



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

City Hall Annex Inman & Broadway

To Robert Healy, City Manager

From Kathy Spiegelman, Assistant City Manager for Community Development

Date May 31, 1984

Subject Housing Needs in Cambridge

In response to the City Council Request of May 21, 1984, we have summarized below the best indicators currently available on the need for lower-income housing in Cambridge. These data appear in The City's Housing Assistance Plan (HAP), which is based on the 1980 U.S. Census, estimates from the Community Development Department, and on the waiting lists for assisted housing programs. We have also attached a list of the percentage of subsidized units in 11 Massachusetts cities and towns. We understand that the State's Executive Office of Community and Development will be issuing a Housing Needs Study within a few weeks. The results of the forthcoming study are not yet available.

1. The Cambridge Housing Assistance Plan reports that over 8,700 lower-income households are in need of housing assistance. These households are paying 30% or more of their income for rent and/or are living in substandard conditions. The 8,700 figure reflects a need for economic relief (i.e. rental assistance) as well as a need for building new low-income housing units. However, it is important to note that it is not possible to determine from available data, the number of households in this category that would actually qualify for federal or state housing assistance since program eligibility depends on factors other than income alone.
2. Perhaps the most concrete indicators of housing need available are the actual waiting lists for assisted housing. The Cambridge Housing Authority list for its public housing units show that over 800 Cambridge families have been waiting for these units at least since 1980. The waiting period for a family applicant is generally 4½-6 years. New applications have not been accepted since 1980.

For leased housing, the CHA has a waiting list of 1294 applicants, 60% of whom are currently Cambridge residents. Last year only 87 applicants were actually placed, due to the inability to locate suitable units and limited landlord participation.

3. The City sponsors several programs administered by nonprofit neighborhood corporations that provide homeownership opportunities for lower-income Cambridge families by rehabilitating dilapidated structures and building new homes on scattered sites. The waiting list for homes is in excess of 250 families, some of whom have been listed for more than 10 years.

Attachment

Percentage of Subsidized Housing Units
in 11 Massachusetts Cities and Towns

<u>Town</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Boston	15.8
Brookline	6.4
Cambridge	10.8
Fall River	11.8
Lynn	11.1
New Bedford	12.6
Quincy	9.4
Pittsfield	7.5
Somerville	8.4
Springfield	13.5
Worcester	11.3

Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Communities and Development
and The Cambridge Community Development Department.
March - August, 1983



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

ROBERT W. HEALY

City Manager

June 4, 1984

To the Honorable, the City Council:

With reference to Awaiting Report Item No. 16, Council order of May 21, 1984, I transmit herewith communication from the Assistant City Manager for Community Development relative to housing needs in the City of Cambridge.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/b

SJ 387

Re: response to Awaiting Report Item No. 16
on housing needs in the City of Cambridge.

In City Council,

June 4, 1984

6/4/84

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