

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

City Hall Annex - Inman & Broadway - Cambridge, Mass. 02139

498-9034

To: Robert W. Healy
City Manager

From: Michael H. Rosenberg *MHR*
Assistant City Manager for Community Development

Subject: Comprehensive Rezoning Progress Report

Date: March 23, 1989

Since the City Council's adoption of the Comprehensive Rezoning Plan last September, the Community Development Department has organized its resources to undertake a major citywide growth management program. As can be seen on the attached diagram illustrating activity in this first year of our two year program, significant progress has been achieved on most elements of the plan within the last six months. In particular, major activity has occurred in the plan's three substantive areas: environmental review, neighborhoods and development districts. This report provides more detailed information on the status of each effort.

Completed Activities - Several initiatives have been completed since September, including:

- Trip Generation Study - This study, conducted by Vanesse Hangen Brustlin, provided useful information on the number of auto trips generated by office projects located in various parts of the City. This information was used by the Department in developing a traffic mitigation zoning proposal to reduce the amount of traffic generated by new development.
- East Cambridge Neighborhood Study - This study, completed in December, is the first comprehensive neighborhood study to be undertaken and is a critical part of the Department's neighborhood planning program. Its recommendations present a comprehensive plan for addressing the broad range of planning and development issues and activity impacting the neighborhood. The Department has already initiated action on the major land use recommendation of the

study, the East Cambridge Interim Planning Overlay District.

- North Point Rezoning - The North Point Zoning petition, adopted by City Council in November, allows for future mixed use development in this area previously zoned Industry B. Among its many features, the petition allows for development of affordable housing and places constraints on traffic generation by commercial uses. The Department is currently working to draft design guidelines and a policy plan to assist in guiding and controlling growth in this area. In addition, the Department is working with property owners in the IB area of Msgr. O'Brien Highway not affected by the North Point rezoning, to develop appropriate zoning controls along this corridor.

Petitions Filed Several petitions have been filed for City Council and Planning Board consideration and are currently making their way through the hearing process. These include:

- Traffic Mitigation Zoning - This innovative petition, aimed at limiting traffic generated by new development projects in excess of 15,000 square feet, was heard by the Planning Board on March 21st. The ordinance committee hearing is scheduled for March 29. A critical element of the Comprehensive Rezoning Plan, the traffic mitigation zoning proposes a mechanism for reducing, on a citywide basis, what is generally viewed as the primary negative impact of development. Through an agreement with Caravan, Inc., the department has already begun a Commuter Mobility program designed to help Cambridge businesses establish alternatives to auto commuting for their employees.
- Townhouse Zoning Revisions - This petition addresses concerns which have been raised about the size and bulk of townhouse development by restricting bonuses which are currently allowed. The petition is scheduled to be heard by the Planning Board on April 4. The Department has received endorsements of the proposed revisions from community groups in three neighborhoods where substantial townhouse activity has occurred in recent years - Mid Cambridge, Riverside and North Cambridge.
- Central Square Rezoning - This petition, based on recommendations of the Central Square Action Plan, is the result of a two year planning effort between the Community Development Department, the Central Square

Advisory Committee, the Central Square Business Association and the neighborhoods abutting Central Square. The petition limits densities and heights and provides for managed growth. Both the Planning Board and Ordinance Committee public hearings have been held. The Planning Board will discuss its recommendations at its April 4th meeting.

Activities in Progress - In addition to those elements of the plan which have been filed for consideration, the Department is also involved in several major studies. Each of these will result in rezoning petitions or specific recommendations for addressing the planning and development issues which are being studied.

- Citywide Design Review Process - Still at an early stage, this effort has focused on an analysis of the City's current design review mechanisms and the successes and failures of each approach. Study of alternate design review scenarios and mechanisms for implementing these approaches has begun and will continue into the beginning of FY'90.
- Review of Residential Parking Requirements - The data needed to assess current parking trends has been collected and will be analyzed in relation to the ordinance's existing parking requirements, neighborhood concerns about insufficient parking in residential areas and traffic mitigation objectives. This effort, conducted in conjunction with the Department of Traffic and Parking, will be completed by June, 1989 and will lead to recommendations for changes, if any, to the residential parking requirements.
- North Cambridge Neighborhood Study - This study is rapidly nearing completion. The study committee has reviewed and approved a final draft of the report, completing its work in February. Final corrections and editing are currently underway to be followed by production of the report. The North Cambridge Neighborhood Study is scheduled for release in May.

Publication of this report will complete the first year of an anticipated five year timeframe for completing the neighborhood studies portion of the Department's neighborhood planning program. Year two activity will focus on the Cambridgeport and Riverside neighborhoods. It is currently anticipated that these studies will begin early in FY'90 and will be followed by a study of Area 4 in early FY'91.

- Rezoning Resulting from Neighborhood Study Recommendations - As mentioned previously, the Department has already taken action on the major land use recommendations of the East Cambridge Study by initiating a rezoning study of the industrial and commercial areas surrounding East Cambridge residential areas. An interim planning overlay district (IPOD) petition has been filed for Council consideration. If adopted, the IPOD will allow the recently appointed study committee to develop permanent zoning for the area without the threat of large scale development occurring while the study is in process.

- Cambridgeport Rezoning Study - Phase II of the Cambridgeport rezoning, focusing on the remaining Industry B area and the Industry A and Office 3 districts between Henry Street and Memorial Drive, was initiated this summer with the Council's adoption of an interim zoning. The Cambridgeport Rezoning Advisory Committee, comprised of landowner/business and neighborhood representatives, has been meeting since last September to develop a petition to address the land use, traffic and urban design issues raised by the future development of this area. The committee anticipates having a petition to file prior to the expiration of the interim zoning on June 1st.

- Industry B Study - the Department is nearing completion of an effort to develop zoning for the City's remaining Industry B areas (excluding Cambridgeport and Msgr. O'Brien Highway). This effort which included extensive land use and zoning analysis also included numerous meetings with the landowners and neighborhood groups. The Planning Board has recommended extending the interim planning overlay district through June 30, 1989 to enable the Department to resolve remaining issues prior to filing a permanent rezoning.

- Review of Buildout Potential in High Density, Non-residential Districts - To date, this effort has focused primarily on providing the necessary buildout data to develop recommendations for the Cambridgeport and Industry B studies. This information has been computerized on a land use spread sheet. Information will be added for the City's other commercial and industrial districts as time and resources permit. This will then be used to analyze these districts.

Activities not yet underway. Only two of the planned elements of the comprehensive rezoning have yet to begin. These are:

- Zoning Ordinance Review and Reorganization - The Department has postponed this activity until later this spring/summer. This will enable us to incorporate the results of several of the above mentioned initiatives into our technical review.
- Industry A-1 Study - Although preliminary data has been collected, this effort is not scheduled to begin until early in FY'90.

Process

In addition to its work on the substantive areas of the plan, the Department has also undertaken procedural efforts to ensure comprehensiveness and consistency. The Department is currently reviewing the goals of each element of the plan to ensure that the objectives of each effort are being met. This review will lead to the development of a statement of overall goals and objectives for the comprehensive rezoning plan. The statement will be formulated by the Department and reviewed by the Planning Board prior to its submission to the City Council.

Over the past few months, the Department has also initiated a series of meetings with community and business groups to explain the purpose of the comprehensive rezoning plan and to review certain elements such as traffic mitigation zoning and proposed changes to townhouse development. These meetings have been particularly useful in promoting a greater understanding of the City's efforts in planning and growth management and in obtaining feedback on proposed zoning mechanisms which address neighborhood concerns.

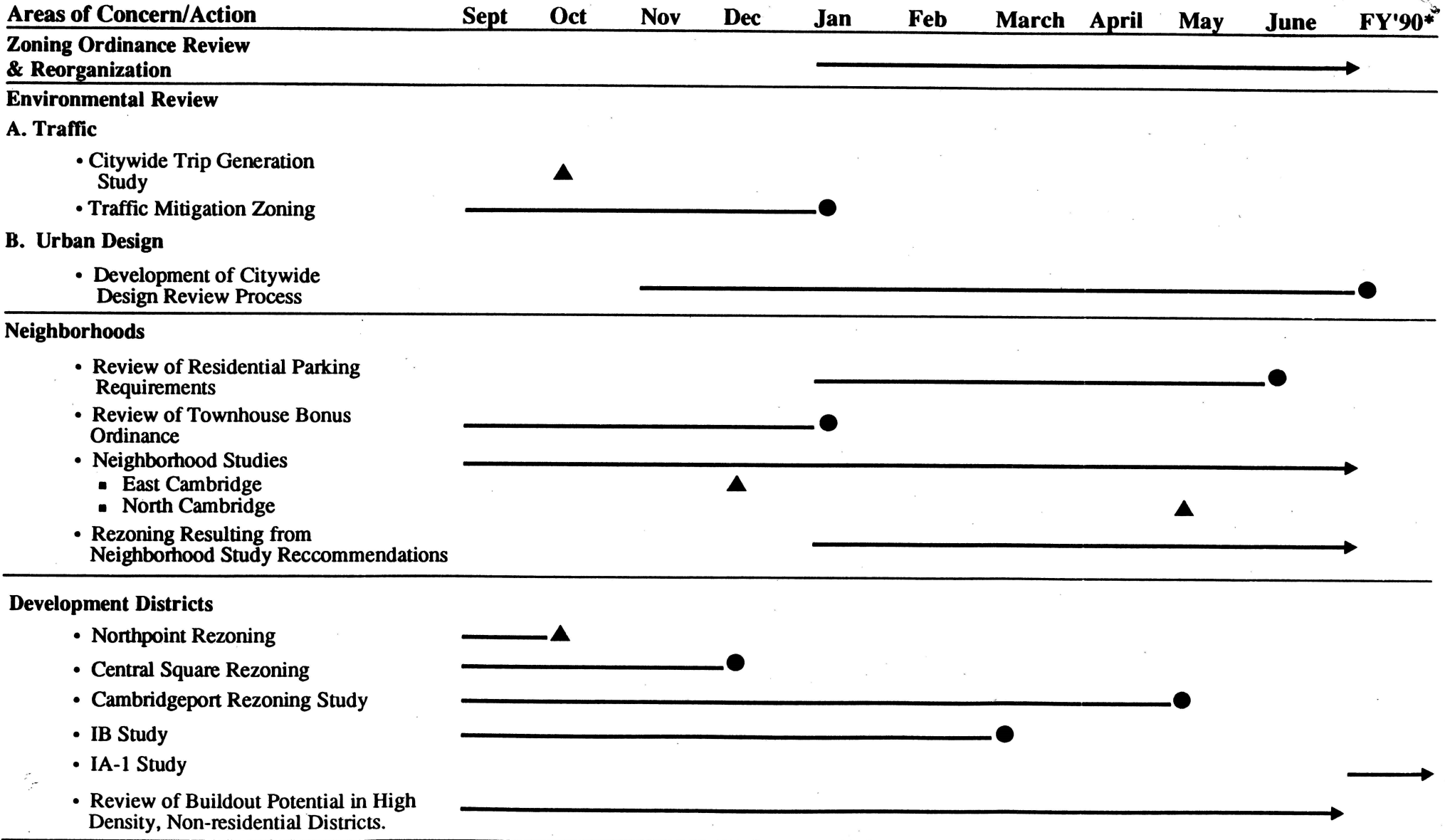
The Department will continue to work on both the substantive and procedural areas of the comprehensive rezoning plan during the next six months with the goal of accomplishing all of the plan's first year objectives.

COMPREHENSIVE REZONING PLAN



Cambridge Community Development Department

▲	= Complete
●	= Zoning Petition Filed
→	= Ongoing



* A detailed schedule of FY'90 activities will be available in July 1989.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
TEL. 498-9011

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

March 27, 1989

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Enclosed please find copy of Comprehensive Rezoning Progress Report submitted by Michael H. Rosenberg, Assistant City Manager for Community Development.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/dls
enc.

Agenda Item No. 3 0-38

Re: enclosed Comprehensive Rezoning Progress
Report from Michael Rosenberg, Asst. City
Manager for Community Development.

In City Council,

March 27, 1989

3-27-89

Placed on file