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Lopez, Donna

From: jessekb@gmail.com on behalf of Jesse Kanson-Benanav [jesse@abettercambridge.org]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2014 11:51 AM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: ABC Supports Policy Order 15
Attachments: ABC Letter to CC Support PO15.pdf

The following text is also included as a PDF attachment to this email

April 7, 2014

Honorable David P. Maher, Mayor

City of Cambridge

795 Massachusetts Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mayor Maher and members of the City Council:

I am writing to express A Better Cambridge's support for Mayor Maher, Vice Mayor Benzan, and Councilor McGovern's policy order on the issue of a master plan in Cambridge. As Cambridge residents we believe strong, community-based urban planning is needed to helps **build housing now** in our city.

I support policy order 15 because it will ensure equity through a planning process facilitated by the professional staff of Cambridge's Community Development Department, rather than politicized under the auspices of City Council committees.

I support the Maher/Benzan/McGovern policy order and believe any new planning process should achieve the following goals:

Ensure a **fair planning process** guided by **CDD's professional staff**, rather than controlled by City Council committees;

Cambridge must **build housing now**.

- Our city faces a serious shortage of housing available to meet the diverse needs of Cambridge families, and housing prices keep rising. A report by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) recently projected that

Metro Boston must produce up to 435,000 new housing units by 2040 to meet the needs of working families and our aging population -- in Cambridge alone, overwhelming demand for housing requires at least 6,000 new housing units.

o Any new planning process in Cambridge should **allow for the immediate and continued production of new housing**, including the availability of important zoning tools such as **special permits and density bonuses for additional housing**.

Build upon, don't scrap previous community planning efforts in Cambridge.

o The Kendall Square Central Square Planning Study (K2C2) was an 18-month, community-based process to chart future growth in two Cambridge neighborhoods poised for significant new development. The C2 recommendations reflect the findings of previous community planning efforts in concluding that "the most important thing that can be done to preserve the diversity of the square is to increase the supply of housing."

o Any new planning process in Cambridge **should recognize the significant community input and public resources already contributed to K2C2 and similar planning efforts**. To disregard K2C2 would set a bad precedent, and would bring into question the viability of any new community-based planning initiatives in Cambridge.

Recognize that **density is key to achieving Cambridge's sustainability goals.**

o Cambridge endeavors to be a leader in the fight against climate change. Sustainable growth means turning away from a car-centered paradigm for development and ensuring growth that relies on cleaner forms of transportation without an increase in vehicle traffic. Increasing the housing and commercial opportunities in Cambridge neighborhoods best served by public and alternative transportation promotes sustainable growth that allows residents the opportunity to live, work, shop, and play in the same community.

o Any new planning process in Cambridge **should emphasize walking, biking, and public transportation to reduce car dependency and build a more sustainable city.**

We believe that Policy Order 15 is most suited to achieve these important community priorities, and we hope can count on your support for the order at Monday's City Council Meeting.

Sincerely,

Jesse Kanson-Benanav
Chairman, *A Better Cambridge*: www.abettercambridge.org
jesse@abettercambridge.org | @jessekb | 617.863.0552