



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, Assistant City Manager
for Community Development
Subject: Awaiting Report Item # 27,
Comprehensive Rezoning
Date: June 22, 1988

In response to Awaiting Report Item # 23, the Community Development Department has devoted considerable thought over the past few weeks to possible methodologies for implementing a comprehensive city-wide zoning plan. This has provided the Department an excellent opportunity to assess the direction of its current initiatives given community and City Council concerns about the City's future growth and development. It has also enabled us to identify the additional steps necessary to coordinate and expand on these efforts and create a strategy which addresses future development in a comprehensive manner consistent with the intent of the City Council's Order.

Issues raised frequently by the community reflect concern about the environmental impacts of development on the City's neighborhoods, in particular those of traffic, parking, land use and in-fill residential density. Several initiatives currently underway address these growth impact concerns. These include: a citywide trip generation survey, a first step in developing citywide traffic mitigation zoning; an analysis of and modifications to residential parking requirements; revisions to the townhouse bonus ordinance focusing on density and bulk; creation of a city-wide design review process; and planning for a traffic mitigation program for existing businesses and commercial uses.

In addition to these efforts, studies of the industrial districts in North Point, lower Cambridgeport and North Cambridge are underway. Neighborhood studies, focusing on a variety of neighborhood specific planning concerns, will include recommendations on land use, zoning and future growth. In establishing a plan for each neighborhood, the studies provide an opportunity for an in-depth review of current zoning to determine whether those regulations are still appropriate. The East Cambridge and North Cambridge reports will be completed this fall and will be followed by studies of the Cambridgeport and Riverside neighborhoods. The Department is also drafting zoning to implement the recommendations of the recently adopted Central Square Action Plan. This petition will be submitted for Council consideration this fall.

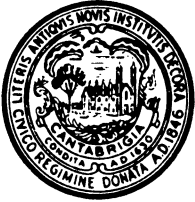
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These district specific studies are consistent with the Department's planning approach of recent years, focusing zoning efforts on those areas of the City where growth is most likely to occur. This approach, combined with the four Neighborhood Planning Studies and the citywide zoning initiatives previously mentioned, will enable the City to address not only the major development issues it currently faces but the more specific land-use concerns in each of these neighborhoods.. The results of these initiatives, which will be presented to the City Council over the course of the next year, will establish a strong basis for comprehensive growth management.

Yet, much additional work remains to be done. Those districts permitting high density, unlimited height (e.g. I-B,O-3 and Residence C-3) or uses which may be incompatible with adjacent residential areas (certain commercial or industrial areas) need to be evaluated to determine the appropriateness of their dimensional and use limitations and their specific locations in the city. Recent community concern about the incompatibility of certain types of uses currently allowed by zoning with the City's neighborhoods, suggests that an analysis of the zoning ordinance use classification is also essential. In addition to these efforts, a better understanding of the City's current land use patterns is necessary for the Department to develop further growth management controls and recommend broader zoning changes.

Current data on existing land uses and densities is needed for the City to make effective decisions about further growth. Such information would provide a clearer picture of growth and development trends in the City than now exists. While data is gathered for specific projects, an updated citywide data base would enable the Department to respond in a more comprehensive and timely manner to development issues confronting the City. Although the neighborhood studies will provide this information, we do not yet have a mechanism in place for keeping this information current. The projected five year time frame for completion of all of the neighborhood studies also means that the City will be without complete data for certain neighborhoods for some time.

In summary, in response to the Council Order, over the next month, the Department will work with the Planning Board to better define a program and time frame for the efforts we have identified as necessary to achieve a comprehensive city-wide zoning plan. We will investigate various methods to develop a city-wide land use data base and determine the staff and financial resources necessary to accomplish this and the other planning activities cited. Our intent is to submit this more detailed program to the City Council for consideration later this summer or early fall.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL. 498-9011

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

June 27, 1988

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item No. 17 relative to a City-wide zoning plan, enclosed please find copy of a report from Michael Rosenberg, Assistant City Manager for Community Development.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mbf
Enc.

Re: response to Awaiting Report Item 17 on
a City-wide zoning plan.

In City Council,

June 27, 1988

6-27-88

Referred to the
Hearing scheduled
for 6-27-88 @ 8:00 PM.