

Council Agenda Report

Date: January 23, 2017

Prepared and Submitted by: Sandra Tripp-Jones, City Manager 

SUBJECT: Letter to Governor Hogan requesting Support

Recommendation:

- A. Authorize the Mayor to send letter to Governor Hogan requesting State support for Cambridge redevelopment projects including Sailwinds/Port Property development; and
- B. Request that the Mayor forward a request to the Cambridge's State delegation- Senator Addie Eckardt, Sheree L. Sample-Hughes (Dist.37A), Christopher T. Adams and John F. Mautz IV (Dist. 37B) – requesting letters of support for the City's request, copy to Bunky Luffman, *Eastern Shore Intergovernmental Affairs*, Office of the Governor.

Discussion:

Attached is a draft letter to Governor Hogan. Secretary Kenneth Holt has suggested that it is timely to request State support and engagement of State agencies for the City's over redevelopment program including several projects for help with Sailwinds in particular. Staff understands that if Governor Hogan agrees, then he will assign several State agencies including the Department of Housing and Community Development to assist the City.

It is also recommended that the Mayor forward requests to the Cambridge delegation to the State with copies to Mr. Bunky Luffman who represents the Governor on the Eastern Shore, requesting they support the City's request.

Attach.

DRAFT LETTER

January 23, 2017

Honorable Govern Hogan
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: City of Cambridge Redevelopment Vision

Dear Governor Hogan;

The City of Cambridge has been a grateful recipient of State assistance with many projects that have supported what is a renaissance of economic activity in Cambridge. In the last fifteen years the State supported Hyatt Regency has added jobs and visitors as well as reputation for Cambridge. Our downtown virtually shuttered fifteen years ago, now hosts locally owned eateries, small shops, and a very successful microbrewery. We have festivals, a thriving arts district, and Ironman has two events here yearly. Historic preservation is a foundational principle and has been significantly supported by the State. Similarly, environmental improvement projects including Cambridge Creek clean-up and restoration and green infrastructure projects including storm-water filtration on Maryland Avenue and Long Wharf have exemplified our partnership with the State. And not least, property acquisition and clearing for an attractive gateway into the downtown have been made possible only by State grant.

All of this has stimulated private investment as well. A major mostly shopping center on Route 50 is now under new ownership with tenants under contract and approved plans transforming this eyesore into a viable mixture of retail and restaurant uses. Commercial properties are being upgraded and new industrial companies have taken leases.

Still, Cambridge's high unemployment and poverty rates, old and blighted residential properties, and overall low property values tell a human story of economic struggle for many in our community.

The City is on the brink of significant economic development that can bring to Cambridge the prosperity experienced by other successful cities in Maryland. The City's greatest assets are

- *Location* - sitting on the scenic Choptank with a deep water port and State Route 50 running through it;
- *Historic resources* – historic commercial and residential properties and the legacies of a unique Eastern Shore history including Harriet Tubman, water-based resources and commerce, food related agriculture and industries, and African-American community life.
- *An engaged and dedicated citizenry* – Cambridge’s 20-20 vision of economic development created 20 years ago, still being implemented with citizen “push” today.

Several major projects are propelling us toward realization of the vision of 20 years ago. And taken together into a comprehensive program of development, the potential impact is huge. These include:

Restoration and repurposing of Phillips Building Factory F – an early 20th century food packing house that employed 10,000 people at one time – to include food related commercial activity, higher education satellite programs, and public entertainment venue;

Environmental cleanup and restoration of Cambridge Creek leading to creation of Cannery Park, adjacent to Factory F creating a major attraction of repurposed factory building and open space;

An initiative to address blighted factory housing in the historic Pine Street area adjacent to the Phillips Factory F and Cannery Park;

Rehabilitation and historic preservation of significant mixed use commercial properties in the downtown – Race Street redevelopment;

Creation of a high quality tour experience from a downtown park and ride facility serving the Harriet Tubman Underground National Historical Park and the National Blackwater Wildlife Refuge;

Repair of a deep water port wharf on Cambridge Creek, a unique facility on the Chesapeake, with potential to attract cruise and other large vessels to Cambridge;

Development of Sailwinds/Port property (transferred to the City by the State for economic development) into a comprehensive waterfront-themed tourist and entertainment complex;

Build out of an attractive green gateway into Cambridge that invites visitors to all Cambridge’s offerings and anchors way-signs for streets, bike trails and boat trails connecting all the above attractions.

Without exception, the State has assisted with launching all these redevelopment projects. However, we badly need State assistance in getting us to the finish line. With this letter, we ask for your support and the engagement of State agencies in helping Cambridge realize this comprehensive redevelopment program.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. We hope for your positive consideration.

Sincerely,

Victoria Stanley Jackson
Mayor