contact with various CETA activities or a close association with others who had had a positive CETA relationship.

Of those responding negatively, half based their opinion on personal experience - the others on peripheral information.

SURVEY QUESTION #15b

How did you learn of CETA?

<u>Media</u>	<u>Word of Mouth</u>	<u>Direct Contact</u>	<u>Unanswered</u>
54.1%	10.6%	50.6%	9.4%

Comment:

More than 25% of the respondents gained familiarity with CETA through a combination of sources. COMA contacts, Media reports, DES and business acquaintances.

SURVEY QUESTION #15c

Have you been contacted by anyone in regard to participating in any phase of CETA?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
64.7%	29.4%	5.9%

SURVEY QUESTION #15d

Has any potential employee been referred to you through CETA?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
22.4%	72.9%	3.5%

SURVEY QUESTION #15e

Have you employed any individual through CETA?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
15.3%	81.2%	3.5%

SURVEY QUESTION #15f

If you have participated in any CETA program, what has been the outcome of your participation? (13 companies participating)

<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Moderately Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
46.2%	15.4%	23.0%	15.4%

SURVEY QUESTION #16

CETA supports an "On-the-Job" training program. Are you familiar with it? If not, would you be receptive to exploring its possible application in your business?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
74.1%	25.9%

Comment:

Of the Companies who were not familiar with OJT, 68.1% were receptive to investigating possible applications of OJT in their business and 7 were not.

Further of the 63 Companies who were already familiar with OJT, 11 desired to be contacted further regarding possible or additional applications.

SURVEY QUESTION #17

Congress is currently in the process of amending the comprehensive Employment and Training Act in an effort to encourage a higher level of participation in manpower development and skills training by private business. What do you think of this concept?

<u>Good</u>	<u>Bad</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
80%	11.8%	8.2%

The overwhelming majority of Companies surveyed believed private sector participation was a good or desirable concept. However, Companies did express reservations and their responses lent themselves to a more detailed and qualified breakdown as follows:

<u>(Unequivocally) Good</u>	<u>(With Reservations) Mixed Positive</u>	<u>(Unequivocally) Bad</u>	<u>(Negative with Some Hope) Mixed Negative</u>
44.7%	35.3%	4.7%	7.1%

Some of the expressed comments were:

"Will it work? Will it be cost effective?"

"Will it reduce tax rate?"

"What Companies will it be applicable to?"

"Is it realistic?"

SURVEY QUESTION #18

What would be the necessary program incentives or resources if you were to participate in a manpower development program?

Good Candidates (including strong screening & assessment procedures) 49%

Financial Assistance (Either salary subsidies or a reimbursement of some form). 52%

More Training (Candidates either trained before hiring or training provided OJT Program Lines) 8%.

# NEWSREEL

## Information from the Cambridge Community Development Department

### A Word from the Director

Dear Cantabrigians:

In City Hall Annex at 57 Inman Street, the Community Development Department (CDD) works to improve the quality of life in Cambridge. For the past several years the City, through CDD, has been involved in efforts to preserve and improve the city's neighborhoods and to plan and promote new developments which will expand the city's tax base. On a regular basis, meetings are held between the department and interested citizens to discover and discuss citizens' concerns. Through these meetings resi-

dents have indicated that housing, transportation, human services, park and recreational facilities, land use and zoning constitute major problem areas facing the city. The department is dealing with these problems today and is planning long-term solutions for tomorrow. Many Cambridge residents have participated in helping the CDD office plan programs and decide on funding.

Through this newsletter, I hope to inform you of the special projects and development activities currently taking place in Cambridge. In addition to discovering "what's new" in city development, you may wish to take advantage of some of the programs included in this publication.

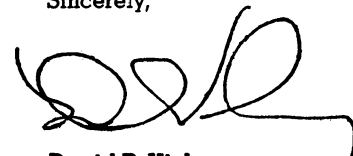
If you would like to receive future mailings from the department, please fill

out and return to the CDD office the communication form found on page 8.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter and find useful information in it. Please contact the CDD office if you have any comments, suggestions, or questions concerning either this publication or the programs administered through this office.

Thank you.

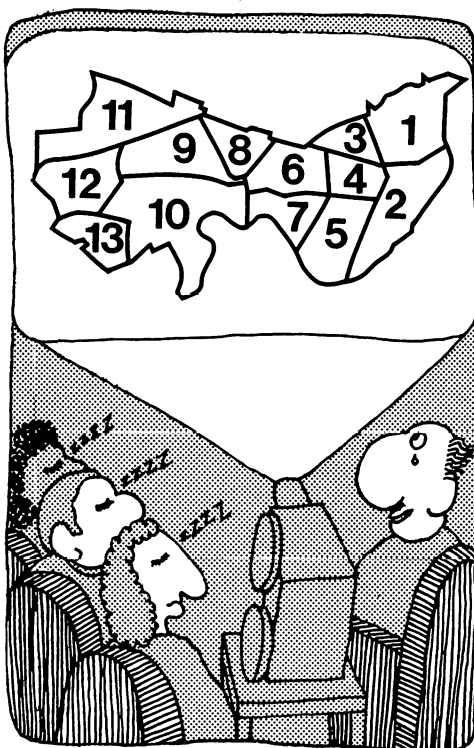
Sincerely,



**David R. Vickery**  
Assistant City Manager for  
Community Development

### Community Development Block Grant Program

A significant portion of the funds the City expends each year for community development activities comes from the Federal Community Development Block Grant Program. This program began in 1975 and replaced a number of so-called categorical grant programs (Model Cities, Urban Renewal, Water and Sewer Grants, etc.) operated by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development during the sixties and early seventies. The concept underlying the Block Grant Program is that the cities receive an annual allocation of funds which they may utilize for community development activities of nearly any type, within general guidelines. The program offers cities the opportunity to tailor programs and projects to their



individual needs, capabilities, and circumstances; and, since funds in a known amount are virtually guaranteed from year to year, local governments can plan more effectively and realistically.

Though the Block Grant Program is notable for the flexibility it permits in developing programs and projects, several underlying principals guide the utilization of funds. First, both the overall program and individual projects must principally benefit low and moderate income persons. For practical purposes this means that Block Grant expenditures in Cambridge are concentrated in seven neighborhoods: East Cambridge, Neighborhoods Three and Four, Cambridgeport, Riverside, North Cambridge, and Strawberry Hill. Secondly, the Program favors "hardware" projects — housing, public facilities, parks, etc. Economic development activities are also receiving emphasis. On the other hand, use of Block Grant funds for public and human services, though possible in the past, is becoming increasingly difficult to accomplish under recently

revised regulations. Thirdly, the Block Grant Program requires an annual application of considerable complexity. Cambridge's application development process normally begins in September and ends in January for a program year which begins the following July.

Finally, the Block Grant Program requires citizen involvement at all phases of the application process and implementation of projects. The City's vehicle for Block Grant participation is the Block Grant Advisory Committee. Membership is open to anyone, by simple request, and has averaged 300 persons during the last several years. During the application process the Committee reviews project proposals and makes recommendations to the City

Manager. During the rest of the program year the members receive mailings regarding program changes, project progress, and other Block Grant issues. Periodic meetings may be called by the City to address particular issues, such as the updating of the street and sidewalk priority list. Any five members can call for a meeting for any purpose.

During the application process, any individual, group, or organization may submit a project proposal for consideration. The Block Grant staff provides technical assistance to persons wishing to develop proposals, and is available at any time to provide citizens with information concerning the Block Grant Program generally or the status of particular projects.

Those interested in joining the Advisory Committee or having their names added to the Block Grant mailing list should contact the Block Grant Management team at 498-9034

The City's current (fourth) year Block Grant totals \$3,343,000. Though this sum is down from the \$4 million we received in Year One, recent changes in the funding formula will insure an upward trend in our grant for upcoming years. Next year's figure reads about \$3.5 million.

During the past several years the Block Grant Program has focussed on a variety of neighborhood stabilization activities. Most of these projects and programs are discussed in detail in this Newsletter.

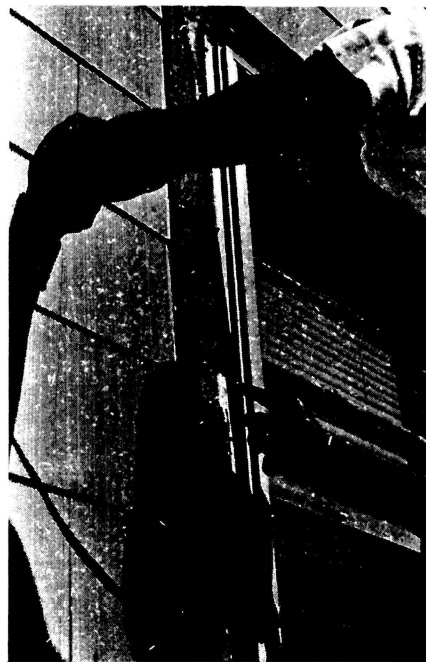
## Housing

Over the past several years Cambridge has made a firm commitment to the Housing Rehabilitation and Conservation Program as a means to upgrade housing, promote home ownership, and stabilize the city's neighborhoods. The Cambridge Community Development Department coordinates efforts to maintain the city's supply of older, lower priced housing. To date, over 650 structures have been rehabilitated, representing over 1500 dwelling units. These investments have an estimated value of over \$3,000,000.

In essence, the housing rehabilitation program provides financial and technical assistance to low and moderate income residents through three nonprofit agencies and the city's Historical Commission. The agencies, Homeowner's Rehab Inc. (868-4853), the Just-A-Start Corporation (492-7900), and the Riverside Cambridgeport Community Corporation (868-7230), are all funded by the city with CDD Block Grant monies.

These three agencies engage in a number of rehabilitation programs, principal of which is the Home Improvement Program (HIP). Under HIP, a Cambridge Homeowner who meets the eligibility requirements and is approved by the rehab agency's housing advisory committee, which is comprised of neighborhood residents, receives a 20% grant for the cost of property repair and general renovation work. The remaining 80% is paid by the family either from its own savings or through a conventional home improvement loan from a local bank or credit union. The average grant extends to \$1250, although in some instances where the applicant has an especially low income (as in the case with many elderly homeowners) the grant can escalate to \$3000.

Another aspect of the city's housing effort is the creation of home ownership



opportunities. Through the Work Equity Program, Homeowners Rehab acquires deteriorated buildings which are then made available to low and moderate income families who purchase the properties by contributing their own labor to building renovation instead of supplying cash down payment. A family applying for the program can avail itself of counseling and must maintain a good credit rating so that a bank will finance the mortgage of home ownership. Just-A-Start operates the Buy-A-House Program whereby houses which are newly built or substantially rehabilitated are sold to neighborhood residents. In specific areas showing evidence of deterioration, such as the Hoyt Field area of Riverside, the Riverside Cambridgeport Community Corporation through the Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) encourages owner occupancy by buying "absentee-owned" buildings for rehabilitation and sale to residents.

Homeowners eligible for HIP may also apply for Preservation Grants of the Cambridge Historical Commission (498-9040) which awards a maximum of \$1,000 to residents who wish to maintain the architectural character of their houses.

Further information concerning all of these programs may be obtained from the Community Development Department in a flyer entitled *Housing Rehabilitation and Conservation in Cambridge: An Investment In the Future*.

In conjunction with the housing rehab agencies, the CDD administers the Federal Section 312 housing rehabilitation loan program (498-9034). The 312 Program provides long term, low interest (3%) housing rehabilitation loans to applicants who are not able to secure similar financing from other sources. Primarily the loan is used for financing substantial improvements needed to bring property up to housing code standards.

In addition, each year about \$200,000 of Block Grant monies is allocated by the CDD to the Cambridge Housing Authority to aid in its housing projects modernization program. Included among such recent improvements are the installation of new windows and frames at Roosevelt Towers Housing Project and the updating of kitchens at Lincoln Way. Also funded through Block Grant is the pilot program in Tenant Management at Roosevelt Towers.

## Elderly Services

The Community Development Department is concerned that elderly citizens maintain their right to independence and the exercise of individual initiative in planning and managing their own lives.

Two factors are recognized as those most frequently limiting the elderly's capability to exercise these rights — economic deprivation and physical disability. It is these factors which define the immediate needs of many of the city's older residents.

During the past year, a group of elderly Cambridge residents and providers of services to the elderly, with staffing from the Community Development Department, worked as a committee to identify needs of the elderly population and to plan how those needs should be met. The Elderly Services Ad Hoc Advisory Committee appointed five task forces to examine and make recommendations in the areas of health, housing, income, transportation, and education and recreation. A final report was adopted and public forums were held to discuss the plan entitled *Meeting the Needs of the Elderly: A Plan for Cambridge* which contains priorities for future funding and activities.

First of the plan's priorities addresses the health and housing needs of elderly persons with chronic and disabling conditions. This priority emphasizes the principle of maximum independence for those with long-term illnesses and covers alternative housing with support services, in home services, nursing home care and early patient casefinding and assessment. Currently the staff is preparing applications for funding from a number of agencies to implement this section of the plan.

Priority number two deals with issues of high cost and low availability of housing in Cambridge — a problem which particularly affects the elderly who may be forced to move out of the city where more than 85 percent have spent the major portion of their adult lives. Recommendations in the plan



address tax abatement, public subsidies, and in home support services.

The plan's third priority concerns income and the availability of jobs for older workers. Age discrimination is the most important underlying factor in the high unemployment rate for the elderly. Although 12% of the 9118 non-institutionalized elderly population 65+ are working, an additional 14% of this population are willing and able to work but cannot find employment. The Task Force on Elderly Income estimates that almost 1300 new jobs must be created, 400 of which are needed by the elderly with incomes of \$3,000 or less. To meet this need, the committee supports development of a jobs action program consisting of outreach, training, placement and follow through services. Presently, the planning staff, Elder Hire, and CETA are working together to create more job slots for the elderly.

Transportation for the city's older residents is the committee's fourth area of concern. The Transportation Task Force supports development of a door-to-door transportation program for the elderly who have difficulty managing their own transportation. Alternatives to existing

means of transportation for non-handicapped persons are also under consideration. Through Block Grant monies, the planning staff recently secured use of the Elder Van to provide emergency health sustaining transportation during city declared emergencies. As a result of the planning effort, Transportation for Handicapped and Elderly (The Ride) was extended to all of Cambridge.

Completing the committee's list of problem areas for the elderly are education and recreation. The development of coping skills, preparation for old age, and the meaningful use of leisure time are all essential to producing an atmosphere in which the elderly feel capable and are allowed to remain productive members of the community.

To date, planning efforts of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee are continuing. At the public forums held to discuss the initial plan, participants raised issues relevant to needs in the community. In cooperation with the CDD and the Cambridge Council on Aging, the planning staff is researching those issues raised and is implementing activities of the current plan.

## North Cambridge

In April of 1977, the City Council directed the Community Development Department to undertake a rezoning study of North Cambridge in response to citizens' concerns that the Red Line Extension might change the character of their neighborhood. The CDD engaged the North Cambridge Urban Design Team consisting of planners, landscape architects, and architects to prepare an urban design study of the North Cam-

bridge neighborhood. For approximately nine months, the North Cambridge Planning Team and area residents and businessmen met publicly with the department staff to discuss the rezoning.

The proposal changed existing residential zoning from small scale apartment style zoning (Residence C-1) to that of one and two family dwellings (Residence B). The Community Development Department also rezoned transitional industrial land, which divides the

neighborhood, to lighter industrial use allowing residential properties to be built in these zones under special permits granted by the Planning Board. These efforts resulted in the largest single rezoning proposal in the City of Cambridge.

In addition, a new industrial zone classification, Industry C, was created for the W.R. Grace area. This new classification allows for a mixture of commercial, industrial and office uses through a planned unit development process.

# Alewife

The Alewife Industrial area is another Urban Design Project in the planning stages at the Community Development Department. Currently a discussion document is being prepared which will focus debate on three sets of issues: future roadway and transportation improvements, open space conservation, and land use and development controls.

Goals of The Urban Design Study are:

1. to create new jobs and expand the tax base in the Alewife area,
2. to improve the roadway system in Alewife for better service and safety,
3. to improve and expand the open space and recreation opportunities in Alewife,
4. to protect the surrounding neighborhoods from adverse impacts of

new development by instituting responsible development controls,

5. to improve the overall image of the area through public improvements and land use controls.

Additional information concerning the North Cambridge and Alewife Urban Design Projects can be obtained by contacting the Community Development Urban Design Section at 498-9034.

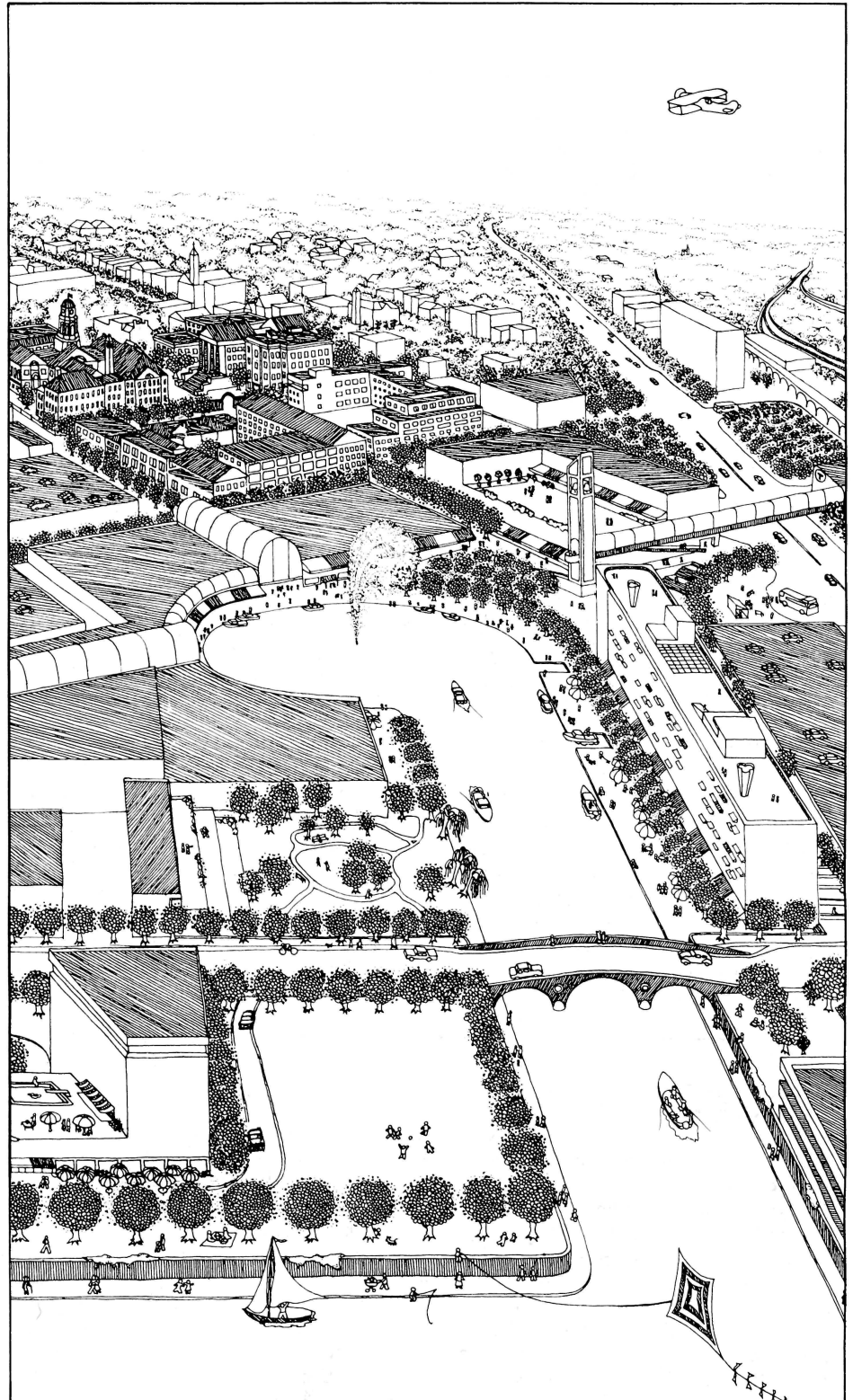
## UDAG / East Cambridge

On July 10, 1978, Cambridge received word that the City had been awarded 6.8 million dollars of UDAG monies for Phase 1 restoration and economic development of the East Cambridge/Lechmere Riverfront area. A new federal program, Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) promotes economic development projects which will revitalize the inner city and create new jobs. UDAG fosters a partnership between the public and private sectors with the private sector contributing new development and the public sector improving existing parks, streets, sidewalks, etc.

The project which was funded will upgrade an area of East Cambridge generally between First Street, the Charles River, Monsignor O'Brien Highway and Main Street. Public improvements, designed to shape private development, will allow the East Cambridge neighborhood access to the parks and waterfront by providing several park strips that extend into the existing neighborhood. Overall, the project involves 16 acres of new park, mostly along the Lechmere Canal and the river. Park connections and the creation of a waterfront park will be funded by UDAG and state controlled federal monies.

Planned roadway improvements include a widening of Binney Street, a partial closing of the Cambridge Parkway along the river to create more parkland, a widening of Commercial Avenue into a tree lined boulevard, a new widened bridge over the Lechmere Canal and work to upgrade the Commercial Avenue and Monsignor O'Brien Highway intersection. UDAG funds will finance the design and engineering of these roadway improvements. Federal Urban Systems money will cover the actual improvements.

Another major public improvement in the plan to be initially designed and engineered through UDAG funds is the construction of a new MBTA station which will probably be built across the Monsignor O'Brien Highway from the existing station. To allow neighborhood residents easy access to the new station,



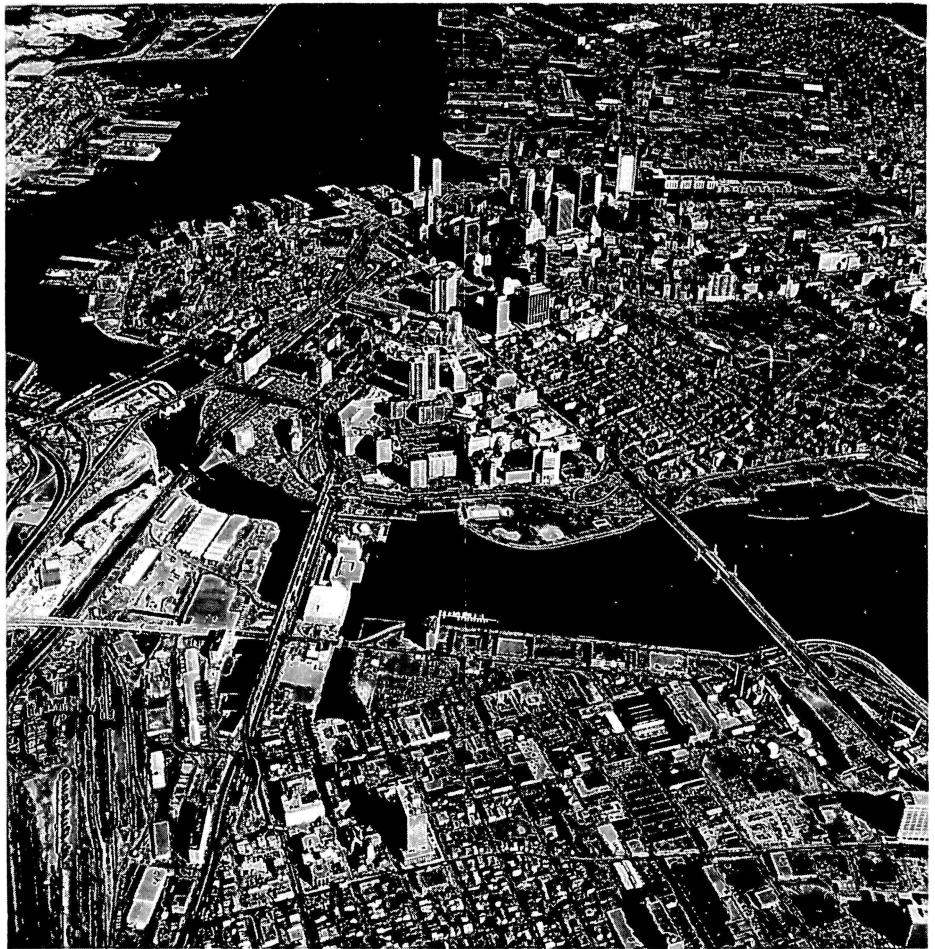
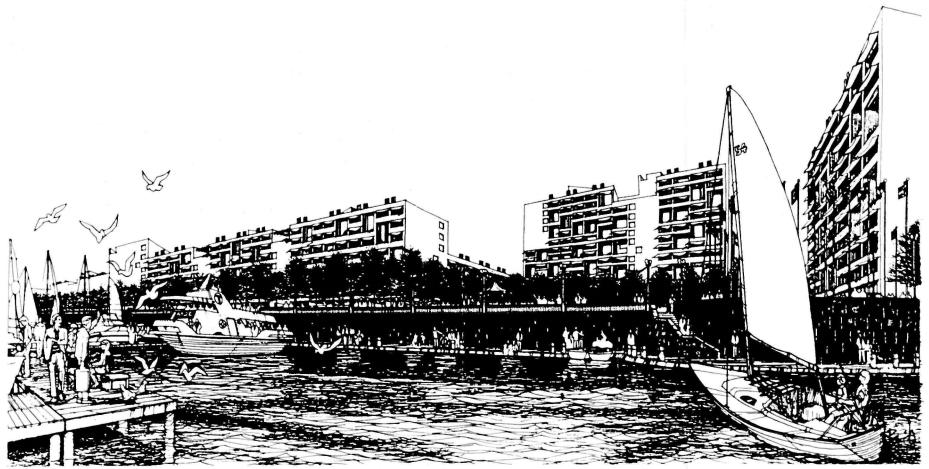
a special pedestrian bridge and other signalized crossing areas will be built. When the station is moved, the City will be able to clean up Lechmere Square and remove the old elevated structure that has long blighted the area. The MBTA will be able to improve service, develop a pleasant station and eliminate a great deal of the danger and confusion caused by the MBTA buses entering and exiting the present station. Much of the bus and commuter car traffic will be moved from the neighborhood.

The Riverfront plan also proposes to connect the existing neighborhood and Middlesex County buildings to the parks and waterfront through beautification along Otis Street from the Lechmere Canal to the old vacant Courthouse building. Included in the plan is a proposal supported by the County Commissioners to restore the oldest portion of the Courthouse for uses by the Cambridge Multi Cultural Arts Center, Inc., a non-profit community group which will offer recreation and educational services to the community. Remaining portions of the vacant Courthouse will be renovated for private economic development purposes such as law offices, retail outlets, and restaurants that can serve the county complex. While UDAG funds and private financing will be used for the historic restoration, the non-profit community group will support its activities by renting sections of the building that will have been rehabilitated for private use.

Construction of parking garages to alleviate the parking problem around the Courthouse and in the East Cambridge neighborhood are other important plan components. The proposed Spring and Thorndike Street garage (accommodating 300-400 cars) will be funded entirely by UDAG. A 700 car garage, planned for a site at Commercial Avenue and Monsignor O'Brien Highway, will be funded by a city bond issue and partly subsidized by the MBTA in return for providing 350 replacement parking spaces.

Neighborhood stabilization, the last major part of the plan, is designed to give the existing residential neighborhood an opportunity to invest in their own houses and improve their own streets. This project will allow low interest housing rehab loans, housing rehab grants, painting grants, open space beautification projects, street and sidewalk improvements, assistance to owners of small commercial establishments, tree plantings and other programs. Because the city recognizes this project as critical to the plan's improvements, the project will be funded by Community Development Block Grant funds.

Retail office and housing development comprise approximately \$40,000,000 worth of private improvements in the



East Cambridge Riverfront plan. The major development parcel is an expansion of the existing retail complex by Lechmere Sales and the Beal Company. Approximately 300,000 square feet of retail uses will be encompassed by this complex. The second major private development will be the new Sonesta Hotel Corporate headquarters to be constructed on Sonesta owned land across the street from the existing hotel. One hundred and twenty units of market rate condominium housing with ground floor retail, office space and a cinema are planned for the north side of the Lechmere Canal. Unihab, Inc. has been chosen as the developer for this part of the project.

In addition to all of the park, roadway, transit station, housing rehab, neighborhood beautification and other physical improvements, the city will gain major financial and employment benefits from the East Cambridge Riverfront Project. Phase I includes the creation of at least 1600 construction jobs over a five year period, the creation of an additional 1390 permanent full time jobs, and several millions of dollars of property tax returns to the city. With full implementation of the project, it is estimated that up to 4000 construction jobs and 4100 permanent full time jobs will be created. Net tax benefits to the city could be over four million dollars per year.

# Transportation

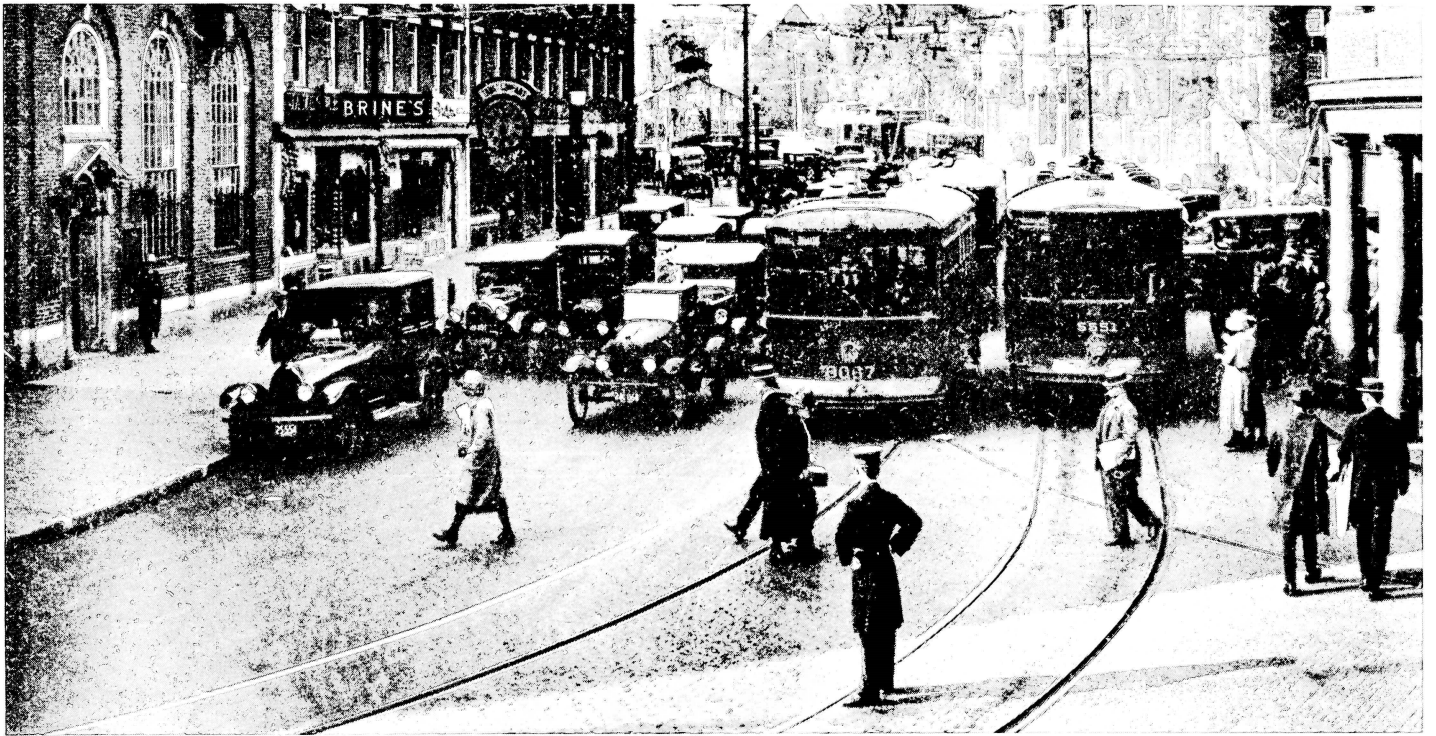
Recent efforts of the Community Development Department to improve transportation throughout the city have resulted in a number of beneficial changes. The Cambridge Transportation Forum, which involves citizens in transportation planning is working to improve the MBTA's distribution of public information and its monitoring of construction of the Red Line Extension. In addition, the Forum has convinced the MBTA to begin use of the Harvard Square bus tunnel on Sundays so that Sunday riders will no longer have to wait upstairs and outside for buses. Forum meetings are usually held on the second Thursday of each month in the Walnut Room at City Hall. More information may be obtained by phoning 498-9034.

At present, the MBTA Red Line extension is entering the construction phase. One hundred and fifty million dollars in contracts will be awarded by this fall. The City has worked closely with the MBTA to ensure that construction disruption is kept to a minimum and that the finished product enhances the livability of the city. Chief among the amenities is the provision for almost four million dollars worth of recreational facilities to be built on the old city dump.

Not only "T" riders, but also bicycle riders are considered by the department in its transportation planning. Money for 100 bicycle racks throughout the city has been given to Cambridge by the Cutler Delong West Fund. The department has succeeded in combining public and private efforts to install the racks and is working on plans for bicycle paths and route signs.

Bus riders, too, are remembered in present planning efforts. At this time, the transportation staff is putting together the results of its recent characteristics count of bus ridership on 11 of the city's bus routes. Project results should yield better bus service at lower cost for Cambridge.

Chief among roadway improvements is the East Cambridge Roadway Improvement Project. This project is an integral part of the Lechmere Canal Urban Development Action Grant Program and includes improvements to Binney Street, Commercial Avenue, and Monsignor O'Brien Highway. These changes will ease traffic congestion in the area, provide a truck route to bypass the East Cambridge residential neighborhood and allow for Cambridge Parkway to be downgraded, thereby creating more space for a riverfront green belt.



## Harvard Square

Future development is also planned for the Southwest Sector of Harvard Square. Presently the site of the MBTA trolley yard and parking area, the Commonwealth's 4¼ acres adjacent to the Kennedy School of Government is being designed for a multiuse project. Plans consist of hotel, office, retail and housing accommodations not to exceed 110 feet in height.

Carpenter/Cambridge Seven is the project developer tentatively selected by the MBTA Yards Project Review Board convened by the state. Sometime during the state's Environmental Impact Review process currently underway, the city's Planned Unit Development review process required by the Zoning Ordinance will begin.

This process will include two public hearings on the proposed designs. Subsequent to these public review processes, the designation of a developer will be finalized. Actual construction will likely begin in late 1979 or early 1980.

As presently conceived, the Carpenter/C7 proposal would provide 210 hotel rooms, 152,400 square feet of office space, 128,650 square feet of retail space, and 60 condominium units.

A city park will skirt the complex and extend around the Kennedy School as well. Thus, Cambridge is expected to benefit both economically and environmentally through development which will add residences, business, and open space to the Harvard Square area.

In addition to the Southwest Sector changes, other Harvard Square improvements are planned in conjunction with the MBTA extension. Architects Skidmore, Owing and Merrill have designed a triangular plaza in front of the Cambridge Savings Bank as the setting for the new entrance to a completely modernized transit station. The old entrance Kiosk will be converted to a newstand. On the opposite side of Massachusetts Avenue, in front of the Coop and Harvard Trust, the sidewalk will be widened and the canopy covering the sidewalk will be renovated. Roadway improvements related to the station reconstruction will include some street modifications, traffic flow changes, and pedestrian amenities such as new lighting and better crosswalks.

## Open Space

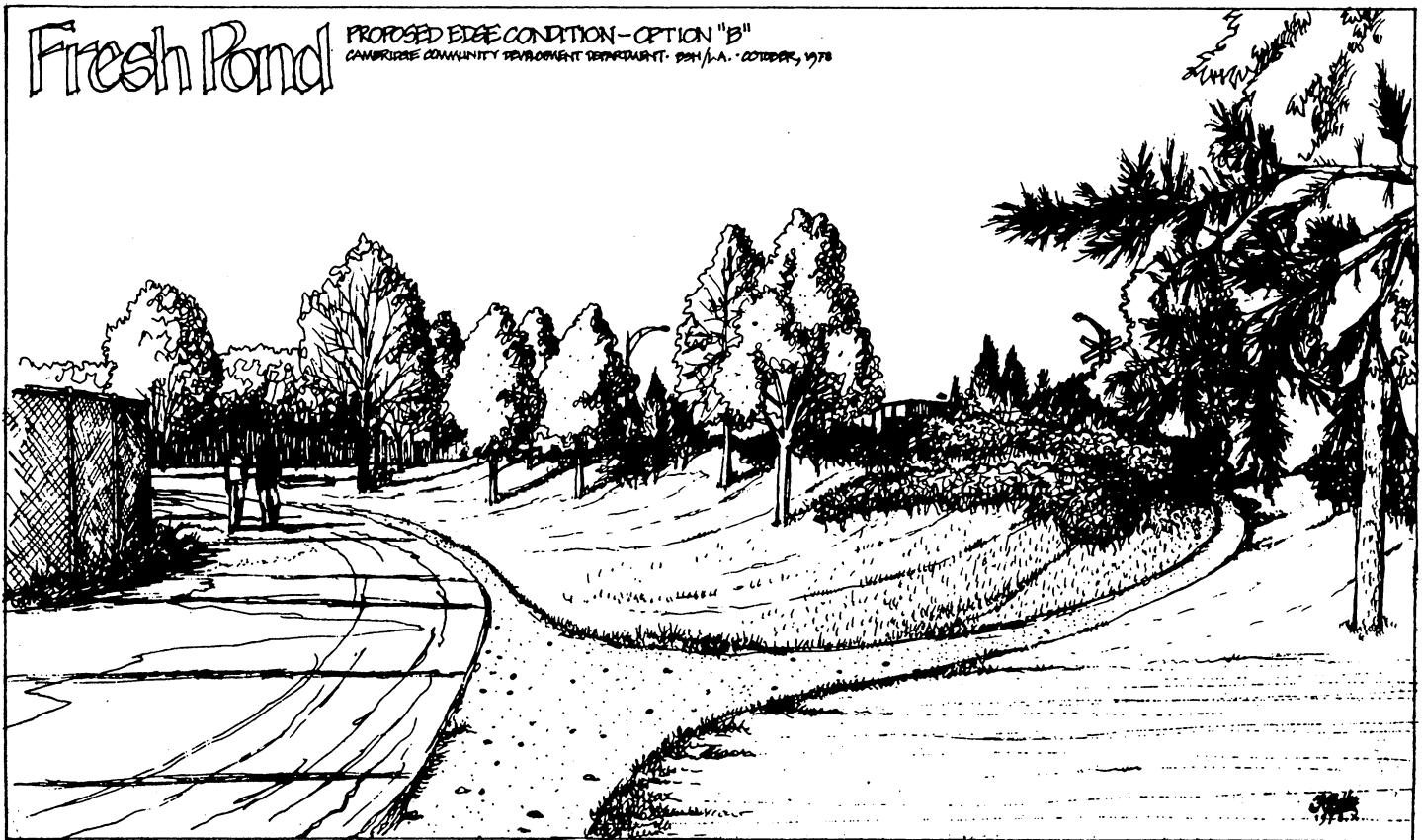
Parks, playgrounds, and open spaces are vital to developing an urban environment as an attractive and pleasant one in which to live. The Community Development Department operates an open space acquisition and development program which uses federal and state funds to purchase land and transform it into recreational areas. A recent acquisition, the Riverside Press property on Memorial Drive is to be developed as a park this year. Designs have also been prepared for a half acre park in North Cambridge at the corner of Clarendon Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue. In the Agassiz neighborhood, the City plans to purchase Sacramento Field, and in Neighborhood Four parking lots

currently owned by Polaroid Corporation are prime considerations for new recreation space. Throughout the City, improvements to existing parks and fields are scheduled for the coming year. A rotating refurbishing program insures that attention is paid to different areas of Cambridge. Depending on budget allowances, about five playgrounds are improved yearly.

Currently, plans are being completed for a four million dollar recreation development at the city dump site. The MBTA will supply the material dug up for the new Red Line tunnel as fill needed for preparation of the site. In exchange, the "T" will use the Russell Athletic Field as a staging area for construction equipment and will restore the field once the tunnel is completed.

The "T" is also building a linear park along the Subway route in North Cambridge from Russell Field to Davis Square in Somerville.

In addition to the projects relating to the MBTA Red Line Extension, future open space planning includes development of a new 16 acre public open space system in East Cambridge as part of the Lechmere Canal project. This plan provides the existing neighborhood with access to the river and with a connection to the new development. The two future pedestrian focal points, the Riverfront and Lechmere Canal (and a series of related spaces offering variety in size, shape and use) are designed to improve the City's visual image.



## Fire Station - Public Works

Funded through the Economic Development Administration's Local Public Work's Program and the Community Development's Block Grant Program, the new East Cambridge fire station is the first station built in the city since 1939 and only the second erected in this century. The new station houses one ladder company and one engine company. The activities of two area stations will be consolidated in the new station, and service to the eastern part of the city

will be improved. Planned developments to be built on the periphery of the neighborhood will also be served by the modern station.

In addition to securing funding for the fire station, the Community Development Department in conjunction with the Public Works Department also acquired monies for a new public works garage and office on Hampshire Street, renovation and weatherization of some of the city's fire stations, and improvements to City Hall, City Hall Annex, the main library, and police department headquarters.

At present, construction on these projects and on the new fire station is underway by private contractors and CETA workers supervised by the Department of Public Works.

Another public works program to benefit Cambridge residents is the lighting system pilot program proposed for Inman Street. This project now in progress, will feature new sidewalks and street lights placed lower than existing lighting to provide pedestrian safety and front yard security.

Completion of all projects is scheduled for this year.

# Graphics

The City government often needs to supply to Cambridge residents important information such as government rules and procedures in an easy to read and handy form. Personnel in the Graphics Section of the Community Development Department prepare this information in readily available publications which often must be completed in a minimum amount of time with a minimum amount of money. Among these publications are a book on the rights of tenants in condominiums, a snow removal brochure, housing posters, maps, the City Guide and Calendar, and a Zoning Primer.

Most of these publications are available free of charge as part of a Public Information Series of brochures and pamphlets to guide and inform Cambridge residents.

**Newsletter compiled by:** Kathleen Coughlin  
**Design:** George Vogt

**Illustration and Photography Credits:**

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**page 3:** photo, Charles Adler

**page 4:** rendering, George Vogt

**page 5:** rendering, Daniel Raih

**page 6:** photo courtesy of Cambridge

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**page 7:** rendering, Bruce Hendler

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Just print your name, address and zip code on your ticket ... then mail it back to us.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Community Development Department has been temporarily relocated at **51 Inman Street** due to the renovation of the City Hall Annex next door at 57 Inman Street. Sometime after **January 1, 1979**, the renovations will be complete and we will move back to **57 Inman Street**.

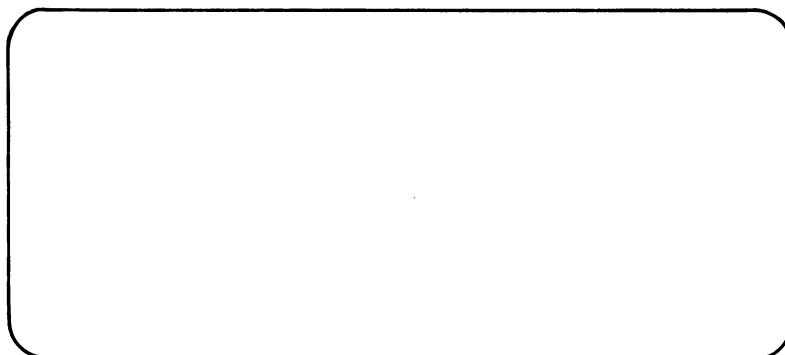
As of **December, 1978**, all the city government telephone numbers will be changed. For information and new numbers of city departments, please call the new City Hall number: **498-9000**.

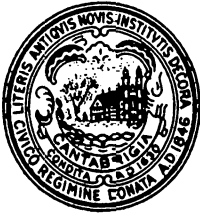
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# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

February 12, 1979

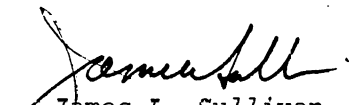
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
JAMES L. SULLIVAN  
City Manager

*To the Honorable, the City Council:*

*The following is in response to Order No. 27 of January 22, 1979:*

- 1. A program whereby local businesses are made aware of the various government sponsored incentives and services aimed at keeping businesses in urban areas has been in place since February, 1978.*
- 2. The Business Assistance Program has had direct contact with over 500 Cambridge firms during the past year and is continuing that contact.*
- 3. A brochure describing the program and the assistance offered has had City-wide distribution. A copy is attached - Exhibit I.*
- 4. An Attitudinal Survey of the Cambridge business community was completed in November. A copy is attached - Exhibit II.*
- 5. "Newsreel", a report on Community Development Department's activity, was disseminated to the entire community, including the business community in January, 1979. See Exhibit III.*
- 6. The Office of Economic Development is currently reviewing the overall economic development activity in Cambridge and preparing recommendations for organizational and functional changes should such appear beneficial to the City's programs. The scope and nature of added promotional programs is included.*

Very truly yours,

  
James L. Sullivan  
City Manager

JLS/b

Agenda #8

S-77

Response to Awaiting Report No. 13 re: outlining plans to promote Cambridge.

In City Council,  
February 12, 1979

2/12/1979

Placed  
on  
File-