



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

ROBERT W. HEALY

City Manager

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Deputy City Manager

June 27, 1988

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Several months ago, the City Council passed an order instructing the Community Development Department to establish a Cambridgeport-Riverside Stabilization Committee. After careful consideration, I am recommending that the creation of the committee be delayed for one year until FY90.

During the interim period, the Community Development Department will undertake a comprehensive neighborhood study of the Cambridgeport and Riverside neighborhoods. The results of this collaborative effort with area residents will be a report which will be the foundation for the establishment of a Cambridgeport-Riverside Stabilization Program.

Proposed Program

The two neighborhood studies will be similar to those the Department is presently conducting in the East and North Cambridge neighborhoods. The Studies will be conducted over a six-month period with a Working Committee of area residents. Separate Committees will be formed for each neighborhood.

The Studies will examine the land-use, zoning, housing, open space, and demographic elements of each neighborhood. Extensive survey and research work will be undertaken by the Department to document changes which have occurred over the past twenty years and to forecast ways in which the neighborhoods are likely to change in the immediate and distant future. The Working Committees will examine the changes, address concerns raised by the data, and formulate an action plan to better guide future change.

The Studies are an opportunity for Cambridgeport and Riverside residents to examine their neighborhoods in an historical and comprehensive fashion. This approach will strengthen the Stabilization Program to be established in FY90 in several important ways. The data bank and action plan compiled in the Study Report will be a valuable information source which the City and community can draw upon when formulating the mission, goals and objectives for the Stabilization Program. The Report will also help to establish a solid work agenda utilizing a ten-to-twenty-year horizon. The proposed Neighborhood Studies will catapult the Cambridgeport-Riverside Stabilization Program toward more concrete, focused, and proactive accomplishments.

FY89 Commitments to the Cambridgeport/Riverside Community

Several capital and planning projects are scheduled for the Cambridgeport/Riverside community in FY89.

In addition to the ongoing commitment to housing programs for these neighborhoods, the FY89 Capital Budget includes substantial funding commitments for activities which have traditionally been funded by the Stabilization Programs. A budget of \$500,000 is proposed for renovation of three neighborhood playgrounds, the first phase of a two-year effort to upgrade all the Cambridgeport parks. FY89 street and sidewalk reconstruction is proposed for William and Auburn Streets at a cost of \$202,000. The \$925,000 Hoyt Teen Shelter renovation will also be completed. A major rehab of the King School Playground, estimated at \$345,000, will begin later this summer.

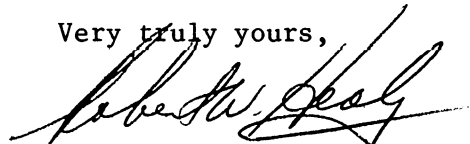
During the next year, the Department will also work with representatives of the Cambridgeport neighborhood on a rezoning of the industrial area south of Pacific Street. These activities will occur simultaneously with the proposed neighborhood planning efforts providing an array of opportunities for Cambridgeport/Riverside residents to participate in planning for the future of their neighborhoods.

Stabilization Program Funding

Several years of cutbacks in the CDBG budget, resulting in a 27% decrease in revenue since FY81, have forced the City to eliminate or substantially reduce several activities from its annual CDBG program. This decision was made in order to preserve CDBG support of the City's housing rehab and development programs. In FY89, these activities, which serve a growing and critical need in the community, will receive \$1.565 million or 52% of the City's annual grant. Despite the high percentage, this has only enabled us to level fund housing programs. This is, in effect, a cutback in buying power, given increases in the cost of providing these services. Further cutbacks would seriously impair the viability of these programs. Thus, in contrast with the initial funding for the East and North Cambridge Stabilization Programs, funding for the Cambridgeport Stabilization Program is not available from CDBG revenues.

As with the East Cambridge and Alewife developments projects, the University Park Project will not generate new tax revenues for three to four years. Funding for Cambridgeport/Riverside Stabilization Program will, therefore, come from existing City revenues for the first few years. Although some level of financial support is anticipated for a Stabilization effort in FY90, the extent of that support is unknown at this time. Funding recommendations will be determined as part of the FY90 Capital Budget process.

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mbf

Agenda Item No. 1 *S-456*

Re: response to Awaiting Report Item 4
on establishing a Cambridgeport-Riverside
Stabilization Committee.

In City Council,

June 27, 1988

6-27-88

Placed on file

C.W. Sullivan

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