



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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March 18, 1994

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached from your information a status report on the Lafayette Square/Massachusetts Avenue Roadway Improvement Project, received from Environmental Program Director Elizabeth Epstein and Assistant City Manager for Community Development Michael Rosenberg.

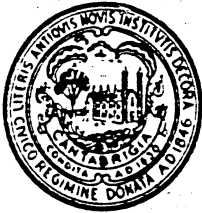
Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mev
attachment

*Referred to Environment
& Traffic + Transportation*

✓/C



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM

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TO: Robert W. Healy, City Manager
FROM: Elizabeth Epstein, Director, Cambridge Environmental Program *ed*
Michael H. Rosenberg, Assistant City Manager for Community *mhr*
Development
SUBJECT: Status Report on the Lafayette Square/Massachusetts Avenue Roadway
Improvement Project
DATE: March 3, 1994

This memo provides information on the current status and background of the Lafayette Square/Massachusetts Avenue Roadway Improvement Project. Through the funding mechanism described below, the City has an opportunity to improve and enhance Lafayette Square and the Massachusetts Avenue corridor from Lafayette Square to Memorial Drive. The City and the Massachusetts Highway Department have been developing preliminary design proposals and determining the extent and nature of improvements that may be included. An extensive community review process is now being initiated.

Massachusetts Avenue/Lafayette Square Project Status

The Lafayette Square/Massachusetts Avenue Project is now undergoing preliminary design development by the City and the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD). The major issues to be resolved are how best to provide for bicycle use in this corridor and how the new island to be created in Lafayette Square and other remnant land should be treated from an urban design point of view. Other urban design enhancements that can be made along the length of Massachusetts Avenue are also being explored, with particular attention paid towards improving the pedestrian experience. Before the project proceeds beyond this preliminary ("25 percent") design stage, an extensive community outreach program will take place to address these issues and identify any other concerns of the residential and business communities (including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology). Because the funding is contained in the ISTEA legislation (see Background below), money for right-of-way acquisition and construction will be available in FY96. This funding cycle will allow full design development over the next several months.

Massachusetts Avenue/Lafayette Square Project Background

In order to alleviate the impacts of the probable increase in traffic in Cambridge due to construction of the central portion of the Central Artery/Third Harbor Crossing (CA/T) Project, the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) and the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction (EOTC) agreed to fund the Lafayette Square Roadway Project as part of its "Services Agreement" with the City of Cambridge dealing with CA/T

Project construction (dated September 11, 1992). Since the Lafayette Square Project is eligible for funding under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) independent from the CA/T budget, it is anticipated that the funding will come from that source, but through the MHD. Funding for this project under ISTEA will first become available in FY96.

Because of the commitment from the CA/T Project and with the help of Michael Swanson, then Chief Engineer of the MHD, the Lafayette Square reconstruction project has been programmed for construction in FY96. The project that is now in the early design development phase also includes upgrading Massachusetts Avenue from Lafayette Square to Memorial Drive, which would otherwise have required funding through the City's general street and sidewalk improvement allocation of Chapter 90 State Funds. The Chapter 90 money initially allocated for Massachusetts Avenue improvements will be used to repair and upgrade other eligible city roadways. This funding arrangement allows the City to maximize the extent of street improvements to be implemented across the city.

Relationship of the Lafayette Square/Mass. Ave. Roadway Improvement Project to the Cambridgeport Roadway Improvement Plan

The Lafayette Square/Massachusetts Avenue Roadway Project is the first phase in implementing the Cambridgeport Roadway Improvement Plan. The initial roadway plan was developed by the traffic consultants to Forest City Development Corporation to help address the impacts of the University Park Development Project; it was revised as the result of an extensive community process and ultimately used as the roadway improvement plan on which the Cambridgeport rezoning was based. The City has now begun pursuing funding for the Cambridgeport Roadway Improvements, as the State has only recently designated these roadways as eligible for ISTEA funding categories. If the Cambridgeport Roadway improvement project is accepted for ISTEA funding, a design development process, including broad-based public participation will be initiated at the appropriate time.

5-113

Status Report on the Lafayette Square/
Mass. Ave. Roadway Improvement Project.

3/30/94 copy sent to Traffic &
Transportation Committee &
the Environment Committee. (d)

3/21/94
Submitted at the
meeting.

Referred to the Traffic
& Transportation
Committee & the
Environment Committee