

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE LANDSCAPING/ BEAUTIFICATION PLAN *DRAFT PROPOSAL* FOR DISCUSSION

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM

Many of our business streetscapes, roadway traffic islands, rotaries, public buildings and parks are lacking in visual interest which appropriate landscaping can provide. While recognizing that a considerable investment has been made over the past ten years to make city open spaces green and attractive, more can and should be done to make highly visible sites more colorful and beautiful for the enjoyment of city residents, visitors and workers.

INTRODUCTION

The City is engaged in a planning process to develop and implement a five year landscape/beautification plan. This process will include selecting appropriate sites, actively seeking the participation of private groups and volunteers and establishing realistic program goals. Of particular importance is to begin small with a few highly successful efforts and to build upon these successes. The intent is to develop a workable partnership between city forces and private forces in terms of design expertise, labor, materials and ongoing maintenance. What mix of public and private participation is appropriate in different situations will need to be established. The most difficult aspect of the plan will involve maintenance of planned landscaping improvements. Other cities and towns have started successful traffic island beautification programs. We will be actively assessing these other successful models.

The elements and time schedule for implementing a city wide landscaping plan would include the following:

ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

1. TRAFFIC ISLANDS/ ROTARIES

The City is presently responsible for maintaining numerous traffic "islands", rotaries, and other small left over green spaces adjacent to roadways. An outreach effort will be mounted to solicit participation by landscape professionals (architects, landscape architects, gardening clubs, and landscape contractors) to design, install and maintain landscape improvements in exchange for free advertising. Such projects tend to be more complex in terms of designing to fit very different sites and in terms of actual planting activity and maintenance given the proximity and hazards posed by traffic conditions. Advertising would consist of signs approved in terms of content, size and graphic style by the city.

2. FLOWER PLANTERS

The City would expand recent efforts to make available raised planters, flowers and related gardening materials to shop keepers, businesses and residents within targeted high visibility streets. Participants would be expected to make a commitment to maintain all planters distributed for a period of one year (watering, weeding, re-plantings). The intent is to provide a quick and colorful display in front of stores and buildings within busy streetscapes. The concept would be to provide a few simple planter and plant material choices and encourage involvement by a large number of residents.

3. PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

The City will focus more attention on the re-design of landscapes at important public buildings like city hall and the city hall annex. These important public spaces need to be reconsidered in terms of maximizing both the visual and practical enjoyment of these spaces by residents, workers and visitors. Given that these facilities must be carefully analyzed and re-designed the services of a professional landscape consultant will be necessary. We shall undertake to hire a consultant or use in house staff to

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develop landscape plans for these and other important sites. Funding for these larger more complex landscapes will be sought through the capital investment process in the coming year. Such projects will need to be put out for bid and implemented by a private contractor(s).

4. PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

The City will build upon attempts in recent years to introduce more varied and colorful landscapes within its extensive parks system. More can be done in high visibility parks such as the Cambridge Common, Danehy Park, Hoyt Field and others to add more color using flowering perennials and annuals. Again to be successful volunteers will be needed to provide long term maintenance throughout the year.

5. SIGNAGE

The City will undertake to hire a professional signage consultant to design a uniform, graphically appealing and informative system of signs covering a broad range of information, rules, and regulations related to open space. Signage which is attractive, minimal and clear goes hand in glove with landscaping improvements and so must be included in this beautification plan.

6. CITY PARKING LOTS

Although not often thought of as an open space resource parking lots can be attractively landscaped. An example would be the recently completed parking lots in Central Square along Bishop Allen Drive. More can and should be done in this area to enhance these spaces through appropriate landscaping.

7. TREES

The Cambridge tree planting program continues to be a strong element of any beautification effort. Every year the City plants hundreds of trees throughout Cambridge within parks, playgrounds and along roadways. Trees are an important part of every planned open space improvement and roadway reconstruction project.

OVERSIGHT

Administration of this new program will be conducted through the Cambridge Open Space Committee in cooperation with other civic organizations. A separate sub-committee will be set up to identify important sites and funding to implement the plan. Community review of larger proposals will be handled through the normal Open Space Committee process. Responsibility for hiring design consultants, developing public outreach materials and follow up on completed projects will reside within this committee.

TIME SCHEDULE

1. TRAFFIC ISLANDS/ ROTARIES

An outreach effort should be mounted over the winter with the intent to secure agreement with one or two landscape contractors and or architects to develop sites in the spring of 1997. The focus should be on doing a few sites at a high level of quality. A brochure explaining this aspect of the plan needs to be developed and distributed.

2. FLOWER PLANTERS

Again participation by area businesses and individuals should be sought with an outreach effort. Agreement should be secured from prospective participants to maintain planters while city officials can provide technical support. Funding should be identified within the Public Works Department budget to provide planters and plant materials with a start up date of spring 1997.

3. PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Landscape improvements to the city hall and city hall annex shall be undertaken as soon as possible. The City Hall re-design will require the services of an outside consultant whereas the re-design of the Annex could be handled using in-house staff within the Community Development Department. Funding for these larger more complex landscape improvements will be recommended through the Capital Investment Program process for the next fiscal year.

4. PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

Landscape improvements within rehabilitated and additional parks shall do more to introduce perennial and annual planting beds as well as community gardening where appropriate. The landscape/beautification sub-committee shall develop design guidelines over the coming year for inclusion in the Cambridge Park Design Guidelines. The purpose of these guidelines shall be to promote a more active strategy with regard to providing flower planting beds for the enjoyment of park users. Again the inclusion of such high maintenance landscape materials will require citizen involvement in maintaining these planting areas.

See attached lists of traffic islands supplied from DPW and the Traffic Department.

Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department Metered Parking Lots

The Department has several small metered parking lots where simple landscaping treatments are possible and two where they have been installed. In FY97 funding for a landscaping maintenance contract will be sought.

Lot 2 - Harvard Square.
No planting area.

Lot 4 - Central Square, corner of Bishop Allen Drive and Essex Street.
Landscape improvements have been designed but are not funded.

Lots 5 & 6 - Central Square, off Bishop Allen Drive.
Landscaping with an irrigation system has been installed as part of the Central Square renovations.

Lot 8 & 9 - Central Square, corners of Pleasant and Green Streets.
Future potential landscape strip.

Lot 11 - Macarelli's, off Cambridge Street running between Warren and Marion Streets.
Future potential landscape strip.

Lot 12 - Corner of Winsor and Cambridge Streets.
Future potential landscape strip.

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CREW MEMBERS:

- 6 Football Field Maint
- 7 Park Furniture
- 8 Irrigation Repair
- 9 Equipment/Vehicle Repair
- 10 Fence Repair
- 11 Rubbish Removal
- 12 Leaf Removal
- 13 Litter Pick Up
- 14 Mowing
- 15 PlayGround Maint
- 16 Snow Removal
- 17 Trees & Shrubs
- 18 Turf Maint
- 19 Special Events
- 20 Sweeping Paved Areas

CODE	PARK/AREA	CODE	PARK/AREA
1	Agassiz Alden	52	Rindge Field
2	Ahern Field	53	Riverside Press
3	Alberico	54	Russell Field
4	Bergin Plygrd	55	Sacramento Field
5	Camb Common	56	Sancta Maria Fld
6	Central Sq Lib	57	Sennott Park
7	Clarendon	58	Silva Playground
8	Columbia	59	Sleeper Plygrd
9	Comeau Field	60	St Peters
10	Cooper Plygrd	61	Tobin Field
11	Corcoran Field	62	Danehy Park
12	Coporal Burns	63	Vellucci Park
13	Costa Lopez	64	Vellucci RR
14	Dana Park	65	Aberdeen Island
15	Dawes Park	66	Arsenal Square
16	Donnelly Field	67	Blanchard&Concrd
17	Elm Hampshire	68	Brattle&Craigie
18	Flagstaff Park	69	Brattle Square
19	Fort Washington	70	Braudette Rotary
20	Franklin Street	71	Camb & Columbia
21	Front Park	72	City Hall
22	Fulmore Plygrd	73	City Hall Annex
23	Gannett/Warren	74	Cronin Park
24	Glacken Field	75	Dog Park
25	Gore Street	76	Fount Ter@Huron
26	Haggerty School	77	Franklin Park
27	Harvard Street	78	Fresh Pond Lane
28	Hastings Square	79	Garden & Concord
29	Hoyt Field	80	Cray Garden East
30	Hurley/VfW	81	Cray Garden West
31	King School	82	Langdon Street
32	Larch Road	83	Mercer Circle
33	Lechmere Park	84	Old Dec Road
34	Library Park	85	Sparks & Huron
35	Linear Park	86	Sullivan Square
36	Longfellow Pk	87	Tubman Square
37	Longfellow Sch	88	Windsor & Hampsh
38	Lopez Plygrd	89	Mcelroy Triangle
39	Lowell School	90	Aberdeen Ave Lib
40	Lustania Field	91	Biquin Bldg
41	Main & Bishop	92	Coporal Burns S
42	Maple Ave Lot	93	Henry Teen Ctr
43	Market Tot Lot	94	Moore Shelter
44	McArthur Park	95	Public Works Gar
45	Morse School	96	Rindge Fld House
46	Old Burial Grd	97	Gar 284 Broadway
47	Old Morse	98	Medical Center
48	Paine Plygrd	99	Goldstar Pool
49	Parkway Tot Lot	100	Centanni Park
50	Peabody School	101	831 Mass Ave
51	Pine St Tot Lot		

REVIEWED BY:

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17.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

November 4, 1996

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report #5 regarding a report of the City's policy of landscaping and gardening around City buildings, please be advised of the following:

The City is in the process of developing a comprehensive landscaping and beautification plan for business streetscapes, roadway traffic islands, rotaries, public buildings and parks. The principal elements of this plan, described in the attached document, were discussed at the October 29th Public Service Committee meeting, chaired by Vice Mayor Born. The Open Space Committee will continue to develop the plan, and meet with the Public Service Committee to discuss its elements.

For the next Public Service Committee meeting, the City was specifically requested to report on:

- Further integration of trees into the landscape and beautification plan and the identification of possible locations for placing significant trees in commemoration of the City's 150th anniversary; and
- An "adopt -a -park/traffic island" program including the development of standards for signage, materials and soil, curbing and irrigation, and administrative requirements.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

Attachment

Consent Agenda #17

5-529

Transmitting communication relative to
Awaiting Report Item Number Five, regarding
a report of the City's policy of landscaping
and gardening around city buildings.

For original order
see 6-3-96 #285CM
order #63 6-3-96

First report received
6-24-96

In City Council November 4, 1996

PLACED ON FILE