

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT  
OF  
CAMBRIDGE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

336 MAIN STREET  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

DECEMBER 31, 1973

March 27, 1974 / \* / Preliminary Draft

Development Program  
Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

1973 ANNUAL STATUS REPORT

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Kendall Square Urban Renewal Area

Surplus NASA Land: General Services Administration (GSA) Boston, advised the Authority last month (February, 1974) that it is prepared, as the result of re-appraisals, to effect the exchange of parcels of land --Federally-owned Parcel 5A and a portion of 8B for CRA-owned Parcels 3B and 10-- with an additional CRA monetary payment of \$57,300 to the Government. In September, 1972, GSA had proposed the exchange of land and involvement of a payment of \$106,200. This second of three appraisals --GSA had rejected a first one-- was made on a fair market value basis despite Authority admonitions that it should be made on a re-use basis, with full consideration of the value-defeating restrictions of the Urban Renewal Plan, the land disposition contract, and deeds. The staff has been in telephone contact and in consultation in Washington with DOT officials regarding implementation of Supplement No. 2 to the land disposition contract which embraces the exchange of land. Supplement No. 2 also has been submitted to HUD for approval. Meanwhile, additional difficulties on the Federal side have emerged. GSA is indicating the exchange of land will not involve DOT and that the parcels acquired from the Authority --the former Badger site on Third Street, Tract Number 10 and a small portion of land just east of the former Sixth Street, Tract Number 3B--, will be open to requisition by any Federal agency, and will not, necessarily be acquired by DOT. Legal counsel for the Authority presently is attempting to resolve this issue by calling GSA's attention --as we did on the appraisal issue-- that consideration has to be given the Urban Renewal Plan, the land disposition contract, and deeds.

Site Operations: While a City Council order prohibited further enforced relocation of site occupants, a number of firms were voluntarily relocated during 1973 and buildings demolished when determined to be hazardous by the Fire Department. After a series of hearings held by the City Council Committees on Housing and Land Development, and Economic Development, Manpower and Employment, the City Council, on July 2, 1973, unanimously adopted the reports and

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recommendations of the committees, directing the Authority to prepare a development plan for the entire 24-acre which would create a maximum number of blue-collar and non-professional white-collar jobs. In the Spring of 1973, the Authority had proposed to set aside its revised multi-purpose concept plan for the "Quadrangle" site (NASA surplus land) and to seek job-intensive development for the 11 acres, while proceeding with the revised concept plan for intensive development of the 13 acre "Triangle" site. An amendment to the committees' reports and recommendations, directing the Mayor to establish a Citizen Task Force to work with the Authority, also was approved, on a 5-4 vote. Ultimately, the Task Force membership was 32 in number. In October, 1973, at the recommendation of the chairmen of the City Council committees that his office become involved in integrating the technical work, City Manager John H. Corcoran named his assistant, James L. Farrell, as Administrator of Community Development. The Authority's willingness to cooperate in an integrated staff arrangement to include the Planning and Development Department, was spelled out in an exchange of letters with the City Manager. The technical staff, headed by the Authority Deputy Director, is presently working with the Task Force to meet a HUD-imposed May 1 deadline for a Kendall Square amendatory application.

In recent weeks, groups such as the City's Planning Board, M.I.T., the Chamber of Commerce, Kendall Square Business Association, and the East Cambridge Planning Team have expressed concern about the Task Force interpretation of the City Council order, the current work program and its single-purpose objective.

In July, 1973, at a meeting in Washington, HUD officials gave assurance that Kendall Square would receive priority consideration when funding became available. In December, the Authority was advised that funds would be available by the end of fiscal 1974. On January 14, 1974, HUD requested an Authority preliminary submission no later than February 15, 1974 and a final submission no later than May 1, 1974, for consideration of an amendatory loan and grant from fiscal 1974 funds.

With the eventual development concept still uncertain, the Authority is pressing for HUD commitment to the principles accepted by the Housing Banking and Currency Committee in the "Housing

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and Urban Development Action of 1972," directing the Secretary of HUD to approve "...the total amount of additional funds...necessary for the orderly completion of the project." An effort is being made to secure legislation that not only would assure full funding but would waive additional cost to the community and would direct the proposed exchange of land with DOT that has been in process since November, 1971, when the then Secretary of DOT, John A. Volpe, agreed to the proposal, provided it could be worked out by legal counsels.

#### Wellington-Harrington Urban Renewal Area

Willow Street Homes (Tract Number 1): The 15-unit development remains vacant, incomplete and in the ownership of the Model Cities Development Corporation (MCDC). The Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) refused to acquire the development with a proposed HUD allocation of \$389,885 under the instant acquisition program. The CHA did allocate fifteen (15) additional units of Section 23 leased housing that would allow for higher rents, that would hopefully enable a private developer to consider completing construction and renting to low income families. This approach has not worked. The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) inspected the property and is interested in funding its acquisition and completion by the CHA. The Authority staff is presently putting together a package that would include re-vesting of title, completion of construction with project funds, rent-up and transfer to cooperative ownership to complete the housing. Also, the Cambridge Housing Authority is again being approached to acquire the development, but under State Chapter 705, instant acquisition or turnkey programs that might be alternatives.

Harwell Homes (Tract Number 2): This 56-unit cooperative has completed its first year in a very satisfactory manner. The property continues to have a high level of maintenance and care. Additional fencing and brick walkways in the backyards have been added.

Cambridge Street Frontage South (Tract Number 3): Several Authority staff sessions have been conducted with the developer, abutting property owners, and the neighborhood businesses interested in

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expanding or relocating on the site. This has resulted in a resolution of problems of access, truck loading, parking, yard space and building height and bulk. The next steps that now appear possible include a request to the City Council to relocate the remaining segment of Webster Avenue, creating a throughway and public off-street parking on the site and the development of the site for neighborhood business uses.

Portland Street Site (Tract Number 4): An acquisition amendatory for this site was filed with HUD in August, 1973. A number of discussions have been held with HUD staff, but the amendatory has not yet been approved. Once approval has been given and funds actually are available for acquisition, planning for the specific re-use will get underway.

Will Scientific (Tract Number 5): The Cambridge Corporation (TCC) and the Wellington-Harrington Development Corporation (WHDC) were designated as joint developers/sponsors to convert this six-story loft building to residential use. An innovative scheme for "congregate housing" was developed to provide a special type of housing for individuals and two person families including various community services, dining and shared quasi-public facilities. The Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) issued a site approval and invited a mortgage application for the development. Due to factors including the moratorium on Section 236 funding and a continued, serious, shortage of Section 23 leased housing units, TCC withdrew from the development team. The WHDC has been interviewing developers to organize a new development team.

Buy-A-House Program: The Authority sold a deteriorated house at 27 Union Street to the Just-A-Start Corporation in July, 1973. The Corporation gutted out and completely rehabilitated the building using work-study teams and providing substantial manpower training experiences. The house was sold in October 1973 to Lionel and Brenda Foster, one of 13 families who were finalists from a pool of 29 applicants. The family lived as tenants in the Wellington-Harrington Area for 13 years before purchasing this home. The Corporation secured construction funds from Better Cities, Inc. The family secured a 100 percent mortgage from Northeast Federal Savings and Loan in Watertown.

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**Immaculate Conception Rectory:** Construction on the new rectory was completed in November, 1973, and the building has been occupied.

**Neighborhood Facility:** The City of Cambridge has received a HUD grant in the amount of \$249,200 for this facility proposed for Tract Number 21, the former Blouin building site located at Columbia and Hampshire Streets. Total development cost is placed at \$373,800. Guidance for development has been provided by the Authority under terms of its technical assistance contract with the City. Working drawings and specifications currently are being reviewed.

**Cambridge Street Frontage (North):** This site offers commercial development opportunities for neighborhood businesses being displaced under the Urban Renewal Plan. The Authority in 1973 continued site acquisition and advertised the site for letters of interest from prospective developers. Through action of the WHCC, contact was made with all business firms yet to be relocated to inform each business of this development opportunity.

**Linwood Court:** This development provides 45 units of housing to be rehabilitated for low- to moderate-income families. The WHDC received tentative designation as sponsor-developer and organized a development team. Two financing alternatives were pursued during the year. The WHDC requested CHA funding of a Chapter 705 public housing development through the State. Several reviews were held and no response was received. The alternative method was to utilize MEFA Section 236 financing. MHFA issued a site approval and made a mortgage commitment in the amount of \$1,155,906 at 7 percent for 40 years, on December 4, 1974, and also a commitment of interest subsidy funds. The WHDC secured a public housing leasing commitment for 50 percent of the units from the CHA. Primary support for proceeding with the MHFA development has been expressed by residents and organizations throughout the Wellington-Harrington Area. Some support for a public housing project has been expressed by three organizations.

**Rehabilitation:** Housing rehabilitation and financing services were offered throughout the year to all property owners in the area. The Federal freeze on Section 312 loans continued unabated requiring primary reliance on conventional funding coordinated with the use

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of JAS resources to enable rehabilitation to continue. Loans from all sources secured through the Wellington-Harrington program, included 19 conventional loans totalling \$153,000, 19 grants totalling \$38,891, and Section 312 loans (one approved, and two pending) totalling \$50,000. The Authority took the initiative in working with the City of Cambridge to begin to develop a locally financed rehabilitation-conservation program, including a rehabilitation subsidy program.

**Community Organization:** Community organization assistance was implemented throughout the year with the WHCC, the South Side and Union Street Neighborhood Associations and other groups. Total evening meetings held with these organizations numbered 47. Also in addition, on-going assistance was implemented with the WHDC, Harwell Homes, Inc., and the Just-A-Start Corporation. Evening and weekend meetings held with these organizations numbered 67. A significant result of community organization activities has been a definite improvement in the ability of neighborhood residents to resolve zoning variance requests, and municipal services deficiencies to the satisfaction of the neighborhood.

**Just-A-Start Program:** The Authority continued its support of its Just-A-Start Program throughout the year. Funding was made available for the sixth Summer phase providing for employment of 117 Cambridge youth and supervisors and 28 Metropolitan area volunteers. The school year phase was implemented five afternoons a week for the second year beginning in September 1973. This provided for the employment of 16 Cambridge work-study students and 22 Metropolitan area volunteers. Major activities included residential rehabilitation assistance, neighborhood recreation services, neighborhood beautification assistance, organized skills training in special sessions and on-the-job, and urban seminars for all participants. The JAS Corporation, in cooperation with the Authority, continued to work with the City to develop a better maintenance and management program for year-round activities on Wellington-Harrington Area playgrounds. In cooperation with the CHA, a program of limited assistance was developed in Roosevelt Towers utilizing CHA funds and volunteer assistance.

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Project Improvements: Site Preparation Contract No. 6 was implemented providing for underground sewer and water system improvements in Union Street and in the intersection of Windsor-Plymouth-Hampshire Streets. This contract also included reconstruction of sidewalks, curbs, the road surface, the installation of trees and construction of two small parking areas at the intersection of three streets.

#### Walden Square Urban Renewal Area

This area, now substantially complete, is due to be closed out shortly. HUD has requested a March 29, 1974 close-out date. A close-out amendatory, filed last Fall, has yet to be funded by HUD. Construction of the 240 units of housing for low- and moderate-income families and the elderly was completed in the Spring of 1973, and occupancy was finalized shortly thereafter. During the year, the now-defunct DCA Development Corporation was replaced by Boston Financial Technology Group as the managing general partner of the Development--Walden Square Apartments Company. Aware of growing tenant problems, the new managing general partner last Fall brought in a new management agent, L.E. Smith Management Associates, one of the largest managers of low- and moderate-income housing in the New England area.

A few remaining items on Site Preparation Contract No. 3 remain to be completed this Spring.

During 1973, the City of Cambridge received a HUD Neighborhood Facilities Grant of \$379,492 for a proposed community facility having a total development cost of \$569,239. The City has contracted the Authority to be its agent with respect to development. A community organization effort has been initiated by the Authority staff, and the architectural firm of Wallace, Floyd and Ellensweig of Cambridge has been chosen to begin preparation of working drawings and specifications. The staff also has held meetings with various agencies that will be using the facility. Construction is expected to get underway sometime in 1974.

A reservation strip, originally scheduled to be part of an extended Route 2 corridor, which no longer is under consideration,

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will be partially used by the City for extension of Bolton Street through to Richdale Avenue. It is anticipated the remainder of the strip will be loamed and seeded by the Authority and then deeded to the City.

### Alewife Brook Park

Additional funding sources are still being explored, particularly in view of indications in 1973 that the MBTA extension from Harvard Square to Alewife, among other points, will become a reality. HUD, primarily because of a lack of funds and a present policy barring new projects, advised the Authority in May, 1973, that it was terminating any support of this project. In May, 1969, HUD announced an allocation of \$254,375 advance funds for a feasibility study here but limited expenditures to \$7,500 pending approval of an Eligibility Report and full coordination of all planning activity and determination as to the feasibility of renewal with other State and local agencies. The eligibility report was submitted in May, 1972. An effort to have HUD approve use of feasibility funds to explore a new-town-in-town concept for the area also was rejected in May, 1973, although the concept still remains a viable possibility for this area. Interest in the project has been expressed by the State Department of Community Affairs (DCA), but funding to a single community by DCA is limited to \$100,000, far short of the estimated \$450,000 needed to carry out surveys and to prepare even preliminary development plans.

### Broad Canal

This project, involving the filling of a small portion of the canal east of Third Street and extending the aqueduct from Boston Woven Hose Company, got underway in September, 1972, and was completed in the Summer of 1973. The project was undertaken by the Authority at the request of the abutters, acting as redevelopers, The Badger Company and the Commonwealth Gas Company. It involved no cost to the Authority or the City, and did not involve Federal or State funding.

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