

Riley, Kate

From: Katie Challinor <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2020 11:00 AM
To: City Manager; Riley, Kate; City Council
Subject: Preschool program expansion

Greetings!

I am writing to support the expansion of the preschool program in Cambridge through the Tobin School/VLUS project. I am the parent of a current 2.5 year old, so I understand that this project won't benefit me personally, but as someone who has been going through the process of trying to secure a preschool spot for my daughter, I can speak to the unbelievable stress the limited number of preschool spots creates for parents.

I was just recently saying to fellow parents that my household is in a very fortunate position. We are well educated and well resourced and still, for us, the process of finding a preschool that met our needs (geographical, financial, and in terms of the hours it serves) felt nearly insurmountable. I can't imagine how much more daunting it would be for someone with fewer means/options than we have. For us, the public preschool program was by the far the best option for every variable. We were overjoyed (massive understatement) when our daughter was offered a spot in the DHSP program. It has relieved an unbelievable amount of stress for our household. The only hard part is that there are so few spots available and most of our daughter's friends were not so lucky.

Living in Cambridge is wonderful but it does come with added expenses and challenges. One of the main issues is the exorbitant cost of the child care options available. Providing additional preschool spots across the city would make an enormous difference in the lives of citizens with young children and would greatly benefit the young children who would get to take advantage of such an amazing early education experience.

Abutters seem concerned about increased traffic and the population of children in the vicinity. Speaking as someone who lives a half a block from the Peabody School, I am hard pressed to think of anything that makes for a more vibrant community and liveable streets than the presence of school children and their families. Never mind that many in Cambridge use bikes, walking, or public transit to move their children around, so increasing the number of students doesn't necessarily mean more cars. And even if it does increase traffic somewhat, it feels a small price to pay to provide a lot more opportunities for young children.

Thank you!

-Katie Challinor

[REDACTED]
Cambridge