

LAND USE RECOMMENDATION FOR KENDALL SQUARE

SUBMITTED BY KENDALL SQUARE TASK FORCE

These land use recommendations for the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Area are made in light of the socio/economic criteria developed by the Kendall Square Task Force and the technical staff during more than nine months of replanning the project. It also contrasts these recommendations with other proposed re-use plans: the so-called MIT plan and the Gifford proposal which is actually not a plan but a list of land uses with allowable floor space.

- (1) In summary, we support a "low density/limited mixed use" plan with a floor to area ratio (F.A.R.) of between 1.1 and 1.4, not including structured parking.* These parameters should allow for at least one million square feet of light industrial and related office space; between 50 and 100,000 square feet of retail/commercial space (less than a regional shopping center); 1 - 300,000 square feet of additional technical or general office space, and up to 220,000 square feet (5 acres) for parking, open space, or a municipal facility such as a modern fire station.

This proposal would produce approximately 1.1 - 1.3 million dollars in tax revenue for the city, lead to a projected \$1.39 - 1.49 drop in the tax rate, produce approximately 2800 blue-collar jobs and generate an additional 1200 - 1500 non-professional white-collar and professional opportunities. It would also hold traffic to and from the area to a minimum; Planning Department estimates indicate 1300 cars and 150 trucks would enter and leave the area daily due to Kendall Square development.

It is important to note that this recommendation specifically excludes a hotel, luxury housing, and a subsidized parking garage. We feel this proposal comprizes the only plan offered to date which maximizes blue-collar employment, minimizes the amount of traffic and pollution and still produces substantial tax benefits to the city. Moreover, we feel it is the only proposal which politically compromises the differences between the diverse population groups in the city and is at the same time economically feasible.

- (*) F.A.R. of 1.1 to 1.4 is based on land area including 5 acres of open space.

Finally, as part of the plan, two conditions should be written into the submission to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. First, that the industrial and technical office space should be developed either before, or at the same time as, the higher density parts of the plan. Second, if any portion of the urban renewal area is consigned for use as a public facility and necessitates the taking of additional space within the project area, such space should be allotted by proportionately diminishing the space given each of the other proposed components.

- (2) The other two higher density proposals were proposed to allow a potential developer a more "flexible" set of options and provide a higher tax yield to the city. Also, the proponents of the higher/highest density schemes have advanced the idea of setting a time limit on the marketing of the light industrial space, asserting that if the marketing effort fails within the specified time framework, the entire renewal area should be turned over to additional research and development, retail/commercial hotel, or housing development.

There are serious flaws in this type of plan.

- (a) Both plans, by including such items as luxury housing and hotel can be characterized as an attempt by private interests to use public money to subsidize their needs: subsidized housing for moderately well-off MIT personnel; hotel space for wealthy tourists visiting the area during the Bicentennial; a regional shopping center which threatens to destroy small business presently located in Central Square and along Cambridge Street; and additional office space for out of town white-collar professionals.
- (b) The MIT plan, in particular, promises to drastically escalate traffic and pollution problems by attracting up to 7,000 vehicles per day. The areas most adversely impacted are, of course, the present victims of Cambridge's traffic problems, namely, the residents of Areas 4, 5, 1, and 2.

In fact, the additional traffic overload which will be caused by all of the development (Simplex, Kendall, the Courthouse, the Hyatt Hotel, etc.) might be enough to review pressure for a new Inner Belt. (It is interesting to note here that Boston University has allowed both Sargent Gym and the Boathouse to deteriorate, that speculators have continued in large numbers to invest in Brookline Street property, and that the Hyatt Corp. is building a large riverfront hotel right along the projected route of the "old" beltway.)

- (c) The tax figure for the high density plan, which promises some \$3 million in annual tax yield to the city and might lead to as much as a \$4.50 cut in the tax rate, can be misleading. These estimates are based on a varied projection of the rate of inflation, assume that the city will be able to drastically increase its debt load in order to duck the sky-high initial service costs implied by the plan, and assume a "reasonable" time limit for full occupancy and thus maximum tax yield. However, there seems to be little evidence substantiating the two latter assumptions, especially in light of the failure of Tech Square to reach full occupancy even after 15 years. The tax relief projected from the high density plan would only be \$3 to \$4 on the tax rate, which might reach \$300 to \$350 by 1980.
 - (d) While proponents of the higher/highest density schemes have repeatedly expressed skepticism that inner city light industrial space is, in fact, marketable, there is no conclusive evidence at all that either high density plan is marketable.
 - (e) While the Gifford compromise which might include a hotel, luxury housing, and additional R & D space, projects less of the undesirable features of the MIT plan, it still threatens to subsidize private interests without guaranteeing broad-based social benefits, and further threatens to sabotage the Task Force mandate to maximize blue-collar employment.
- (3) Contrary to the editorial position of the Cambridge Chronicle, which urged the Council to pay less heed to the Task Force efforts, we would urge the Council to accept our recommendation as a means of dispelling this municipality's image as a politically fragmented area too risky to attract large scale, comprehensive development.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION - KENDALL SQUARE URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT

A Kendall Square Task Force, composed of Cambridge citizens, shall continue to advise the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority and the City on matters affecting the Project beyond the submission of the Plan Amendment and through project execution and construction.

Composition:

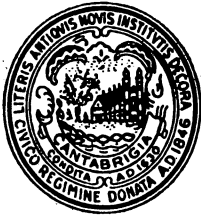
The Kendall Square Task Force shall be composed of representatives of all community organizations who choose to send a representative(s). Each organization shall have only one voting member. A majority of the organizations shall be from the neighborhoods immediately surrounding Kendall Square. Each year each organization shall be required to affirm in writing that it wishes its representative to continue or that it is sending a new representative.

Power:

The Kendall Square Task Force shall have an advisory and participatory role in the preparation of the plan, in the preparation of any amendments or changes to the plan, and in the selection of developers for the various parcels. Advisory here means the KSTF shall be regularly informed of all on-going business related to the Project in timely manner, by means of written materials and meetings. Developer Kits shall advise prospective developers of the existence and the role of the KSTF. Developers' proposals shall be submitted to the KSTF for review. The City shall make available to the KSTF sufficient staff to enable the KSTF to analyse and comment on the proposals in a timely manner. The KSTF shall review the developers' proposals for meeting criteria in areas of jobs, job quality, number of jobs, job density, skill levels, employment of Cambridge citizens, job training, environmental impact, building design, traffic generation, and other areas of concern. After selection of a developer, a written report on the selection and the reasons for the choice, particularly as regards the criteria of job fulfillment, shall be made by the CRA to the KSTF.

Procedures:

The KSTF shall meet at least once a month for the duration of the project and more frequently as required. Progress reports shall be written by the KSTF twice a year and submitted to the City Council. Officers shall be elected on an annual basis. All expenses, typing, printing, mailing, etc. as required shall be paid for by the City.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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2.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
JAMES L. SULLIVAN
City Manager

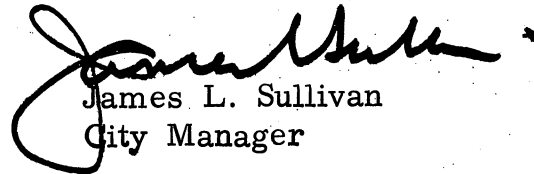
May 20, 1974

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Enclosed herewith please find -

1. Statement from Kendall Square Task Force reflecting its views on proposed development in Kendall Square.
2. Draft statement prepared by a member of the Task Force on "Citizen Participation".

Very truly yours,


James L. Sullivan
City Manager

JLS/b

Statement from the Kendall Square Task
Force.

In City Council,

May 20, 1974

Placed on File