



Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

336 MAIN STREET • CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02142 • PHONE (617) 492-6800

August 31, 1973

Mr. John H. Corcoran
City Manager
Cambridge City Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Re: Progress Report
Kendall Square Urban Renewal Area
Project No. Mass. R-107

Dear Mr. Corcoran:

The purpose of this letter is to provide a progress report as requested by the City Council on July 2, 1973, when it adopted the report of a joint Subcommittee on Economic Development and Manpower, and Housing and Land Use, calling for development of 24 acres of land in Kendall Square to provide for maximum blue-collar and non-professional white-collar jobs for Cambridge residents.

The citizen Task Force, established by the City Council order on July 2, met on seven successive Wednesday evenings during July and August. Authority representatives were present at the last six meetings during which the Task Force dealt with (1) organizational matters including establishment of subcommittees to work on unemployment issues, attracting and maintaining industry, and nominating candidates for office on the Task Force, (2) the kinds of guidance needed by the Authority from the Task Force, (3) the kinds of services needed by the Task Force from the Authority, (4) the technical support needed from the Planning and Development Department, (5) the need for and organization of the new Office of Economic Development and Manpower, (6) how best to advise the Authority in the preparation of a plan to fulfill the City Council objectives, and (7) establishment of a subcommittee, still unnamed, to work with the Authority staff.

With the initial agreement of Mayor Ackermann and then of the Task Force, Authority staffer Bob Remer has been serving as temporary recording secretary to the Task Force. At the

Task Force's request, the Authority's Deputy Director, Tad Tercyak, along with Assistant Director Ron Thomson and I have conferred with the Task Force and its subcommittees to provide technical support in certain areas, to review the urban renewal plan and to explain the difference in definition between such a plan and a concept plan, as well as discuss possible amendments to the approved urban renewal plan, and to outline for the Task Force those steps in the urban renewal process required for the redevelopment and industrial reuse of the area, together with the public actions necessary for such an undertaking.

The role of the Authority and the complexities of urban renewal in the process of meeting distinct, new objectives for Kendall Square led to some misunderstanding at the outset between the Authority staff and some Task Force members. An example of this was the motion adopted by the Task Force on August 15 which was objected to by both Ron Thomson of the Authority and Mike Moser, presently involved at your direction in establishing an Office of Economic Development and Manpower, on the grounds that it reflected a misunderstanding of the difference between an urban renewal plan and a concept plan, and of the difference between the establishment of general guidelines by the City Council and the designation of specific land uses by that agency and/or group responsible for project planning. A copy of the Authority's response to the Task Force motion, as prepared by Tad Tercyak, is enclosed. A more viable relationship has been apparent in recent weeks, in line with Mayor Ackermann's early admonition that the Authority should be considered an ally rather than an adversary in the important job ahead.

The City Council order of July 2, establishing the Task Force, (1) underscores the necessity of involvement of representatives of affected neighborhoods and institutions in the process of planning and seeking and evaluating development proposals, (2) points out the City Council's conviction that residents should be more completely involved in reprogramming work, (3) outlines the responsibility of the Task Force to advise the Authority in the formulation of a new development plan and in the evaluation of the economic and environmental impact of such a plan.

At the same time, the City Council order and the accompanying Subcommittee report (1) takes note of the primary responsibility of the Authority to oversee the development of Kendall Square,

and (2) requests you to direct the Authority ". . . to institute a development plan for Kendall Square . . ." and to submit said plan to the City Council for its consideration.

It therefore becomes obvious there remain some very real problems as to which agency or organization can most properly and appropriately undertake what task, when, and with which immediate objective in mind.

Thus, it is clear that the Authority cannot prepare a new development plan for Kendall Square without the extensive involvement of the Task Force as well as other departments and agencies if such a plan, in the last analysis, is to be regarded by the City Council and by the community at large as a credible and defensible plan for achieving currently established industrial job goals.

Clearly, under these circumstances, there are certain things the Authority can reasonably and properly do. There are other things which it cannot do.

The Authority, certainly, can and will continue to provide open access to the participating groups and agencies to all of the studies and reports heretofore undertaken. It also can prepare and make available prototypical studies of different types of industrial development and an evaluation of their costs and benefits and impacts on the community. It can make available to the Task Force some staff, within the limits of presently-approved federally-supported budgets, and has already done so. The Authority, too, can prepare and arrange for the approval and adoption of necessary amendments to the urban renewal plan, and for those activities necessary to the marketing, preparation, improvement, and disposal of project sites for industrial reuse.

The Authority cannot, however, easily exercise its "primary responsibility" to oversee the development of Kendall Square for industrial reuse without a far more refined picture of the employment needs which are to be satisfied by contemplated industrial reuses in the area. It cannot effectively determine the requirements for a land reservation for a truck right-of-way and for a truck route to service the area. It cannot accurately assess the minimum extent of parking facilities required to satisfy the demands of industrial-commercial tenants while, at the same time encouraging the use of public transportation. Such vital inputs can be made more effectively, and should be made, by the Planning and Development Department and by the Department of Traffic and Parking.

Suffice to say, a team effort is required if the process is not to be painfully long and slow.

Before we can even think about looking for development proposals, the work now being done for the Task Force by Dan McSweeney, Assistant Director, and other members of the Planning and Development Department, must be completed. This work includes unemployment data analysis, industrial job screening, the preparation of those job profiles, and a realistic profile of industrial development which would provide such jobs to meet City Council established requirements for the area.

We would urge you, in addition to sanctioning formally the industry-profile work being done by the Planning and Development Department, to ask that Department, together with the Department of Traffic and Parking, to carry out the task of establishing requirements for truck service in and around the project area, for the upgrading of arterial streets, if necessary, and for public parking facilities designed to encourage increased public transportation use.

The difficulties in the job that lies ahead were well perceived in the City Council Subcommittee report on industrial development in Kendall Square and in the accompanying report on industrial development generally in Cambridge. The Subcommittee identified clearly, concisely, and completely the many reasons that presently exist --well beyond the control of this Authority-- for "the painful exodus of industrial employers from the City," an exodus which the Subcommittee itself points out might increase in magnitude and severity, producing further industrial unemployment and causing the economic employment base of the City to become more unbalanced and inadequate.

The Authority staff will continue to work as closely as it can with the Task Force and other departments and agencies involved to the point where project development objectives are clearly defined so that the renewal program, under Authority direction, can be used as the vehicle for attaining those clearly defined objectives.

The job ahead, not only for the Authority and the Task Force, but for other departments and agencies, is not an easy one, and cannot be accomplished without your personal leadership,

the understanding and support of the City Council, and continuing coordination by new Assistant City Manager Jim Farrell in his assigned community development work.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert F. Rowland". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert F. Rowland
Executive Director

RFR:eal

Attachment

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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
Tel. 876-6800

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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
JOHN H. CORCORAN
City Manager

September 10, 1973

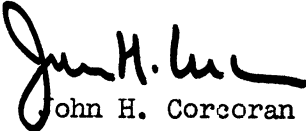
To the Honorable, the City Council,

I have forwarded to you, under separate cover, a letter from Robert F. Rowland, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority.

This letter will serve as a Kendall Square progress report, requested from the Authority by the City Council in its order of July 2, 1973.

It is my understanding that the citizen Task Force, referred to by Mr. Rowland, presently is preparing its own progress report for submission to the City Council, possibly by next Monday.

Very truly yours,


John H. Corcoran
City Manager

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Progress Report on the Kendall Square Urban
Renewal Area.

In City Council

Sept. 10, 1973

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