



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUSAN B. SCHLESINGER,
*Interim Assistant City Manager
for Community Development*

MARY FLYNN,
*Deputy Director for
Community Development*

To: Robert W. Healy
City Manager

From: Susan Schlesinger *SH*
Acting Assistant City Manager for Community
Development

Re: Response to Council Order #36

Date: June 23, 1994

In response to comments received during the public hearing process, the Joint Legislative Committee on Local Affairs released, on May 2, 1994, a revised version of the "The Growing Smart Bill". This current draft reflects a variety of changes which improve and strengthen the legislation. The principles behind the Massachusetts Planning and Development Act should be supported because this much needed bill provides an effective tool which will help implement and better coordinate planning in Massachusetts among all levels of government.

There are areas in the legislation which are particularly important to Cambridge. Section 4 (Local Comprehensive Plans) designates regional commissions as the bodies that adopt guidelines for the preparation and approval of local comprehensive plans and provides for up to 70% funding for the preparation of initial LCP. This new draft now allows LCP which have been prepared within five years of the effective date of the Act to be submitted to the regional commission for approval. This means that the Cambridge Growth Policy Document: Towards a Sustainable Future, if adopted by the City Council, could become the Cambridge Local Comprehensive Plan. In addition the City would be eligible to be reimbursed for up to 70% of the cost of preparing the document. Although the preparation of a LCP is not mandated, adoption of such a document has certain benefits (see Section 8 below).

Secondly, Section 6 (Plan Preparation and Public Transportation) which specifies procedures required for the preparation and review of LCP, has been modified to allow more flexibility between individual communities. Although

the requirements still require "consistency" with state planning goals and the relevant regional policy plan, the "consistency" requirement for coordination with LCP of abutting Municipalities and with state agency and authority ten to twenty year plans has been changed to "compatibility". This change is important because it allows for more flexibility when dealing with issues such as development at Alewife and the concerns of Belmont. Light manufacturing and research and development activities might not be consistent with an abutting residential neighborhood but still could be compatible depending on its size and design.

Lastly, changes to Section 8 (Benefits of Local Comprehensive Plan Implementation) make clear that with an approved LCP and supportive local development regulations (eg. zoning, or wetlands) municipalities will have benefits which include priority for the following funding programs:

State revolving funds and construction grants for water and sewer infrastructure and acquisition assistance for open space, conservation and recreational lands and waters

Transportation Improvement Program funding

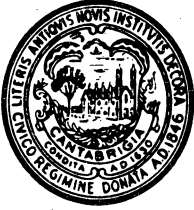
Mortgage subsidies for residential construction and rehabilitation, low and moderate income housing programs, and urban renewal grant and loan programs;

Other benefits would allow municipalities to adopt a unified program of development impact fees for capital facility improvements reasonably attributable to demand created by new projects.

A Municipality may submit to the Secretary of Environmental Affairs its approved LCP and local development regulations with a request for certification that would, under certain circumstances allow a municipality to designate parts of community as a defined growth center. This designation would enable state permits to be granted for projects in growth centers without individual ENF's and EIR's.

Municipalities could provide that any project which complies with the LCP and municipal development regulations can obtain a single unified permit hearing as a matter of right, covering all permits, licenses, orders and approval, except compliance with the state building code.

In summary, this Act is compatible with the City's effort to adopt a Growth Policy Document and can contribute significantly to overall planning efforts in the State.



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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

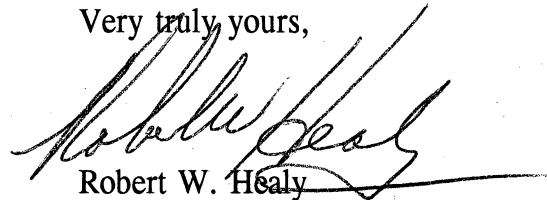
RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

June 27, 1994

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 4, regarding comments received during the public hearing process, the Joint Legislative Committee on Local Affairs, a revised version of the "Growing Smart Bill", received from Susan Schlesinger, Acting Assistant City Manager for Community Development.

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mev
attachment

Response to Awaiting Report Item Number Four, regarding comments received during the public hearing process, the Joint Legislative Committee on Local Affairs, a revised version of the "Growing Smart Bill".

In City Council,

June 27, 1994

*Referred to the
Housing and
Community Development
Committee on motion
of Councillor Quehay.
6/29/94 - copy sent to
Housing and Community
Development Committee
du*