



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 *MAR*
Assistant City Manager for Community Development

Subject: Comprehensive Rezoning Progress Report

Date: December 6, 1989

The Community Development Department has recently completed the first year of the two year Comprehensive Rezoning Program adopted by the City Council in September, 1988. The attached diagram, outlining the work program for FY`90 illustrates that significant progress was achieved on most elements of the plan within the first year. In particular, major activity has occurred in each of the plan's three substantive areas: environmental review, neighborhoods and development districts. This report provides more detailed information on the status of each effort.

Completed activities -
September, 1988 - March, 1989

As reported in the March, 1989 status report, several initiatives were completed in the program's first six months. These included:

- Trip Generation Study - This study, conducted by Vanesse Hangen Brustlin, provided useful information on the number of auto trips generated by office projects located in various parts of the City. This information was used by the Department in developing a traffic mitigation zoning proposal to reduce the amount of traffic generated by new development.
- East Cambridge Neighborhood Study - This study, completed in December, 1988, with final publication this November, is the first comprehensive neighborhood study to be undertaken and is a critical part of the Department's neighborhood planning program. Its' recommendations present a comprehensive plan for addressing the broad range of planning and development issues and activity impacting the neighborhood. The

Department has already initiated action on the major land use recommendation of the study, the East Cambridge Interim Planning Overlay District.

- North Point Rezoning - The North Point Zoning petition, adopted by the City Council in November, 1988, allows for future mixed use development in this area previously zoned Industry B. Among its many features, the petition allows for development of affordable housing and places constraints on traffic generation by commercial uses. The Department is currently working to draft design guidelines and a policy plan to assist in guiding and controlling growth in this area.
- Monsignor O'Brien Highway - As a spin off of North Point initiative, the Department worked with the property owners of the Boston Sand and Gravel site and the IB area on Msgr. O'Brien Highway, to develop appropriate zoning controls for these sites. This resulted in the September, 1989 adoption of a petition to reduce development potential in each of these areas. The Msgr. O'Brien Highway corridor was rezoned from IB to a new district Special District 1, establishing an 85' height limitation and a 3.0 FAR. The Boston Sand and Gravel was rezoned from IB to IA.

April, 1989 - December, 1989

Several additional activities have been completed since April including:

- Townhouse Zoning Revisions - This petition addresses concerns which have been raised about the size and bulk of townhouse development by restricting bonuses which were previously allowed. The petition, which was endorsed by community groups in three neighborhoods where substantial townhouse activity has occurred in recent years - Mid Cambridge, Riverside and North Cambridge, was adopted by the City Council in May, 1989.
- Central Square Rezoning - This petition, based on recommendations of the Central Square Action Plan, is the result of a two year planning effort between the Community Development Department, the Central Square Advisory Committee, the Central Square Business Association and the neighborhoods abutting Central Square. The petition, which was adopted by the City Council in May, 1989, limits densities and heights and provides for managed growth.

In addition, the petition establishes the Central Square Advisory Committee. The group, comprised of representatives from the four neighborhoods abutting Central Square and from the business community, will review projects requiring special permits or variances to determine if the projects are in keeping with the intent of the zoning and the action plan. The Committee, which will submit advisory recommendations to the Planning Board, was appointed by the City Manager in November, 1989.

Petitions Filed - No action taken

- Traffic Mitigation Zoning - This innovative petition is aimed at limiting traffic generated by new development projects in excess of 15,000 square feet. Although no action was taken on the petition when filed earlier this year traffic mitigation remains a critical element of the Comprehensive Rezoning Plan. The traffic mitigation petition proposes a mechanism for reducing, on a citywide basis, what is generally viewed as the primary negative impact of development. Currently, the Community Development, Licensing and Traffic Department are using the traffic mitigation materials as a uniform guidelines standard in reviewing development projects. As the provisions are applied and additional work is done, further refinements will be made in anticipation of resubmitting the petition at a future date.

In addition, through an agreement with Caravan, Inc., the department has already begun a Commuter Mobility program designed to help Cambridge businesses establish alternatives to auto commuting for their employees. To date, the Program has made excellent progress, working with various developers/businesses around the City to create alternative transportation strategies.

Activities in progress - In addition to those elements of the plan which have been filed for consideration, the Department is also involved in several major studies. Each of these will result in rezoning petitions or specific recommendations for addressing the planning and development issues which are being studied.

- Citywide Design Review Process - This effort has focused on an analysis of the City's current design review mechanisms and the successes and failures of each approach. To date, the Department has worked closely with the Boston Society of Architects on a study of alternate design review scenarios and mechanisms for implementing these approaches. Their findings were

recently presented to the Planning Board. It is expected that further discussion and refinement of a design review process will occur during the first part of 1990 in anticipation of submitting a petition by the end of the fiscal year.

- Review of Residential Parking Requirements - The data needed to assess current parking trends has been collected and will be analyzed in relation to the ordinance's existing parking requirements, neighborhood concerns about insufficient parking in residential areas and traffic mitigation objectives. Once final calculations and analysis are complete, this information will be presented to the Planning Board for discussion and policy development. This effort, conducted in conjunction with the Department of Traffic and Parking, will be completed by May, 1990 and will lead to recommendations for changes, if any, to the residential parking requirements.

- Neighborhood Studies - In the second year of the Neighborhood Studies Program, the Department is working to complete the North Cambridge Study while beginning the study process in two additional neighborhoods.

North Cambridge Neighborhood Study - This study is close to completion. Final corrections and editing of the report are underway. Production of the report will begin in early 1990 with publication expected by late spring.

Cambridgeport and Riverside Neighborhood Studies - Data gathering and preliminary analysis of demographic, land use and housing trends has begun. In addition, the Department has selected Atlantic Research to conduct opinion surveys in both neighborhoods. The surveys, which will be similar to those conducted for the East and North Cambridge studies, will begin in January, 1990. It is expected that the Neighborhood Study Committees will be established this spring.

- Rezoning Resulting from Neighborhood Study Recommendations - As mentioned previously, the Department has already taken action on the major land use recommendations of the East Cambridge Study by initiating a rezoning study of the industrial and commercial areas surrounding East Cambridge residential areas. In June, 1989, the City Council adopted a six month Interim Planning Overlay District to allow for the creation of a rezoning committee to study these areas. Last month, the committee, comprised of neighborhood and business

representatives, submitted a series of zoning options to the Planning Board for their consideration. A petition for a four month extension of the IPOD, which expired December 1, 1989, has been filed to allow the Planning Board time to review the options and develop a rezoning petition.

- Cambridgeport Rezoning Study - Phase II of the Cambridgeport rezoning, focusing on the remaining Industry B area and the Industry A and Office 3 districts between Henry Street and Memorial Drive, was initiated in the summer of 1988 with the Council's adoption of an interim zoning. The Cambridgeport Rezoning Advisory Committee, comprised of landowner/business and neighborhood representatives, has been meeting since September, 1988 to develop a petition to address the land use, traffic and urban design issues raised by the future development of this area. The Committee's draft petition was presented to the community and landowners at meetings held in September, 1989. Since then, the committee has been reviewing comments on the petition, both during and subsequent to those meetings. Further analysis has been done and possible changes/refinements are being discussed.

At the Committee's request, the Planning Board has filed a petition for a second six month extension of the interim zoning. This will allow the rezoning process to be completed without the potential of large scale development occurring before a final petition can be filed. The Board has requested that the Committee complete its' work by March 1, 1990 to allow the Board ample time to consider the proposal prior to filing.

- Industry B Study - In the fall of 1988, the Department initiated a rezoning study for the City's remaining Industry B areas (excluding Cambridgeport and Monsignor O'Brien Highway). This effort, which included extensive land use and zoning analysis, also included numerous meetings with the landowners and neighborhood groups. At the end of the study period, several issues were unresolved. Although interim zoning for the area was considered, the Board agreed instead to accept a voluntary moratorium on the part of most major landowners. This came at the landowner's request to allow them time to conduct traffic and design studies. The result of those studies are expected in the spring of 1990.

- Review of Buildout Potential in High Density, Non-residential Districts - To date, this effort has focused primarily on providing the necessary buildout data to develop recommendations for the Cambridgeport and Industry B studies. In addition, data on the Industry A, Industry A-1 and Office 3 districts has been collected. This information has been computerized on a land use spread sheet. Information will be added for the City's other commercial and industrial districts as time and resources permit. This will then be used to analyze these districts.

Activities not yet underway - Only two of the planned elements of the comprehensive rezoning have yet to begin. These are:

- Zoning Ordinance Review and Reorganization - this effort will be undertaken by the Department in conjunction with representatives from the Planning Board, Board of Zoning Appeal and Inspectional Services Department who have zoning expertise and familiarity with the details of the ordinance. It is expected that the committee will begin meeting in January, 1990.
- Industry A-1 Study - Although preliminary data has been collected, this effort is not scheduled to begin until early in 1990.

Process

In addition to its work on the substantive areas of the plan, the Department has also undertaken procedural efforts to ensure comprehensiveness and consistency. The Department is reviewing the goals of each element of the plan on an ongoing basis to ensure that the objectives of each effort are being met. A draft statement of overall goals and objectives for the comprehensive rezoning plan will be formulated by the Department and reviewed by the Planning Board early in 1990 prior to its submission to the City Council.

Over the past year, the Department has also initiated a series of meetings with community and business groups to explain the purpose of the comprehensive rezoning plan and to review certain elements such as traffic mitigation zoning and proposed changes to townhouse development. These meetings have been particularly useful in promoting a greater understanding of the City's efforts in planning and growth management and in obtaining feedback on proposed zoning mechanisms which address neighborhood concerns.

The Department will continue to work on both the substantive and procedural areas of the comprehensive rezoning plan during the next ten months with the goal of accomplishing all of the plan's objectives within the two year timeframe established for the program.

RECEIVED
89 DEC -7 AM 9:33
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
TEL. 498-9011

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

December 11, 1989

To the Honorable, th City Council:

Enclosed please find a copy of the Comprehensive Rezoning Progress
Report, submitted by the Community Development Department.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/dls
enclosure

Agenda # 6 *0-133*

Community Development Department's
Comprehensive Rezoning Progress Report.

In City Council,

Dec. 11, 1989

Placed on file