

April 28, 2022

Approved Minutes – Cambridge Pedestrian Committee

Staff and Committee Members: Cara Seiderman (CDD), Lev McCarthy (CDD), Sandy Goldberg, Kelsey Tulstin (CDD), Gary Chan (CDD), Ray Hayhurst, Sarah Willis, Brooke Williams, Elizabeth Paden, Walter Goldberg (CDD), Sean Peirce, Jeannine Powers, Robin Bonner, Jenine Turner-Trauring, Debby Galef

Attendees: Sarah Bai, Emma Johnson, Donald Giller

AGENDA

1. Agenda Review, Approved minutes from last month.

2. Our Parks, Our Plan: Parks & Open Space Planning

Lev McCarthy (lmccarthy@cambridgema.gov) and Gary Chan (gchan@cambridgema.gov), Community Development Department

1. Open space work in Cambridge is shared across multiple departments
2. Developing an action plan for the next 7-10 years
3. Process overview
 1. Context: Parks and open spaces are a key part of the City's infrastructure for maintaining and increasing quality of life; many benefits
 2. Looking to work with the community to answer overarching questions:
 1. How can parks and open spaces reflect community values?
 2. How should open spaces evolve over time?
 3. How do we make good use of public space?
 3. Planning process steps
 1. Inventory and needs assessment
 2. Vision and goal setting
 3. Strategy development
 4. Open space plan
 5. Community feedback is sought at every step
- d. Analyzing park access
 1. Cambridge has 109 open spaces covering 490 acres; 11.9% of Cambridge's land area is public open space
 2. 321 acres of city-owned parks and public space
 3. 169 acres of privately owned public spaces (POPS) and non-City-owned public open spaces (e.g., Magazine Beach)
- e. Common metrics to evaluate space
 1. Access: walksheds (living 5-10 minutes' walk from a public open space in Cambridge); proximity to multiple park types; amount of open space acreage within walkshed; population density; accessible acres per resident

2. Resilience: tree canopy density; urban heat islands; present-day and projected flooding data
 3. Public health: estimated prevalence among adults of chronic health issues, based on data from 500 Cities Project (now PLACES)
 4. Community: age distribution; family populations; people with disabilities; population at or below 200% poverty level; minority population; vehicle access
- f. Priorities for parks and open spaces
1. Within walking distance
 2. Accessible without driving
 3. Shade/heat protection
 4. Accessible for users of all abilities
- g. Questions

How important is parking, especially street parking? Haven't analyzed that yet; walkable access is the larger consideration according to survey data.

Have you talked to people about parks not just as destinations, but also as wayfinding/transportation throughout the city? Would love to get feedback on that from the committee! One idea that came up a lot in surveys was the idea of connectivity between parks, not just whether there's a physical sidewalk or road but whether it's pleasant/easy to travel between parks.

Have you heard any feedback on peoples' perceptions of using the parks for mobility, or any feedback regarding safety and comfort in parks? Walking is the primary use of the parks! Have gotten feedback about some of the popular parks (e.g., Fresh Pond) and the different modes of use, such as walking vs. biking.

Is there anything specific that committee members should look at during walking meetings, or specific parks we should visit? North Point in Cambridge Crossing

Has there been any discussion about allowing for serendipity or unplanned use in parks, so people can go there to be surprised? Great idea. It's interesting to think about designing for flexibility and different types of activation, and how to make that easier. Examples are public art, including things like performance or other "temporary" art.

Has there been consideration of seasonal concessions or limited food and drink sales in parks? Many focus group members have brought this up! It's something we'll want to look into more.

What is the end goal of this process? Are we looking to build more parks, better use our current parks, attract more people? Our hope is to develop a set of recommendations of both short and long term initiatives, such as opportunities for more planting, demographics that could be better served, and improvements to existing parks. There may also be areas where the City should be on the lookout for opportunities to create or redevelop open spaces.

The parks surveys are still open!

Tell us how you use parks:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021cambmaOS01>

Park use and access survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OurParks3>

f. Staying involved:

Visit the project page: <https://cambridgema.gov/openspaceplan>

Visioning Pop-Up: Hoyt Field, Monday May 2, 4pm-7pm

Project Updates

TP&T

Project website for Porter Square:

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/streetsandtransportation/projectsandprograms/portersquaresafetyimprovements>

Community Meeting on the Brattle Street Safety Improvement Project, Tuesday May 3 (link will be in update email)

Question: What is the extent of the “improvement”? Answer: Entire length of Brattle Street will be looked at, but will be addressed in two phases due to Eversource work.

DPW

Commonwealth Connect: use to report potholes, snow clearance problems, etc.

Ongoing construction

Broadway btw Galileo and Ames - Loughery Walkway is closed at Broadway and Ames for drainage work. Detour until June 2022

Inamn Sq - drainage work resuming in spring

Eversource Electric - multiple crews performing test pits on the eastern side of the city

Gore Street - water service installation until Fall 2022

Port Infrastructure Project

Willard Street - preparing bid docs

MassAve4 separated bike lane project - design started, utility investigations by DPW and utility companies

Committee Work Plan

Potential committee walks

Binney Street Walk (spring/summer)

Danehy Park path extension and universal design playground

Community walk of Danehy Park and Linear Park extension project on May 4 at 5pm

This project will also be discussed in a joint committee meeting on May 18

Historical Commission/Society Walk in Neighborhood 9 and Avon Hill

Sarah W met someone who is willing to open up her home and talk about the history for a Neighborhood 9 walk.

North Point/Cambridge Crossing

[Tim Toomey Park](#)

September [NACTO Conference](#): anyone interested in joining or leading “walkshops”?

Ray H is meeting with NACTO rep next week and will report back.

Committee members would like to start earlier rather than later for walking meetings; Cara will start planning for May. Bring umbrellas if needed!

Does the committee want to sponsor a community walk?

Still no guidance on when we can meet indoors, but outdoor meetings and walks are okay.

Hello from new CDD intern Walter!

Public comment

Non-agenda item raised; Cara will follow up by email.

Are members of the public welcome on walking meetings, and how long do they usually last?

Yes, and they usually last around 1-2 hours.