

Announcing Upgrade Cambridge

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PRESS RELEASE

Cambridge Residents Announce Formation of Upgrade Cambridge

Group Seeks to persuade Cambridge to build a municipal broadband network as a framework for equitable digital access

Cambridge MA, March 7, 2018 - Concerned Cambridge residents announce today the formation of Upgrade Cambridge (<https://upgradecambridge.org>), a grassroots group whose purpose is to persuade Cambridge city leadership to invest in a city-owned fiber-to-the home broadband network. Upgrade Cambridge organizers believe that a city-owned network enjoys broad public support and provides the best framework to achieve and sustain equitable digital access in Cambridge. They further believe that a modern high speed, reliable network, one that is open, equitable, net neutral and preserves subscribers' privacy, is vital to maintaining Cambridge's robust, knowledge-focused economy.

Cambridge began a process of exploring network alternatives in 2014 when the City Manager appointed a Broadband Task Force. That Task Force produced recommended next steps in 2016. Eighteen months later, the City Manager has not responded to the report and has yet to respond to City Council requests for information. In light of this inaction, and with the broad support municipal broadband has in Cambridge, Upgrade Cambridge organizers felt there was no alternative to forming a single-issue political group to bring pressure to bear on the City. Upgrade Cambridge intends to use the classic tools of grassroots organizing - meetings, leaflets, petitions and canvassing - as well as technological methods to mobilize residents in support of this initiatives.

"That 50% of lower income households don't have broadband at home and thus don't have easy access to school resources, government services or Cambridge's burgeoning economy is simply unacceptable," said Upgrade Cambridge's co-founder Saul Tannenbaum.

"Infrastructure is destiny. Building the right infrastructure will improve opportunities for everyone Our Fair City," said Roy Russell.

Upgrade Cambridge calls on the City Manager to proceed with the three recommended next steps of the Broadband Task Force:

1. Engage with residents who have trouble affording broadband to design a solution that meets their needs
2. Engage with the business, entrepreneurial, and corporate communities to assess their needs and identify potential anchor users
3. Perform a detailed financial feasibility study, understanding costs and revenues in a highly granular manner

Upgrade Cambridge will hold its first public meeting Tuesday, March 20th at 7 PM, in the Central Square Branch of the Cambridge Public Library.

About Upgrade Cambridge

Upgrade Cambridge, which is in the process of filing for 501(c)(4) tax exempt status, is led by

a Steering Committee consisting of Matt Goldstein, Charles Franklin, Bret Matthew, Adriane Musgrave, Dolan Murvihill, Vatsady Sivongxay, Roy Russell, and Saul Tannenbaum.

Press inquiries should be directed to press@upgradecambridge.org.

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