ELISE HARMON-FREEMAN

OK. Sorry for forgetting to hit record. We're about a minute into this meeting, the second community meeting for the Main Street Safety Improvement Project.

As I was saying, we are now recording. Your camera and microphones are off. We'll enable your microphone only when you're speaking. If you would not like to be recorded tonight, just put your questions and comments in the Q&A.

Before I go into the purpose, outcome, and process of this meeting, I just wanted to start a little Zoom poll to see where you guys are coming from, how you heard about this meeting, and if you've attended any meetings for this project before. So I'm going to keep that open for about 30 seconds while I go over the slide, and then we'll see what everybody says.

So tonight, we're going to be discussing the feedback that we've received so far for the Main Street Safety Improvement Project. And we will present the design options that we've developed based on that feedback. At the end of this meeting, you're going to have enough information to be able to provide new feedback on what design options would work best on the street.

And how tonight's meeting is going to work-- we're going to present slides with updates on the project. And then you will be able to ask questions and make comments during a public comment period. You can also write questions in the Q&A box, like I said.

We have Stephen's contact information at the bottom of the screen. Feel free to reach out with him-- to him with any questions at any time. And I encourage people to go to the project page for updates. That's www.cambridgema.gov/mainstreetsafety.

OK. And I'm seeing that we have a pretty high participation rate in this poll. So let's see. I'm going to share the results.

How did everybody hear about this meeting? Most people heard from some version of an email, a couple of people from social media. We have a fair amount of people who attended the first community meeting, a few people who provided input on our community feedback map or online comment form.

And then we have a couple new people who haven't come to any events so far. So welcome. Thanks for getting involved. OK, so I'm going to stop sharing the poll. And let's continue with the presentation. Stephen, do you mind going to the next slide?

So just briefly, the project area we're talking about for this project is Main Street between Lafayette Square and Portland Street. That includes this little section next to Lafayette Square that connects Massachusetts Avenue to Main Street that is called the Sidney Street extension. And this project area includes kind of the whole frontage of Newtown Court.

Today, our agenda looks like we're going to go over a timeline for this project. We're going to go over a little bit of the planning background, why we're doing this project. We'll do a brief project introduction, look at the design options we've come up with based on your feedback, talk a little bit about how to give feedback going forward, and then we'll go on to a Q&A.

So project timeline-- we have just ended phase 1, which was our project introduction. In that phase, we didn't have a design. We asked for community feedback on current conditions to the street and made sure people know that the project is coming.

Now we're going to be going into phase 2. We're presenting the draft designs tonight. And we'll have opportunities for you to give feedback on different options for the street. And we'll ask you some questions about opportunities to make additional edits to the design options.

And then, coming up next, we'll come up with a single preferred design based on your feedback. And we'll present that and give you a chance to look at everything together and give any additional input that you have.

I know these community meetings serve as updates on the project's status. So we're just entering a new phase now. We don't make decisions at these community meetings. We'll post this online after the fact. And anybody who has missed tonight's meeting can rewatch and give feedback. Now I'm ready.

So like I said, we're ending the first phase of the design project. That included our community meeting in March, two open houses kind of on the street at the intersection of Main Street and Bishop Allen Drive Plaza, and then another one at the Pisani Center, which is a community center in between Washington Elms and Newtown Court.

We've also had meetings with businesses, houses of worship, and community members who live in the area. And we've gotten a lot of emails, phone calls, people filling out that online feedback form, and online feedback map.

Coming up next, we're going to have two more open houses. We'll talk a little bit more about that at the end of this meeting. And we'll continue doing kind of everything we've done before-- meetings with businesses, houses of worship, and community members, and then those emails, phone calls, continue an online feedback form, and we'll open up a survey.

So how to get involved-- you can attend a meeting or open house, like you are right now, visit the project web page to find all of our past materials, background, ways to sign up for the email list or contact Stephen. You can provide feedback online. We'll be opening a survey with asking you for input on the design options we'll present tonight. And then you can always call or email Steven if you want to talk to him directly and have a one-on-one conversation.

As always, we recognize that the entire community isn't present tonight. We'll continue to do project mailings, signage, visits to businesses, have opportunities for online engagement to help us reach members of the community who can't be here. We'll continue to do more outreach to hear from more people.

But as always, let us know if you have any suggestions for how to reach a wider audience. Is there an email list, a bulletin board? What's the best way to reach people in the area that we might not know about?

And just to re-emphasize, tonight is the beginning of the feedback period on these design options. We're going to be looking for input. We're not going to be making any decisions. And we're going to welcome your feedback for the next couple of months. And we will post a recording of tonight's meeting online, as well as the presentation slides.

And with that, I think I am turning this over to Brooke McKenna, our transportation commissioner.

BROOKE MCKENNA: Great. Thank you, Elise. So I'm going to start us off just talking a little bit about the planning background, our street design and policies. Next slide.

So just to go over a little bit about what guides our street design, so we really design our streets for people of all ages and abilities. And a big part of this is designing for people who may not have access to a car. Some people are not able to drive. Some people don't want to drive or may not be able to afford to drive. And it's really important that our streets be accessible for them.

We also look to ensure that we're designing our streets for people who use different types of mobility devices, whether it might be a mobility scooter, adult tricycles, child trailers, adaptive bicycles, and many, many more types of devices that people use to get around the city.

So when we think about congestion and delay, our focus is on safety. And we see that moving people slowly is moving them safely. So we do not prioritize eliminating delay for people driving over the safety of other road users. And that's a really key tenet of how we approach street design.

And we really focus on moving people and goods, not vehicles. So biking and riding transit is a more efficient use of limited street space. And we really focus on having safe and accessible facilities, including bike lanes, that can be used by a wide range of people, whether young, old, of varying abilities.

But we also recognize that we need to be able to safely allow for trucks and local deliveries. Having goods and services are key to making Cambridge a livable city. So we really have to take that into account. And then another key component is that public space on our streets can also be used for things other than transportation--so things like outdoor dining or public gathering and placemaking and community building.

So our approach is really a safe systems approach. And what this means is that we really take a human-centered approach to designing our streets. We want to engineer and design our streets in a way that prevents errors as much as possible and then really lessens the impacts of errors when they do happen.

We all know that we're all human and mistakes happen. And by designing the environment in a human-centered way, we make space for those errors to happen in a way that is not life-changing or fatal for folks. So it's really about shifting away from individual blame to really thinking about our streets as a system and making sure that system is safe.

So we do that by designing for the most vulnerable road users. So that's the people who aren't protected inside a car. So that's people who are walking and biking or scooting or on a mobility scooter. So it's really about designing for those most vulnerable users.

And then also, we want to prevent crashes because that's more effective than mitigating the impacts after the fact. And enforcement and education always come up as part of this conversation. And they are an important part of the conversation. But they are supplemental to designing streets in the right way. They're not a replacement for good design.

So an example of what we talk about with this, about designing so that errors are not fatal, is if you think about a momentary distraction, which can happen to anyone, a momentary distraction can mean that a driver doesn't see a cyclist or a cyclist doesn't see a driver. And when we provide separation between people in cars and people on bikes, we decrease the chance that momentary distraction can lead to a deadly crash.

So here in the city, we have a long history of really designing our city around sustainable transportation. And we define sustainable transportation as options that allow people to get around in ways that reduce emissions and congestion, such as walking, biking, and public transit.

And the city has supported these goals going back to the early '90s with the Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance all the way up through our adoption of Complete Streets policies and Vision Zero in 2018, and then the introduction of the Cycling Safety Ordinance in 2019.

So kind of starting to dig in a little specifically around biking in Cambridge, I'll talk a little bit about the Cambridge bike plan and separated bike lanes. So the vision for the city's bike plan is that Cambridge will be a place where bicycling is equally available to everyone, all destinations can be reached by bike, and streets are designed to accommodate people of all ages, abilities, and identities.

So we're trying to remove the barriers that make it difficult for people to choose to cycle in Cambridge. Creating safe and comfortable streets make it easier for people to bike instead of driving.

So what are separated bike lanes? So separated bike lanes basically provide people who are biking and people who are driving each their own dedicated travel space and then provide some element of physical separation between the two, whether it's a flex post or a curb, and also parking at times.

And, really, the benefits of separated bike lanes is that they increase the comfort and access for people of all ages and abilities. They reduce the likelihoods of crash and injury. Very importantly, they eliminate the threat of dooring from parked cars.

Dooring is when a cyclist is hit by an opening door, which can really injure cyclists but can also push cyclists in front of moving traffic. And it's a real serious problem in the city. And separated bike lanes are really effective way to eliminate that threat.

So separated bike lanes as a whole, they reduce the conflicts between vehicles and people biking. And in addition, they encourage slower traffic speeds by visually narrowing the roadway width. Go to the next one.

So as I mentioned in the last bullet, separated bike lanes narrow the roadway for drivers, both physically and visually. And that does slow people down. Lower speeds are safer for all users, including people walking, driving, and biking.

When we implemented separated bike lanes on the section of Cambridge Street between Harvard Square and Inman Square, we saw a 25% reduction in speed. So it's really an effective tool for not just improving the safety of cycling, but lowering speeds and increasing overall safety in a corridor. Next slide.

Another benefit for people walking when we put in separated bike lanes is it does break up and lessen the crossing distance. The most dangerous time when you're crossing the street is when you're exposed to vehicular traffic. And when we introduce separated bike lanes, as you can see in this diagram, you're able to break up your crossing.

You can cross the bike-- you can look for bikes, cross the bike lane. Then you're able to pause, look for vehicle traffic, and cross the rest of the way. And then, again, you have areas of safety where you can pause to look before you make the rest of the crossing.

So in addition to other pedestrian improvements that we may do in a corridor, just the very introduction of separated bike lanes increases pedestrian safety as well. Next slide.

So what you see here is the Bicycle Network Vision from the 2020 bike plan. And this lays out kind of across the city the vision that we see for biking in the city. And what you see in the purple is the separated bike lane network.

This is the network across the city that's been designated for greater separation. And this is what we're working towards building out through the Cycling Safety Ordinance. So as we make progress, it becomes clearer that it's not just a quarter here and a quarter there but a complete network of streets that will provide people the opportunity to bike to whatever destination they're trying to get to across the city in really safe, comfortable facilities.

So just to touch quickly on what the Cycling Safety Ordinance is-- so back in 2019, the city council originally passed the ordinance that was focused on capital construction projects being done as part of the five-year plan for streets and sidewalks. So, basically, if the city was going to reconstruct a street that was designated for greater separation in the Bicycle Network Vision that we were just looking at, those bike lanes would be built out as part of that capital project.

It was a great step forward. But because capital construction really does take a long time, the council came back and made an amendment to the ordinance which introduced the concept of quick-builds, building out the network using both construction and quick-build methods, and sets a very ambitious timeline for installing 25 miles of separated bike lane in about seven years or so.

And the locations that are included in the ordinance are both some locations that are specifically called out-- specific corridors that are called out in the ordinance, and then, also, generally, the entire Network Vision is where we'll be pulling that 25 miles from.

So as I mentioned, some streets are called out specifically in the ordinance. And that includes all of Mass Ave, Broadway from Quincy Street to Hampshire Street, Cambridge Street from Oak Street to Second, Garden Street from here on to Berkeley, and Hampshire Street from Amory to Broadway, and then, on top of that, 11.6 miles of separated bike lanes pulled from the rest of the Network Vision. And Main Street is a part of that 11.6 miles.

Go on to the next. And with that, I will hand things over to Stephen Meuse, our project manager, for the project introduction.

STEPHEN MEUSE: All right. Thank you, Brooke. Hi, everyone. My name is Stephen Meuse, and I am the project manager for the Main Street Project. I'll provide some context for the project to summarize some of the feedback we've received so far and then talk about some of the considerations we worked through while creating the design options for review tonight.

So this photo is a zoomed-in version of the Bike Network Vision plan that Brooke just spoke about a few slides ago. And Main Street is the red dashed box here on the screen. The entire length of Main Street is designated for greater separation in the bike plan to support people biking safely and comfortably.

Main Street is a key east-west corridor. It connects Cambridge to Boston via the Longfellow Bridge. It interacts with the future Grand Junction Multi-Use path.

It's a direct connection between Central and Kendall squares. And just in general, it connects residents and visitors to retail, jobs, parks, squares all along the street and around the city. All of Main Street is due for separated bike lanes. However, this project is only focusing on the section between Lafayette Square, which is down at Mass Ave, and Portland Street. That's the section with the really thick blue line on this map.

This project's only focusing on that short section because the rest of Main Street is either already designed or is being designed by adjacent projects. So the portion we're talking about tonight is to the west or left of the screen. And then, moving from there to the east or right, we have a segment being constructed as part of the Ragon Institute, which would finish up late this year or perhaps early next year.

Then we have some work ongoing as part of the Grand Junction Path Project. That's the dashed orange line on screen. And then we have a couple of blocks that are being done by the Community Redevelopment Authority's effort. And finally, we have separated bike lanes that are already installed from Third Street to and over the Longfellow Bridge connecting to Boston.

And so just to refocus once again, project area is Main Street from Mass Ave/Lafayette Square to Portland Street. And this does include a small section of Sidney Street extension, which is the small jog and the blue line.

The scope of the project is as follows. We will install separated bike lanes. We will improve crossing locations for people walking. We'll identify locations for curbside access such as parking, loading, pickup, dropoff, and the like. And we'll address safety for all users at key intersections.

And so this is a quick-build project, meaning that we can make safety improvements faster than with traditional construction. With quick-build projects, we can make changes to pavement markings. We can install flexible posts in the roadway to separate modes.

We can change signs, and we can make minor modifications to traffic signals. Quick-build projects can be installed within months, compared to construction, which can take years.

Through all the outreach events that we've held so far, both online and in person, and through the many emails, phone calls, and online comment forms and videos we received, we have a much better understanding of what the community wants to get out of this project. We heard lots of strong feelings about what the project should look like and what it signifies to the community. And we also had a lot of specific comments about individual needs and problem spots.

So this slide shows a selection of some of the comments that represent many of the central themes of the feedback. The community really wants us to maintain as much permit parking as possible. And they want to be able to move around their neighborhood safely, no matter what mode they choose, whether it be with a car, on bike, on foot, et cetera.

And so I can't emphasize enough how many comments we received about permit parking in this area. So community members want to be able to park near their homes. And many need this access to get to jobs, appointments, child care, and other activities that are not optional for them. And so we hear this, and our design options accommodated this need as best we could.

And so we are prioritizing permit parking over other types of parking, such as parking meters and loading and other types. And we are looking to add more permit parking to side streets by reviewing some of those regulations as part of this process.

And so separated bike lanes allow us to remove street cleaning signs as well and the restrictions for that because the streets can be swept using different equipment, like in the photos shown on this slide. Residents will no longer need to move their cars to have Main Street swept. So it's an added benefit.

We're also coordinating with the housing authority to strengthen signage for Newtown Court parking lots to discourage use by nonresidents. And we heard that was a real problem, especially for people visiting businesses after hour or later into the night. And all of this is being considered while we look to identify sufficient space for business loading as well as pickup/dropoff that is still a popular use for the road.

And so the bike lanes along Main Street are planned to be one way and on both sides of the street. This design leads to predictable interactions for people biking, walking, and driving at intersections. It's a familiar design that's used elsewhere in Cambridge, as well as within the region and across the nation.

And so we're not the only city doing projects like this. The design also provides better access by bike to both sides of the street. And that means that if you're biking, you always have access to a safe route to get to where you need to go, no matter which side of the street you live or work on.

And specifically for Main Street, this type of bike lane would not require major changes to traffic signals. And it would be easy to accommodate future bus stops. And we know the MBTA is planning to add service to Main Street within the next few years.

We did hear requests for a two-way bike lane on one side of the street, and that might have made space for more parking. We did evaluate this and found that the design was not feasible for Main Street compared to elsewhere, where we may have two-way bike lanes. Main Street is a much more complex setting.

The main drive for this idea was to have more parking. But when we looked at it conceptually, we found that we wouldn't get much more parking at all and would end up with a less ideal walking, biking, and driving experience. And that's because of a couple of things.

So two-way bike lanes require traffic signals at each end to get people into and out of them. That's because people biking need to somehow cross intersections diagonally to accommodate this. Signals would need either new bike-only phases where everyone is stopped except people biking. And that would increase delay for everyone.

Or alternatively, they would need new vehicle turn lanes to stop turns across the bike lane at certain times in the signal phase to allow people biking to proceed through the intersections without conflict. So more parking would also need to be removed at driveways and intersections for sight distances since you'd need more visibility when you have two-way bikes. And another factor is access to the bike lane and destinations.

So with a two-way lane, only people on one side of the street would have access to the facility. Everyone else would need to try to cross the block or maybe use the sidewalk to get to a crossing location. So while having two parking lanes seems like it might be a good idea, we'd likely be left with a similar amount of parking for a less-than-ideal bike lane.

And I do want to add that having a two-way bike lane would make adding the bus stops in the future much more difficult. You can't have a bus stop along the curb with oncoming people on bikes. And so we do plan to try to make up for the loss of parking on Main Street by better managing the parking that we can keep and by exploring new regulations for other parking spaces nearby.

So now we'll move on to the design options that we developed based on the feedback we've received so far.

So we have divided the project into two sections to review these layout options. The first section is Sidney Street extension to Windsor Street, where we have two options that's shown in orange. And that section has a mix of businesses, industrial uses, houses of worship, and residences.

The second section is Windsor Street to Portland Street. And that section has three options. And that's the section with Newtown Court to the north and businesses and institutional uses to the south.

These options all have one-way separated bike lanes along the curb. The differences between them pertain to where the parking and loading areas are. And that decision is really up to the community.

The first section that we will look at is Sidney Street extension to Windsor Street. And we have two options here. And so I'll start with summary, and then we'll go into each individual option.

So here's a summary of the two options on screen now. Option 1 has all of the parking and loading on the north side, while option 2 has it on the north side, which means Sidney Street extension and Cherry Street and on the south Side between Cherry Street and Windsor Street.

So none of these options have parking on the south side between Sidney Street extension and Cherry Street. And that's because of the number of driveways there and also due to the amount of truck activity. So that's the section where the U-Haul is and the Tootsie Roll factory.

There's a lot of different movements down there, and we weren't able to have any options with parking on that side. So we are also, with part of both of these options, maintaining the many accessible or disability parking spots that are in this area. However, we do need some help identifying where the remainder of the parking should be.

And so we're looking to have you think about what type of parking or loading is important here and which side makes the most sense. So in these blocks, is the number of spaces more important or the location of those spaces? We're looking for everyone's thoughts, and we'll continue to have direct outreach to the businesses here to understand their loading means as well as how their customers come and go. And so I'll go into each option in more detail in the next few slides.

So the first option has the parking on the north side. There is one separated bike lane along the curb on both sides of the street-- sorry, one-way separated bike lane on both sides of the street. And the accessible disability parking space is retained where it is today.

And so we've also proposed to move an existing pastor space in front of the church around the corner city street extension. And then we're going to pair that with additional accessible parking spaces. And that's about one building over, over on Sidney Street extension. And so eight parking spaces remain in this section, and we want to know what they should be used for.

And so keep in mind that we do also have several metered spaces on Bishop Allen Drive, just to the top of this page, right off the screen. And we could repurpose those to something else if there is a need for that, whether that's more permit parking, loading zones, pickup, dropoff. We have some options there as well.

The second option has the parking switch sides at Cherry Street. There is the one-way separated bike lanes along the curve on both sides. And the accessible parking space is retained and, again, the passenger and other accessible parking spaces over on Sidney Street extension.

In this option, 12 spaces remain. And then we want to know what they should be used for. And so Bishop Allen Drive spaces are still part of the discussion.

And then so one other thing that separates this option from the previous one is that there is a chicane, or a bend in the roadway, at Cherry Street crosswalk. That's where the parking switches from the north side to the south side. And that can also help slow down speeds through here.

And so now we'll go on to talk about the second section, which is Windsor Street to Portland Street. And that's where we have three options. And so once again, here's a summary of the three options for this section. And then I'll go into each one in a little bit more detail.

Option 1 has all of the parking on the north side/the Newtown Court side of the street. Option 2 has all of the parking on the south side. And option 3 is parking that is on the south side for the first half and switches to the north side at Osborn Street for the second half. For all these options, we intend for the parking to be assigned as permit parking only based on strong community support for that regulation.

Each option has one-way separated bike lanes along the curb on both sides. The only difference is are the number of parking spaces and where they're located. And so as we look through these, consider what's more important. Is it the total number of spaces, the proximity of these spaces to homes, or the designer layout of the spaces overall?

And so I'm going to focus a lot on parking. But I do want to acknowledge that all three of these options greatly shorten the crossing distance for the unsignalized crosswalk at Osborn Street. And one of them does have the bend, or chicane, as well for lowering speeds.

So option 1 has parking on the north side only, meaning all of the parking would be on the Newtown Court side of the street. There's about 19 parking spaces total, all permit. And that's a loss of about 13 spaces.

If we make changes to the metered spaces on Windsor or Osborn, we might be able to limit some of the permit parking impacts, maybe to about five. And whether that's overnight parking or a later start in the morning is up for discussion. Option 1 also provides a good location for a future bus stop at Windsor Street without needing to come back and remove parking later to make that fit. Sorry.

So option 2 has all of the parking on the south side of the street. And so given that there are no driveways on the south side, there is much more parking with this option compared to option 1. And so only three permit parking spaces total are removed if parking is all on the south side.

We could further mitigate that with the changes to Osborn or Windsor Street to the meters there. However, all of these parking spaces would be-- they'd still be permit parking, but they'd be across the street from Newtown Court-- so just want to point that out.

The third and final option is a mix of options 1 and 2. Parking is on the south side between Windsor and Osborn to maximize the number of spaces in that block. But then it switches to the Newtown Court side between Osborn and Portland to provide closer parking access to some of those homes.

And all these spaces would be marked as permit parking. And an added benefit here is that if you were arriving home at this location, you could come from either end and have a chance of finding a parking spot without needing to turn around.

Once again, there are opportunities for further parking mitigation if we look at Osborn and Windsor Street meters. We have the chicane for lower speeds. And I do want to point out that there's a potential for a future bus stop to remove additional parking spaces on the south side if that's where the bus stop needs to go.

And so that was it for the street layout options. And so now we're going to look at some of the changes that we're looking at for the traffic signals. And we have two options for what happens at the Lafayette Square intersection. And that's where Main Street meets Mass Ave, Sidney Street, and Columbia Street.

So there are three traffic signals within the project area-- the Lafayette Square signal, as well as the Windsor and Portland Street signals. We plan to make important safety improvements to the intersection at Lafayette Square, which is where we received significant community feedback as well as many helpful suggestions. Operations at the other two intersections are relatively straightforward. So we won't discuss those locations today.

The Lafayette Square signal is rather complex. It consists of two closely-spaced intersections controlled by one traffic signal controller. We have many opportunities for improvements here based on the feedback we received, as well as operational observations by staff and our consultants. We want to protect more crosswalks from turning vehicles. We want to add bicycle signals to help people biking know when it is safe to go and when it is not.

We want to discourage people from biking through Lafayette Square Plaza, which we heard a lot about. We also want to find space and signal time for people biking to be able to turn without being in vehicle lanes. And we want to add separation while biking through the intersection.

So here's the first option. It's basically the same as today, but modified to fix some of the issues we heard about. We'd reduce Columbia Street to one lane. So right now, it's a through lane and a right-turn lane. And that's because the amount of traffic that comes down there doesn't really warrant two lanes.

We would relocate that passenger parking spot that I just spoke about for over to the metered spaces, and then also add in two additional accessible spaces. For people biking, we can add greater separation in this short block and allow people biking to connect to Sidney Street-- from Sidney Street to Sidney Street extension.

And then this option also really makes no changes to vehicle access. It would protect one additional crosswalk from turning vehicles. It adds new bike signals. And it would include turn boxes to help people biking make left turns, which they struggle with today.

The second option for this intersection makes minor changes to vehicle access. So if we disallow through movements at the Main Street, which is the Toscanini's side of the intersection, we have a lot more options in terms of safety benefits. So Columbia to Main and Main to Columbia are very low-volume connections and routes. And that's because if you need to go that way, you can take Bishop Allen Drive instead.

We're talking about a handful of people that go straight there today, maybe 10 or so per hour. And that's during the busiest times of the day. By removing the through movements, we can greatly reduce the number of vehicles turning through those crosswalks during the walk phase. And importantly, this change also cuts off the route that people biking through Lafayette Square take.

So if you came through the plaza, you'd have to turn right to Sidney Street. You wouldn't be able to continue straight. And going the other direction, you'd have to turn left onto Sidney Street extension instead of continuing straight into the plaza. There would no longer be a time where you can make that.

Instead, people biking would be accommodated within the roadway itself. And the bike lanes that would have additional separation. This option also makes the same faster and accessible visibility parking changes as the previous option, as well as adding the bike signals and the turn boxes.

So that brings me to the end of the design options. So now I'll touch a bit upon how we plan to reach people and hear back. So it's important to remember that tonight's the beginning of the feedback period for this phase of the project, not the end.

And we aren't making any decisions tonight over the coming weeks and months. We welcome your feedback, whether it's online or in person. And we'll use this feedback to help design one preferred layout for the street. For those who aren't here tonight, we'll post a recording of the meeting online, including the slides. And our feedback form on the website is still available. And you can always submit comments to us using it at any time. It has a nice check box if you'd like to reach out-- like me to reach out to you and respond back. Also, general comments are welcome. We presented many options tonight, and it was a lot. We'll be launching a survey with the next couple of days so that community members can express their design preferences. And this will be available both online and in person at the open houses.

And so speaking of those open houses, we have two planned to help us reach new members who may not be able to attend a community meeting and for those who would like to speak directly to us and help explain their thoughts. Both of these are next week, and they summarize what we presented tonight. At these events, we will have boards summarizing key slides and information from the presentation, as well as large printouts of the design options for people to look at and comment on. We'll also have a paper copy of the design options survey.

So I know I had a lot of options tonight. And it's hard to look at each one and think about them in a minute or two per our options. So at the open house, you can see it on a table. It's also going to be online. So you can take your time to look at those. And obviously, I'm around and available to answer any questions that might come up.

So in addition to those officially scheduled events, we're available for in-person or virtual meetings with community members and stakeholders. You can send us an email or call us, use our online comment form at any time to request a meeting. And we anticipate continued discussions with many entities along Main Street. And that's including but not limited to Newtown Court and Washington Elms, DPW's Port Infrastructure Project, bike, pedestrian, and transit committees, the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities, the businesses, houses of worship, and more.

And so some of these are already planned, and others, we're looking forward to setting up a time for further discussion. So thank you all for attending, and I'll hand it over to Elise to begin the question and feedback portion of the night.

ELISE: Thank you, Stephen. So we are going to enter your questions and feedback portion. So I'm going to allow you to raise your hand in a minute. If you're dialing, in you can dial star 9 to raise your hand. I see we have a couple of people calling in on the phone. So you should now be able to raise your hand to ask questions or give comments.

Again, you're welcome to leave a comment or ask a question in the Q&A as well. In order to allow everyone to speak, try and limit your time a little bit. But we don't have too many people here tonight. So I think we can probably go over one minute. About every 10 or 15 minutes, we'll provide answers to questions. And we are currently scheduled to end at 8:00 PM.

You're also more than welcome to contact Stephen directly with written or verbal feedback after this meeting if you think of anything you can't say tonight. So let's see. I've got [INAUDIBLE] with your hand up. Go ahead.

AUDIENCE: Hi. I'm always excited to see these projects. Seeing a whole network of connected bike lanes means people from this neighborhood will be able to go elsewhere safely. People in different neighborhoods are able to go here safely. So it's all going to be one big connected safe network.

I was also happy to see that there is going to be both more accessible parking and pedestrian safety improvements. I had just wanted to clarify I understood correctly the Lafayette Square design options. It sounded like the second option would sort of separate, hopefully, bikes and pedestrians better so that people don't bike through Lafayette Square.

Is it also that it will allow safer crossings for pedestrians, or were both options in Lafayette Square equally good for pedestrians? Were they both improvements for pedestrians, or is it the second option allows for safer options for pedestrians? Or what were the tradeoffs there?

ELISE: Thank you. And we actually don't have anybody else with their hand up right now. So maybe we could just answer that question immediately.

STEPHEN MEUSE: Yeah, so we're going to post some of the signal diagrams online for both of those options. It's really difficult to have to explain how the signal works and follow that in this type of setting. But basically, option 2 does have additional benefits for people walking and prevents some of the turns across those crosswalks that can occur today in the concurrent movement.

And so there's two-- so people who cut through Lafayette Square, they're doing that for a couple of reasons. One, safety in terms of the middle block, not wanting to share the road, especially the middle of the road, with larger vehicles, and then also because it's convenient. And so with these options, we are making it safer to do what we want people to do, and then also removing the convenience of cutting through the plaza. I hope that helps.

ELISE: Thanks, Stephen. I'm still not seeing anybody else with their hand up. Again, if you are calling in, feel free to dial star 9. If you'd like to ask a question or give a comment-- oh, here's two people. I've got Joan up first, followed by Nate Fillmore. Joan, please go ahead.

AUDIENCE: Hi. Thank you very much. I was trying to follow along with the slides and the different options. And so I don't think I did a very good job. And I was going to ask if it was possible to get a summary of the parking spaces by each option.

I mean, maybe you did that. I just didn't catch it as I was going through it. But I would really like to understand completely what happens to the parking overall.

And my next question is it looks as though you did do some traffic counts as you were thinking about making Columbia Street one way. Did you do any bike counts? I'm just curious how heavily-used this current corridor is by cyclists. And if you did do some counts, that would be great to post.

STEPHEN MEUSE: Right. So I think I can go back real quick in the presentation and leave this on screen. So there was a summary of the park-- it's this one here in the bottom left. So, basically, yes, we're still getting rid of at least half of the parking spaces overall. And pretty much all of the parking loss is absorbed by removing meters. And so the top row there is the prioritization of the permit parking spaces.

So all of these options keep more than half of the permit parking. Some come very close to keeping it where it is today. And then you had a question-- oh, so we're not-- sorry if I misspoke or wasn't clear about Columbia Street. It's not that we're making Columbia Street a one-way.

It's that currently, Columbia Street, when you come down and approach Main Street or Mass Ave, you have a right-turn lane and a straight lane or through lane. And the number of people who come down Columbia that way don't need two lanes to queue up at the signal, because they both get a green at the same time. So those two lanes can be combined into one lane.

So it's not that we're making Columbia a one-way. It's that there's two lanes now, and it's going to be just one. In terms of counts, we do have some for before-and-after analysis. And they do include some bike counts in there. So I can take a look at those and see what we can do for posting, perhaps.

ELISE: Thanks, Stephen. I have Nate with your hand up. Nate, please go ahead.

Nate, it looks like you just muted yourself. You were unmuted before.

AUDIENCE: Hello? Yes. Hey.

ELISE: There you go.

AUDIENCE: Am I here? OK, I think I disconnected for a second. Thank you guys for the project-- very exciting to see. I just had a couple of specific questions or comments in terms of-- particularly in terms of what's shown on this slide. I guess one question that I had and potential concern is that the clear zones at the end, especially near Portland, is-- I assume that there's a reasonable amount of people potentially turning right there.

And the clear zone after the parking for option 2 looks like half a parking space or something-- so perhaps not very long. And I was just curious, by comparison to the part in the Windsor segment, that it seems a bit shorter.

So I was just curious what you're thinking there and if that would be adequate. But overall, the plans look very, very nice. So thank you guys.

STEPHEN MEUSE: Yeah, so thank you. We can look at some of those corner sort of restrictions. I believe it's measured from where that point of conflict is crossing the green. So some of the geometry of the intersection itself comes into that. It's not usually just 20 feet back from the stop line, for example. There's a couple other factors.

Something that's not shown on here, but if you look towards the Windsor Street end, which it looks like it has a really big clear zone, no parking area, there's a fire hydrant there. So that's where there's no parking closer to the Windsor Street intersection on that lower side of the screen.

ELISE: Thank you, Stephen. I'm going to move on to some of the questions we're seeing in the Q&A right now. So, again, feel free to raise your hand if you would like to ask a verbal question. But we'll get to you in probably another 5 or 10 minutes.

So first of all, let's see. "Stephen, could we add green bicycle markings across the Newtown Court driveways? Is that something we're considering? What about other driveways in the corridor?"

STEPHEN MEUSE: Yeah, definitely could add the green for those driveways. It's not a problem.

ELISE: Great. Let's see. There's a specific question about a space for a second ADA spot between Bishop Allen and Cherry Street. Have we looked into the geometry of adding one there?

STEPHEN MEUSE: So to the left of the-- I just put it on screen for everyone to see if they want to look. To the left of the existing spot that's right there is a fire hydrant. It might fit to the right of it. That's actually in front of a residential building, and that is a spot at the request of a resident.

But if there is a need, we can also consider putting a more public available, accessible parking spot there. There's also a couple accessible parking spaces that exist on Cherry Street right now for some of the houses of worship that are in that area. So there's some availability nearby. But if it fits, and it makes sense, we can look into adding an additional one here.

ELISE: Thank you. And someone commented that it looks like a number of the loading docks intersect with crosswalks. Is that expected to infringe on pedestrian safety?

STEPHEN MEUSE: As far as the loading docks, I'm trying to think where that is. Is this-- so I'm not sure where that is on here that the question is asking about. I'll try to answer that with-- maybe it's the section down here where the U-Haul is and the Tootsie Roll.

So that's the section we're not having parking on that side. And so there'll be posts where there can be and no posts at the driveway opening. So if you want to clarify, just drop it in the chat or raise your hand. And I can maybe provide a better answer.

ELISE: Thank you, Stephen. And this might be a question for Brooke, actually. What can we do to enforce illegal parking or-- such as stopping or loading in bike lanes?

BROOKE MCKENNA: Sure. So enforcement, it's an important element of how we keep the cities safe everywhere, including along the corridors, where we have separated bike lanes. The Cambridge Police Department does a great job enforcing people who stop in bike lanes.

Here in the traffic department, we have parking control officers who issue violations. And we have a real focus on safety violations, such as blocking bike lanes, blocking accessible ramps or crosswalks, and things like that. So we do as much as we can to do the enforcement.

It can be challenging when people stop very briefly, because it's hard to get there to do the enforcement. But we really find that having the flex posts is not a perfect solution. But it does really help deter people from stopping and blocking the bike lanes.

So it's certainly an issue that we're cognizant of. And we work closely with the police department to do as much enforcement as we can, as well as designing them in a way that discourages people from stopping in the lanes.

ELISE: Thank you, Brooke. And I see we have another person with their hand up. And I think we've gotten to all the Q&A questions. So, Nate, please go ahead.

AUDIENCE: Hello. I thought of another question, actually-- question/comment, which is in the Lafayette thing. First of all, it's very exciting that you guys are going to change that, too, because that's often been a stress point for me personally. And one question-- I had two question comments. One is with the turn box to facilitate the turn from Mass Ave onto whatever it is, into the little extension, I'm curious. And maybe you won't get into it tonight.

But I would just encourage you, I guess-- or I'm curious what it is. And I would encourage you to be thoughtful with the phasing of that because it is a stressful left turn. But also, if there's a huge penalty in terms of the time for that for using that bike box, then it's sort of unfortunate. So I'm curious what the options are there, and just something to think about.

And then, conversely, the other side, I'm curious if option 2 that you presented, currently, if you're coming from Main Street and want to go to Mass Ave, it's a very short period of time where you have to make that right turn. It's usually yellow by the time you get there to make the right turn onto Mass Ave.

And so potentially, with option 2, I'm curious if that would allow you to allocate more time for that phase of the signal, which might improve the experience even for drivers making that dominant movement, as well as bicyclists and stuff, too. But so those are my two questions/comments comments about that.

STEPHEN MEUSE: Yeah, so I had mentioned earlier that the reason people cut through Lafayette Square is sort of two things. It's convenience and safety. And so option 1 addresses most of the safety reasons why people wouldn't do it, but it does not get rid of that convenience. So I would probably anticipate people to still be able to cut through the plaza if they want to in this option 1, because you can still go straight through.

But if you want to do it the way we intend, you're in a separated bike lane. You have a special time where you can turn without the vehicles also taking those turns. And then both options, it's hard. So for everyone else, forgive me for getting really technical at the moment.

But both options are going to separate the right turn from Sidney Straight extension onto Mass Ave. And so it's close to the number 4 that I have on screen. So right now, there's a time in the signal phase where there's a green right arrow and then a time where it's just a green ball. And people can turn right when it's safe to do so.

So we're going to hold the people from turning right when that crosswalk is on and when the bikes are going. So if you are coming down Sidney Street extension, say, on a bike, you can turn onto Mass Ave at a different time from the people driving. And that's for option 1 and option 2. So I think that answers both of your questions.

ELISE: Thank you, Stephen. And I see Kevin Moses has his hand up. Kevin, please go ahead.

AUDIENCE: Yeah, hi. I asked this via the Q&A, but I figure it might be easier to explain live. If you switch to option 2 for Sidney Street, I worry a bit about driver compliance with the straight through option-- the restriction, that is.

I wonder if there's anything you could do to harden it against that, whether it's putting down like a planter or a concrete bollard at the apex of that turn, particularly because that conflict could be particularly catastrophic due to bikes potentially turning left across their path with the green light.

STEPHEN MEUSE: So that's what I have on screen now. And I think what we would want to do-- if we went with this option, we want to figure out how to make the geometry work where it's sort of a forced left for vehicles. And I think the left in particular has more options because of what's going on in that north side of the street there.

We are also sort of limited, though, for the turn templates coming out of Sidney Street extension taking the left. So right now, this is actually a little bit sort of aggressive in how that would look. And this is sort of the first go at how we would design some of the striping through here-- so definitely an opportunity to take another look at it.

But right now, it's showing it'd be pretty difficult to go straight through. We would definitely have some sort of flex posts or other things in there to prevent at least that movement.

ELISE: Thank you, Stephen. And then somebody asked about the Ragon Institute plans. And I posted the link in the Q&A. But I'm wondering if you could just talk really briefly about the basics of what that's going to look like.

STEPHEN MEUSE: Yeah, so that's a great reminder that I should put that plan on our website. And so that was done through a process with the building permit and the special permit through zoning and all of that. And on their side of the street, which is the south side, or the towards-Boston side, they are building a sidewalk-level separated bike lane, so similar to what you see on, like, Vassar Street or Western Ave.

And on the other side of the street, across from them, they are building a separated bike lane in a quick-build fashion, kind of like we're doing here. So that's the paint in the post with the parking off the curb. And so they are pretty close to finishing their building.

But I did hear that there is some utility work that the city is going to want to do. So it might be into next year for them to actually finish that work.

ELISE: Thank you, Stephen. I don't see anybody else with their hand up right now. So feel free to raise your hand if you have a comment or question.

I'm also not saying any more questions in the Q&A. We're scheduled to be here till 8:00. But if nobody has any questions or comments, we'll end a little early. So maybe we can go back to the outreach slide for a second, Stephen.

And I'd just like to remind everybody that we're planning to have two open houses next week on Tuesday and Thursday, where you can come kind of look at plans printed out if that helps you. We'll have one at the Pisani Center, which is right in between Washington Elms and Newtown Court on Tuesday from 4:30 to 6:30 PM, and one right out on Main Street at the intersection with Bishop Allen Drive on that Thursday, and crossing our fingers for good weather for both of those.

But we'll have project staff out to talk to you, answer your questions, and hopefully meet some people who weren't able to make it here tonight. We'll also be posting a survey with these options outlined so we can gather some additional feedback online.

And we will post tonight's recording and the presentation slides with all the options online. And we will email the project list when those are available so you have some more time to look at everything, consider the pros and cons of different options, and then give feedback in whatever way works best for you.

We consider all feedback equally, whether you email us or use the comment form or fill out the survey. One way isn't better than another to make your voice heard.

And let's see. I'm still not seeing comments or questions. So I'm going to look to maybe Stephen and Brooke. Should we end a little early tonight? I'm seeing nods. OK. Well, thank you.

BROOKE MCKENNA: We can go ahead and wrap up.

ELISE: Great. Well, thank you so much for everybody who came out. We really appreciate everybody who comes to these and gets involved. And we hope to see some of you next week as well. So have a great night-- a little closer to dinnertime now. So you're not ending at 8 o'clock. And have a good rest of your week everybody.

STEPHEN MEUSE: Thank you, everyone.

BROOKE MCKENNA: Thanks, everybody.