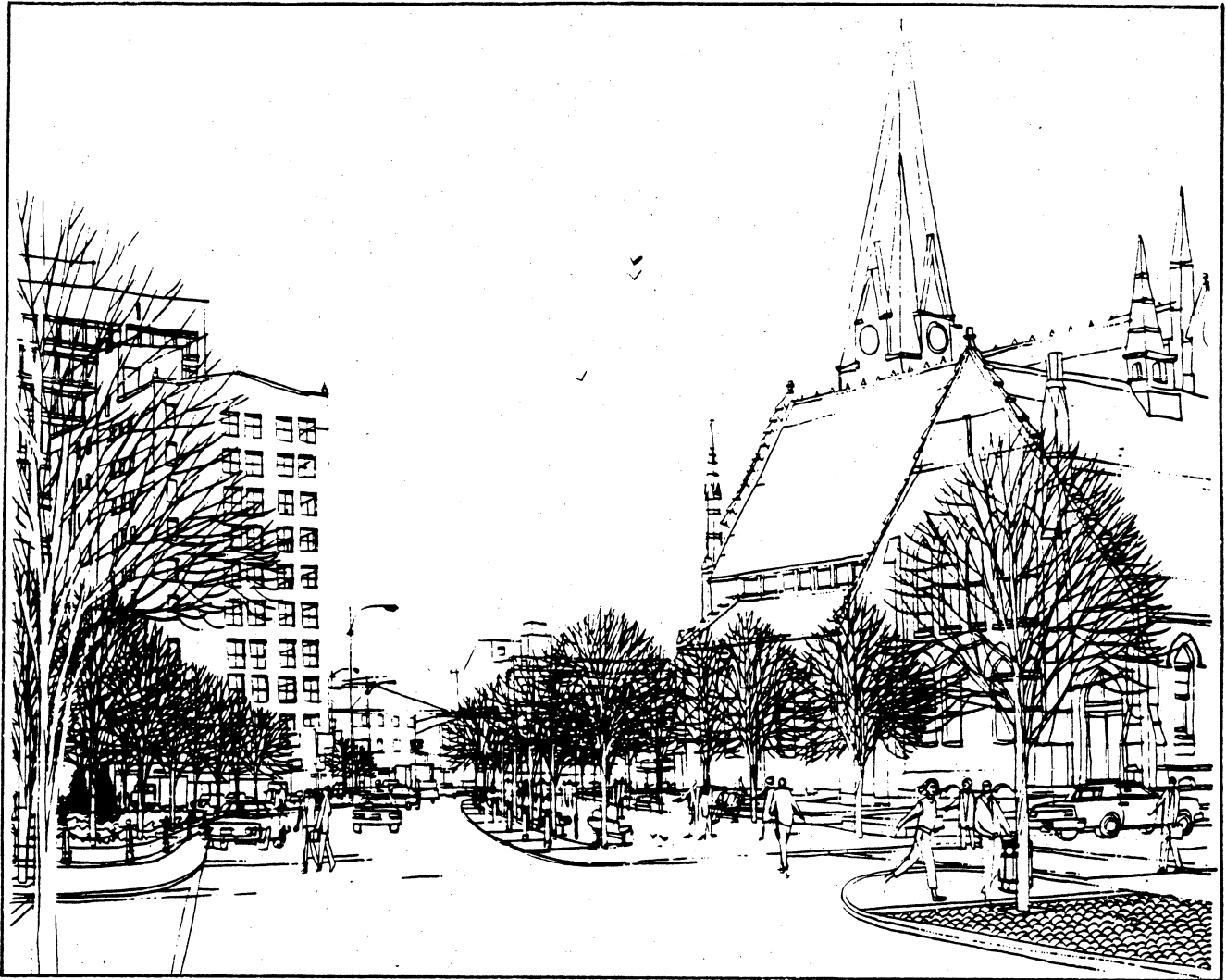
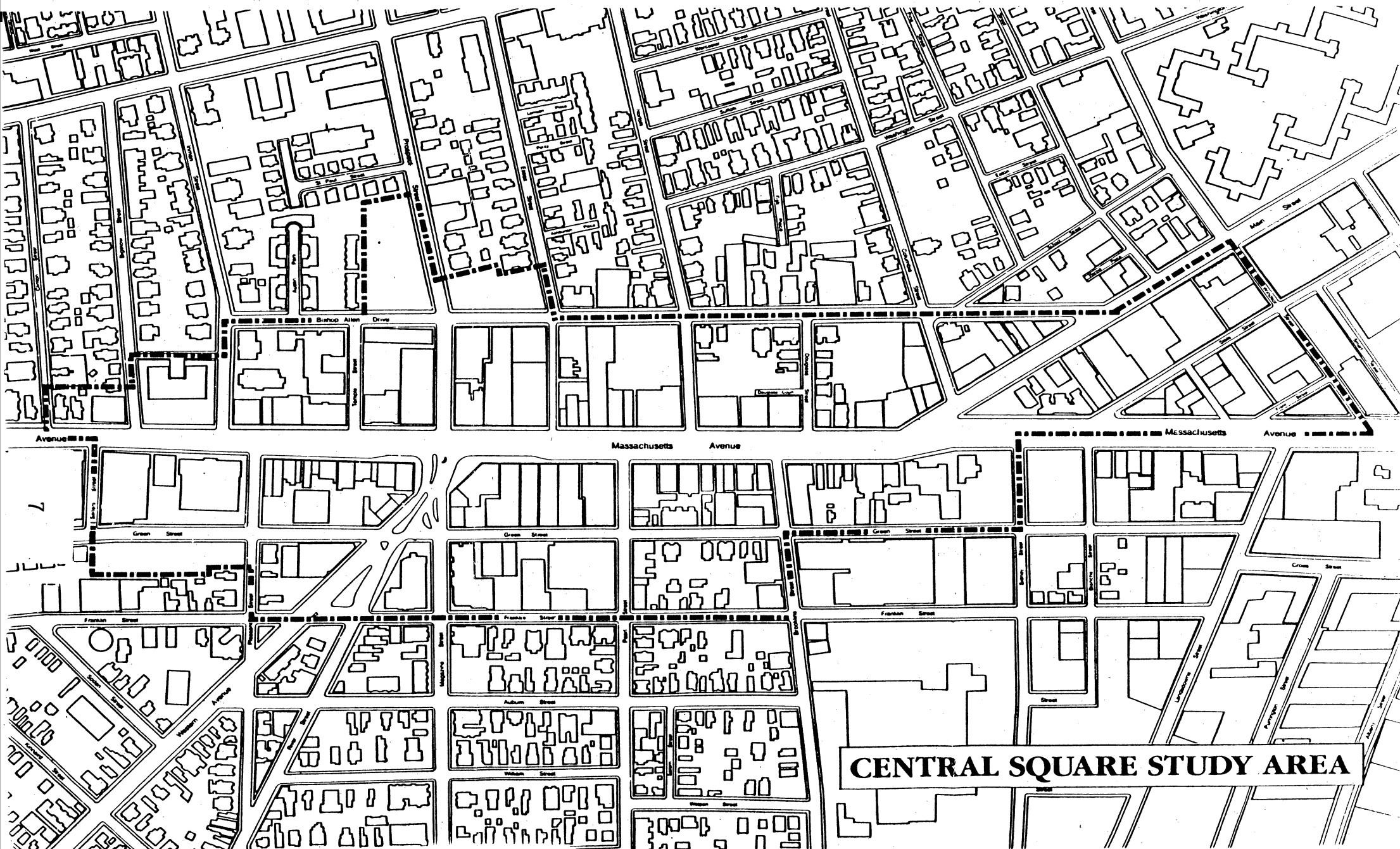


Summary Report
for
City Council Hearing
February 1, 1988



City of Cambridge

CENTRAL SQUARE ACTION PLAN



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Central Square Economic Development Subcommittee has met over the last two years actively participating in research efforts, meeting with neighborhood and business groups and conducting community meetings. The result of these efforts has been compiled in this report. The purpose of this report is to develop a long range Action Plan that will be economically viable and respectful of the Square's present unique retail environment.

The goals of the plan are to:

- o encourage responsible and orderly development;
- o strengthen the retail base and the market capture of the neighborhoods;
- o preserve the Square's cultural diversity;
- o create an active people-oriented space;
- o improve the physical and visual environment;
- o provide retail establishments that cater to the people of diverse economic and social groups who live in the surrounding neighborhoods;
- o encourage the development of new mixed-income housing units; and
- o promote compatible retail adjacent to residential uses.

A key objective of the Subcommittee's work is to strengthen Central Square's retail viability by attracting a stronger neighborhood consumer base. The Subcommittee retained Economics Research Associates, a marketing consultant, to evaluate the Square's present market capture and to recommend a retail mix that would strengthen the capture of the neighborhood market. The recommended retail uses include specialty food stores, a junior department store, factory outlets, home furnishings and fixtures, card and gift shop, dance and exercise apparel, art gallery, and a book store.

Businesses such as drug, liquor, convenience stores and fast food establishments are already well represented. The proposed cap on fast food establishments together with a revised fast food definition will keep the number of fast food establishments from exceeding the present number. The Action Plan also proposes limiting convenience stores from locating within 1000 feet from each other.

In addition to improving the retail mix of the Square retail development recommendations also focus on the following:

- o improving the appearance of the Square through development of design guidelines in the Urban Design Plan;

- o Centralizing the marketing and promotions of the Square through a marketing committee and a downtown manager; and
- o Requiring additional guidelines and amending some existing regulations on licensing common victualler, entertainment, and liquor licenses.

Zoning recommendations and Urban Design objectives have been formulated to implement the goals and objectives of this report. These recommendations include the creation of an Overlay District as outlined on page 41. The regulations of the Overlay would encourage the development of housing, encourage retention and rehabilitation of historically significant structures, promote a unified image of the Square as a retail area, and control heights along Massachusetts Avenue and adjacent to residential areas. Some of the key elements are summarized below:

- o requires design review for projects over 2000 square feet;
- o establishes a height limit on Massachusetts Avenue;
- o requires setbacks adjacent to residentially zoned areas;
- o requires active ground floor uses along Massachusetts Avenue and Main Street;
- o promotes a viable retail mix by capping fast food establishments; restricting auto dependent/related uses such as gasoline stations, auto rental or repair, etc; and, restricting non pedestrian oriented office uses;
- o identifies structures which are potential landmarks and potentially significant for inclusion in a National Register District.

Housing recommendations are proposed to encourage the creation of more housing opportunities in Central Square. Incentives are built into the Overlay area for housing development. City owned parking lots are recommended to be used as leveraging mechanisms for the development of mixed income housing units.

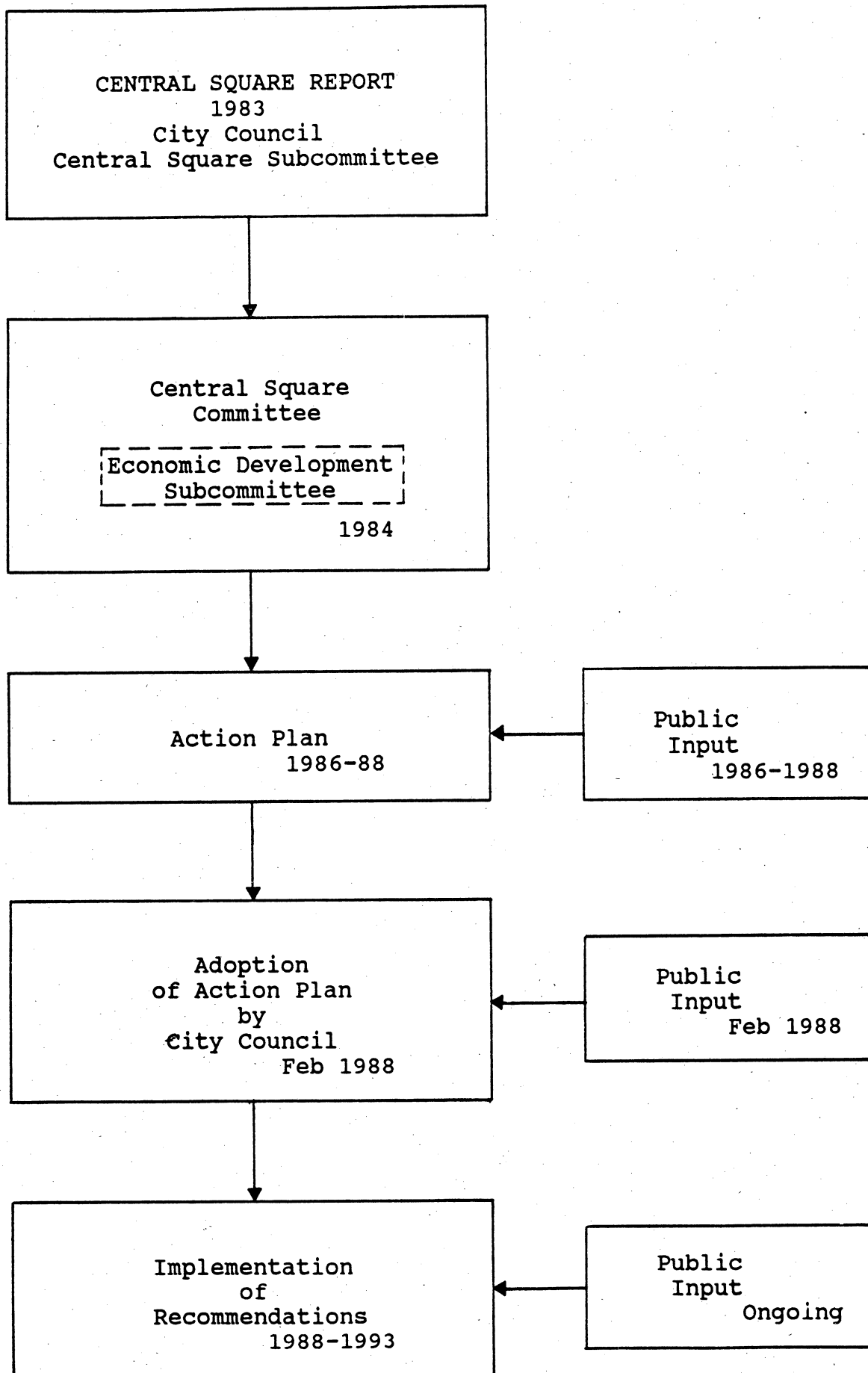
The recommendations for Streets, Sidewalks and Open Space are focused at tying all of the public areas within Central Square together and creating a clean and safe pedestrian oriented environment. Recommendations include expansion of the MBTA Red Line and Central Square Enhancement Project improvements, creating safer pedestrian areas at Auburn Street and Western Avenue and at Lafayette Square and, the creation of pedestrian links between the neighborhood and the retail area.

Improvements to the current traffic situation in Central Square need further study, but it is already clear that efforts to reroute truck traffic from River Street and Western Avenue and to encourage greater use of

public transit facilities by the Square's employees should be pursued. A further study of present parking and loading requirements should be undertaken by an independent transportation consultant.

The continued efforts of the Central Square neighborhood, business people, property owners and the City are necessary for the Square to realize its potential as a full service community retail district. The combined efforts of these groups in developing the Central Square Action Plan must continue until the plan is implemented and the goals of revitalization are achieved.

ACTION PLAN EVOLUTION/PROCESS



CENTRAL SQUARE ACTION PLAN

GOALS

- * Encourage Responsible and Orderly Development
 - * Strengthen the Retail Base
 - * Broaden the Market Capture of the Neighborhoods
 - * Preserve Cultural Diversity of the Square
 - * Create an Active People Oriented Place
 - * Improve the Physical and Visual Environment
 - * Provide Diverse Retail Establishments
 - * Encourage the Development of Mixed-Income Housing
 - * Promote Compatible Land Uses
-

MAIN AREAS
of
ATTENTION

- * Retail Environment
 - * Zoning and Urban Design
 - * Housing
-

RETAIL
RECOMMENDATIONS

* RETAIL MIX

- JR. Department Store
- Discount and Factory Outlets
- Home Furnishings and Fixtures
- Art Gallery
- Book Store
- Apparel
- Specialty Food
- Etc.

* RETAIL RESTRICTIONS

- Fast Food Establishment
- Convenient Food Stores
- Auto Related Business Activities

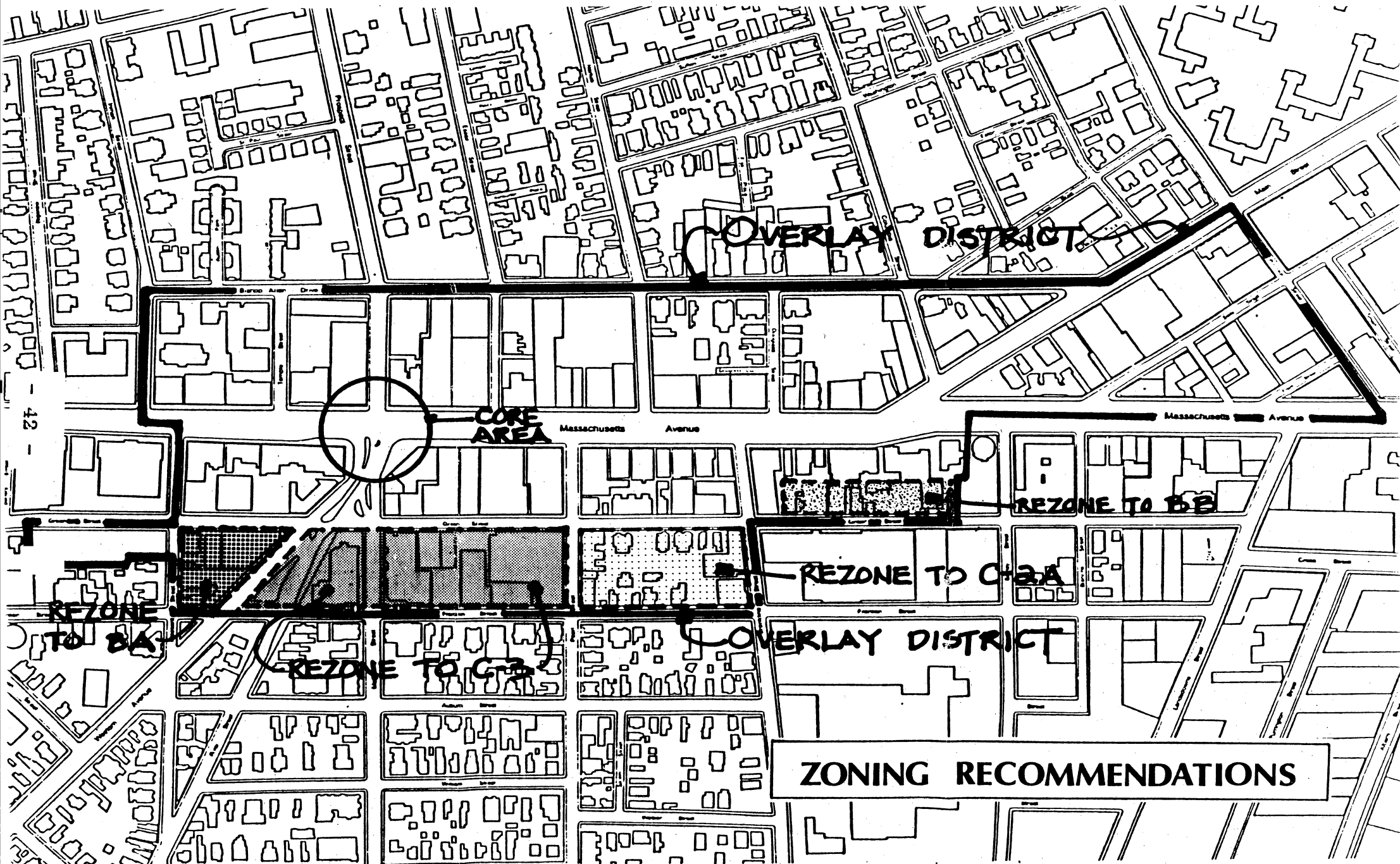
* DOWNTOWN MANAGER

* MARKETING COMMITTEE

* LICENSING REGULATIONS

- Common Victualler
- Entertainment

* PUBLIC SAFETY



OVERLAY DISTRICT

CORE AREA

Massachusetts Avenue

Massachusetts Avenue

REZONE TO BB

REZONE TO C-2A

REZONE TO BA

REZONE TO C-2A

OVERLAY DISTRICT

ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

ZONING and
URBAN DESIGN

* HISTORIC DISTRICT

* OVERLAY DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS

- Height
- Setbacks
- Land Use
- Design Review
- Signage

* PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

* TRAFFIC and PARKING STUDY

HOUSING

* ZONING INCENTIVES

* PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION
of the
ACTION PLAN

* REZONING

Overlay District

- FAR (As of Right/Special Permit)
- Heights
- Setbacks
- Land Uses
- Signage
- Incentives for Development of Housing
- Urban Design Guidelines

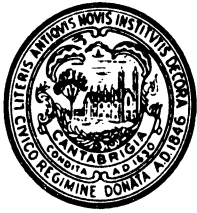
* PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

- Traffic and Parking
- Street and Sidewalk Improvements
- Street Lighting/Pedestrian Lighting
- Signage

* ASSISTANCE to CENTRAL SQUARE BUSINESSES

- Marketing Committee
- Downtown Manager
- Technical Assistance

* ONGOING RESIDENT, BUSINESS and CITY LIAISON
EFFORTS



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
TEL. 498-9011

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

February 1, 1988

To the Honorable, the City Council:

I transmit herewith summary packet for the Central Square Action
Plan hearing scheduled for February 1, 1988.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/b

Re: enclosed summary packet for the Central
Square Action Plan hearing scheduled for
February 1, 1988.

In City Council,

February 1, 1988

Referred to Hearing
Scheduled 2/1/88
@ 6 P.M.
Hearing Held