Cambridge Cycling Safety Ordinance Advisory Group
Meeting Summary
Meeting 2 | April 25, 2023

MEETING OBJECTIVES
- Review the City's process and tools for engagement on CSO projects
- Discuss how the process has evolved, what has been learned, and what could continue to be improved

MEETING MATERIALS
- Meeting 1 Summary
- Meeting 2 Participant Agenda
- Meeting 2 Presentation

WELCOME & OVERVIEW
Elizabeth Cooper and Simenesh Semine, Facilitators, Consensus Building Institute, welcomed the Advisory Group members and members of the public to the second Cambridge Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO) Advisory Group meeting. This hybrid meeting was held via Zoom and in the City Hall Annex. Simenesh reviewed the meeting agenda, the first meeting summary, and noted that the finalized documents from Meeting 1 had been posted to the project website. The group members went around and introduced themselves and their affiliations.

Brooke McKenna, Transportation Commissioner, asked Advisory Group members how they would like the project staff to relay public comments they receive online. Members agreed that if there are only a few comments, they can be forwarded to the group via email as they come in. If there are a significant amount, they would like to receive them in batches. The comments will be related to the work of this group. City staff noted that if they get a high volume of comments, they will also group and synthesize the comments for the group.

To see the full attendance list, please see Appendix A.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH ON CSO PROJECTS
Elise Harmon-Freeman, Communications Manager, Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, and Andrew Reker, Transit Program Manager, Community Development, then gave an overview presentation on different types of CSO projects (quick-build versus construction), timelines for design and engagement, and the types of feedback the City generally solicits from the community. They discussed project phases and engagement goals before giving examples of project webpages, postcards, emails, posters, flyers, business outreach, community meetings, open houses, surveys, feedback maps, and other project communications and engagement strategies. For details, see presentation slides on the [advisory group web page](#). Advisory Group members asked the following questions:

Quick Build Projects
One member wondered how projects get decided to be built as Quick Builds. Brooke noted that there is a set of criteria for how street reconstruction is prioritized over a five-year plan. When

bike lanes are called for but the street is not in that near-term plan, the lanes are installed as Quick-Build projects.

One member wondered what the process was for evaluating Quick Build and other projects after they are built, to determine lessons learned before beginning more projects. Brooke explained that time is required after a project is complete to account for adjustment time and to get enough data on usage patterns before it can be evaluated. She noted that because of the expedited timeline, they cannot wait to complete an evaluation to continue other Quick Build construction. A member said that there are several examples of evaluations on past projects available on Cambridge Street and Western Ave that show positive results. These evaluations are available online and will be shared with Advisory Group members after the meeting.

Language and Accessibility
One member asked how many languages the City publishes information about projects in, and if it does outreach on adjacent streets as well as the direct streets where the projects take place. They noted concern that postering on Garden Street did not go beyond to the adjacent streets, where impacts were felt due to changing traffic patterns. City staff confirmed that, on Garden Street they did outreach to all the doors on the direct streets as well as the surrounding areas. The City has translated materials for long-term construction projects in the past, but hasn't done it for quick-build CSO projects. The City generally looks at neighborhood demographics to determine what language to translate materials into, but languages include Amharic, Arabic, Bangla, Chinese, English, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Spanish.
One member suggested that the City also consider using plain language on their signage. City staff noted that language accessibility is something they are working to improve and are taking into consideration community demographics to incorporate into outreach and translation needs. The City is building Community Engagement Teams in various departments in which staff come from neighborhoods and communities where the City is trying to strengthen engagement, such as Arabic-speaking, Amharic-speaking, and American Born Black Communities. City staff also work with the Cambridge Language Access and Justice team.

Another member wondered if the online community meetings have transcription for deaf people. City staff noted there was automatic transcriptions in their meetings as well as a professional transcription (and subtitles) once the video is posted online. Simultaneous ASL interpretation is also available if requested ahead of time.

GROUP DISCUSSION
Following the presentation, Elizabeth opened the discussion to general comments about group members saw was working well and how engagement could be improved. Members made the following comments:

Community Outreach
One member suggested that to improve community outreach, the City should make signs simpler and more direct to ensure people know that they are related to bike lanes (rather than characterizing them as more general safety improvements). Signs could include QR codes to online resources and more information. They also noted that people are more likely to show up and engage with the City if they know specifically what they are going to be discussing and influencing.

Another member suggested that the City do more to share via the website what projects are currently going well to show the community the benefits of these projects. Someone else noted that

it might also be helpful to better visualize the entire network and vision for the CSO that is going to be built over the next several years. Without being seeing the bigger picture, people will have trouble understanding the overall strategy and how streets are prioritized to contribute to the network. A clear visualization, similar to how MBTA subway lines are shown, could help people grasp the network. This could help build enthusiasm around the CSO.

Someone wondered if the City would be able to reach out to community members who express frustration that they did not know about a project and ask what outreach strategies would work best to reach them. Another member noted that they were not aware that the City's outreach techniques were this extensive. They asked if the same voices typically participate throughout each process and how new people can be included or caught up once a process has started.

City staff explained that a quick-build project typically takes 6-8 months from introduction to installation, and each phase length is different depending on the project. They notice more people join in the second and third phases, when changes begin to be apparent. Ideally, people are involved in the design input phase, where there is most opportunity for input and to avoid them being surprised by changes. One member suggested doing email/text/social media blasts the day before boots on the ground for construction. City staff noted that they do send an email out the day before work is going to happen, and while they like to give a week of reminder, due to the unpredictability of some aspects of final installation, sometimes a week's notice is not possible.

One member suggested that the City add a Phase 4 that would focus on connecting with local business and organizational partners to help integrate the changes brought about by the project, troubleshoot around concerns, and help keep the corridors vibrant with interactions with businesses. This could include information on how people can get around, and where people can park, etc.

Public Transportation
One member noted that it is important for the CSO projects to consider how they are interacting with and impacting the public transportation and MBTA systems around them. For example, they should include consideration for creating more seating for people to wait for buses or rest between stops. Overall, there needs to be consideration for pedestrians in these processes with consideration to the demographics of people near CSO project sites. City staff responded that transit and pedestrian concerns and potential improvements are considered and where possible addressed in CSO projects.

Traffic
Someone felt concern that the CSO projects were having a serious impact on traffic, and felt that was not being adequately considered in the evaluation phase. City staff noted that they monitor the implementation of these projects carefully. For example, since installation on Garden Street they have been doing data collection and providing the City Council with a report on traffic and usage. Other factors affecting traffic can complicate how residents experience traffic changes in the short-term as a result of these projects.

Parking
One member noted that, in the process of design, there should be the same number of accessible parking spaces, and the parking spaces need to be the correct size to ensure proper access to those

who need it. Another member noted that loss of parking affects people who need assistance from direct service-providers such as nurses and aides, when these service-providers ability to park and reach them is impacted.

REVIEW OF UPCOMING CSO PROJECTS

Following the discussion, Elise reviewed the plan and timeline for CSO projects that have been added to the City's near-term plan. One member noted serious concern about the traffic implications for the upcoming projects on Mass. Ave, Harvard Square bus stops, and Central Square, and wondered how these major arteries of the City being under construction in a short timeframe was going to impact people's daily lives. Brooke acknowledged that it was a significant amount of construction, and said the City would be monitoring and planning around those concerns carefully. One member asked if median removal on Mass. Ave. was a driver of the decision to do partial construction. Brooke noted that was a key factor.

Someone asked if there were going to be more buses on the street because of the expected MBTA increases (which would also impact traffic). Andrew noted that planning for City construction/traffic and MBTA interactions was a key concern for City staff and that this is a consideration as staff think about the timelines of the various projects across the City. He noted that they were open to feedback on the Central Square project as it will be impactful, but they are still waiting to see how the MBTA will recover from the pandemic to fully understand the interactions between the two projects. The MBTA and the Transportation department have regular meetings to ensure coordination.

One member asked if the City thought they would ask for an extension on the CSO. They have not decided whether that would be necessary yet.

NEXT STEPS

Group members shared topics they would like to discuss in future meetings:
- Evaluation criteria for CSO projects and what criteria should be considered
- Updates on a detailed schedule going through 2026 (as updates are available) and where the Advisory Group can be giving feedback
- "Phase 4" post-installation phase, working with local partners
- What does success look like for the CSO Advisory Group?

Members felt having the option to join in person or virtually was helpful, and agreed to continue to hold hybrid meetings.

Elizabeth went over the next steps and action items:
- CBI to draft a meeting summary
- CBI to schedule next meeting date and create draft agenda
- City staff to post presentations and materials to the project website
- City staff to share any Public Comments with the Advisory Group

PUBLIC COMMENTS
   o Joan Pickett: I know this is early days for this group, but this meeting makes me optimistic about this process. I made a public comment which pointed you to a safety report relevant to these discussions. Regarding outreach, safety improvements is not the correct language, and the public needs truth in advertising about specific

communications (saying bike lanes and parking on signage). There should be another phase included about evaluation for the projects that have just happened, because the next implementation cannot be improved without looking at the last one. In the evaluations you should look at all of the stakeholders, but also what is happening with traffic, businesses, and impacts to residential side streets so we can understand the multidimensional impact.

Elizabeth thanked everyone for their participation and closed the meeting.

Advisory Group Members
Denise Jillson – Small Business Advisory Committee
Amy Flax – Bicycle Committee
Mark Boswell – Bicycle Committee (In Person)
Diane Gray – Vision Zero Advisory Committee
Jason Alves – Small Business Advisory Committee
Jennie Song - Black, Indigenous, People of Color Owned Businesses
Michael Monestime – Small Business Advisory Committee
Lois Carra – Council on Aging
Mercedes Evans – Human Rights Commission
Debby Galef – Pedestrian Committee
Kaleb Abebe – Peace Commission (In Person)

City Staff
Elise Harmon-Freeman, Traffic, Parking, and Transportation
Brooke McKenna, Traffic, Parking, and Transportation
Andrew Reker, Community Development
Cara Seiderman, Community Development

Facilitation Team
Elizabeth Cooper, Consensus Building Institute
Simenesh Semine, Consensus Building Institute