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CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Cambridge City Council
City Hall
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Dear City Councillors:

In its capacity as an advisory body to the Committee on Transportation and Parking, the Cambridge Transportation Forum has recently approved two Reports and one Resolution which I am forwarding with this letter to the Committee for its consideration. The Reports concern Bicentennial Transportation (approved 5 Sept.), and Implementation of the Clean Air Transportation Control Plan (approved 3 Oct.) and the Resolution concerns a proposed City Curb Cuts Program (approved 3 Oct.).

All three items deal with important matters of transportation policy and each has been the subject of careful study and discussion by the CTF. I very much hope that these fruits of the citizen participation process prove useful to the Council and the City Manager.

As Chairman of the CTF, I must, however, regretfully ask that the Council not act on the proposed temporary parking lot on the old City Dump until the Council, the neighborhoods concerned, and the CTF have an opportunity to restudy the proposal in light of new information that came out at the Committee's hearing on October 8, after the CTF voted on its Report. At that hearing it became clear that the primary use for the proposed lot would be as fringe parking for commuters until the Red Line is extended. This would mean a period of at least six years and perhaps two or three times that long. The new thrust of the proposal is a far cry indeed from the "Cambridge Bicentennial Park and Ride Plan" suggested by the Bicentennial Corporation on June 10.

Clearly we now have a new proposal for a semi-permanent revenue-producing commuter parking lot, not a temporary facility for Bicentennial visitors. While the City administration has indicated its support for the former plan, only the latter plan has received adequate study and public airing.

By proposing this delay for further study I do not mean to imply opposition to the new proposal. It should be evaluated on its own merits. If the Council does not act before December 9 I believe the CTF can make a new report to the Council by then. This should also give the City Departments ample opportunity to document their recommendation on this major land use and transportation policy issue.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'John Pitkin'.

John Pitkin, Chairman, CTF

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Copies: 12 to City Clerk, City Manager, Mr. Teso, Mr. Bowyer, Mr. Sawyer, Ms. Hanley
Cambridge Bicentennial Corp., Board of Traffic and Parking

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING
ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
CLEAN AIR TRANSPORTATION CONTROL PLAN

The Clean Air Transportation Control Plan of the State of Massachusetts and the Environmental Protection Agency requires the City to impose and to enforce a ban on all on-street parking by non-residents between 7:00 A.M. and 10:00 A.M. on weekdays by March 1, 1975. It also requires all employers of 50 or more people to reduce off-street parking provided to employees by 25% before May 31, 1975. Each affected employer is required to submit an action plan for compliance, as is the City, which is soon expected to do so.

On July 23, the Department of Traffic and Parking held a meeting for affected employers on implementation and enforcement of the Plan, including a session on "How to Prepare an Action Plan." This was an excellent first step in educating the employers and the public about the Plan. The attitude of the employers present appeared to be one of cooperation and compliance. A similar session for employers of less than 50 should be held soon.

Though the City's Action Plan has not yet been submitted, we are concerned by an obvious lack of strong administrative leadership in carrying out the intent of the City Council's January 28, 1974 Resolution on the Clean Air Transportation Control Plan. The intent of the Resolution was to reconcile the objective of clean air with the minimum parking requirements of businesses and other employers and the need to preserve the tax base. The Resolution proposed (1) a fairer sharing of the employee parking cutbacks among employers; (2) a delay in the 7 to 10 A.M. on-street parking ban until certain feasible improvements were made in the public transportation system; and (3) full cooperation between the City and affected firms in seeking constructive solutions to problems.

The Cambridge Transportation Forum believes that prompt action by the City Manager must be taken in order to obtain the approval of the Environmental Protection Agency for a revision of their Plan. The EPA Counsel stated at the July 23 meeting that they would not be favorably disposed toward last-minute requests for exceptions to the Plan.

The requested revision should include the following:

(1) documentation of the inadequacies of the public transit network; (2) documentation of the inequalities among businesses, especially small businesses who must deal with the EPA through the City of Cambridge; (3) documentation of the uniquely severe combined impact of off and on-street parking restrictions faced by firms in the City of Cambridge; and (4) a statement of the City's continued willingness to do what is reasonable and necessary to meet the National Clean Air Standards.

The Cambridge Transportation Forum further recommends that the Chamber of Commerce should participate fully in drawing up the proposed revision. This matter is of utmost importance to the future well-being of Cambridge.

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL
ON BICENTENNIAL TRANSPORTATION

It is projected that large numbers of automobile-born sightseers will be attracted into and through Cambridge by the observance of the Bicentennial of American Independence during the next two years. This influx of visitors threatens to bypass our underutilized public transportation system and disrupt the daily lives of people who inhabit or regularly come to Cambridge by congesting the streets and pre-empting the supply of parking spaces in certain areas. Therefore action must be taken to minimize the negative impacts of these visitors to the City.

The Community Development and Traffic Departments' report on a Bicentennial Transportation Plan is well-timed in this regard. However the recommendation of the Report that "park and ride" facilities should be built in Cambridge seems certainly unwise in the case of Kendall Square and of doubtful desirability in the case of the Dump Site at New Street. As a matter of policy the City should strive to have visitors' cars intercepted and parked before they reach Cambridge.

The Cambridge Transportation Forum recommends that:

1) No Bicentennial or other "park and ride" facility should be built at Kendall Square. To do so would attract additional traffic through City streets. This should be against City policy and violates the intent and the letter of the EPA Control Plan.

2) No temporary "park and ride" facility should be built on the New Street Site until other means of meeting the need have been examined, including but not limited to studies of the:

a) Feasibility of alternative sites, such as the Harvard Business School lots in Allston near the Turnpike.

b) Implications of EPA 7 A.M. to 10 A.M. on-street parking ban. Quantified results may reveal sufficient spaces to handle the projected need.

3) Other approaches to dealing with Bicentennial traffic problems are equally necessary and require urgent attention, including the following:

a) Pressing for construction of "park and ride" facilities in other towns, perhaps on a shared cost basis.

b) Encouraging visitors to park and use public transit or ride a bicycle by providing information and maps as well as easy access to rental bicycles.

c) Devising mechanisms for enforcement of parking regulations, including resident sticker parking restrictions, to effectively deter violations by visitors from other states.

Submitted: August 28, 1974
by the Steering Committee

Adopted: September 5, 1974
by the Cambridge Trans. Forum

RESOLUTION ON CAMBRIDGE CITY CURB OPENINGS PROGRAM

RESOLVED: That the City of Cambridge should abide by existing State law and take advantage of Federal and State funds as offered through matching grant programs for the provision of curb openings at all points where there is an existing striped pedestrian lane crossing; furthermore the curb openings provided should be as wide as possible and should at least meet the State minimum standard.

A. The Cambridge Department of Public Works should provide the curb openings without delay at pedestrian crossings abutting City property.

B. The City should publicize an offer to have the CDPW provide curb openings for pedestrian lanes with abutting private landowners at no cost to them.

C. The City DPW should provide channels through traffic islands within the pedestrian lane of the same width as the curb openings.

D. All curb openings and channels should be within the striped pedestrian lane and should be a minimum of 54 inches to provide clearance for parked vehicles.

In City Council,

November 11, 1974

*Referred to the
TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE*

*Copy sent to Chairman
of Transportation
Committee 11/12/74 dl*