

November 16, 2016 !

Statement Regarding 2016 Elections

I contribute my time serving on the CRA board because it is an authentic demonstration of local control, governmental transparency, and probity. Beyond that, our statutory authority draws from the implicit strength, sustainability, and resilience of urban communities.

Redevelopment authorities were created to reverse the deteriorating condition of America's cities. The federal role in this activity has declined significantly since their creation, and today most city planning and community investment efforts are primarily local ventures. Thus the CRA through its Strategic Planning process has worked to redefine the role of a redevelopment authority in a progressive and economically healthy municipality, which is very different than the order of business under urban renewal programs from 60 years ago.

Importantly, this body's operating principles exhibit an inclusive character that values diversity and honors our country's pluralistic traditions.

Last week's election results have re-revealed that this approach to public administration has many critics, possibly due to a lack of the type of faithful public engagement we practice in Cambridge.

Cambridge faces challenges as market interest in housing and commercial development threatens the diversity of land uses and the community's sense of stability. The CRA's support of the Kendall Square innovation district symbolizes the Cambridge community's esteem for science and invention, and I am proud that the search for solutions to global issues from disease prevention to climate change mitigation are a core aspect of our City's identity.

The CRA remains focused on the value of cities as centers for collaboration, intersections of cultural diversity, catalysts for economic advancement, and models of sustainable development. I strongly believe that we must remain vigilant in our efforts to demonstrate the civic value of the CRA's approach, and serve as an influential example of the institutional merits of this style of government.

Conrad Crawford
Member, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority