

Broadway Safety Improvement Project Working Group

City of Cambridge

February 27, 2025 | Draft Meeting Summary

Introduction

The City of Cambridge convened a Working Group to advise on the Safety Improvement Project (SIP) on Broadway. Working Group members are tasked with offering advice, ideas, and concerns about project design, and on the broader outreach about the project. The Working Group meeting was held at the Cambridge City Hall Annex and on Zoom. There were 12 members in attendance, along with City staff, facilitation team members, and members of the public (Appendix A).

This meeting summary captures the key discussion points, advisory group feedback, and actions identified during the meeting. The presentation slide decks and recordings may be found on the Safety Improvement Project on Broadway webpage linked [here](#) and in the Working Group google drive folder. This summary is loosely organized according to the structure of the meeting agenda (Appendix B). Opinions are not attributed to specific members unless there is a clear reason to do so.

The objectives of this meeting were to introduce Working Group members, orient them to the Safety Improvement Project on Broadway, design considerations and the quick-build process.

Actions

- **Consensus Building Institute:** Share draft meeting summary for Working Group review and agenda for the next meeting.
- **Working Group Members:** Review the Working Group charter and submit suggestions to the [outreach plan form](#).

Welcome and Introductions

Jeff Parenti, Assistant Commissioner for Street Management in the Traffic, Parking, & Transportation Department (TPT), welcomed and thanked Working Group (WG) members. He then introduced the project team and reviewed the meeting agenda. Abby Fullem, facilitator with the Consensus Building Institute (CBI), invited Working Group members to introduce themselves and share a hope for the process, summarized below:

- Interest in designing a safe, inclusive, and accessible street for all transportation modes.
- Interest in a design that takes special account of the school community's perspectives and needs.
- Interest in amplifying voices traditionally marginalized in decision-making processes.
- Interest in learning more about city processes.

Relevant Policies and Plans

Andreas Wolfe, TPT Street Design Project Manager, provided background on the Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO) and Safety Improvement Project on Broadway (SIP). Andreas articulated the city's long-term vision for sustainable and safe transportation, providing Working Group members with an overview of the policies that have supported these objectives.

WG members shared questions and comments during and following the presentation. They are summarized below, along with clarifications and responses from City staff, which are italicized in sub-bullets.

- What types of crashes are included in the bike crash data? Does it include bike-pedestrian crashes and instances where bikes run into cars?
 - *The data includes any bike-related crashes reported in police crash reports.*
- How are e-bike and e-scooter crashes reported or accounted for?
 - *There has not been a consistent way of reporting on e-scooters and bikes since they have risen so quickly in popularity. They are now included in police reports.*
 - *CBI proposed that WG members with additional questions about bike crashes connect with Jeff Parenti after the meeting.*
- Data collection and learning from that data could be a permanent component of the Safety Improvement Project's implementation plan.
- A WG member shared that it may be top of mind for WG members that there were fatal crashes in Cambridge in the last year.
- Was Harvard Street ever considered as an alternative to Broadway?
 - *Harvard Street was identified in the Bicycle Plan as a low volume, low speed street. Due to its width, it is ill-suited for separated bike lanes. Broadway was designated as a location for greater separation in the 2020 Bike Plan. Broadway serves as a main connection to important destinations like the Cambridge Rindge and Latin, Cambridge Public Library and Fletcher Maynard School.*
- What does "bicycle comfort facilities" mean?
 - *WG Member: Cyclists have varying comfort levels with riding on different types of bike facilities. Different types of bike lanes and interventions can be made to increase cyclist comfort and make less experienced cyclists feel safe while riding.*
- A WG member shared the observation that people are biking more frequently on Cambridge Street and Massachusetts Avenue compared to Broadway.
 - *Broadway does not currently have separated bike lanes, which likely contributes to this.*

Introduction to Broadway SIP

Jeff explained the significance of the Broadway SIP goals, project area, and projected timeline. Chaimaa Medhat, TPT Community Relations Project Administrator, summarized the City's engagement strategies for the Broadway project and requested feedback from Working Group members on how to enhance community outreach efforts.

WG members shared questions and comments about the presentation. They are summarized below, along with clarifications and responses from City staff, which are italicized in sub-bullets.

- Are Sections B and C occurring at the same time? If so, why create separate sections?
 - *Both sections are scheduled for 2026. These are long corridors and dividing them into sections allows us to conduct more targeted engagement, reduces the construction impact, and makes implementation more manageable.*
- Is there a reason all sections cannot be completed in 2025?
 - *We are trying to spread out the impact of construction. Sections also help us have more local and focused conversations rather than trying to talk to different neighborhoods at the same time.*
- Is there already a plan that we can view online?
 - *There is a draft plan online. We are looking for feedback from the public via open houses, individual outreach, and surveys, and from the Working Groups on Section A.*
- Should we consider what is politically feasible when giving design input?
 - *This is a personal decision for each Working Group member. The City, not this group, is the final decision-maker about this project.*
- Is there a way to know where community input in surveys and open house feedback is coming from? I want to know if the feedback is balanced and reflective of the entire community?
 - *Part of our responsibility as city representatives is to proactively try to reach people who we do not always hear from. We know that standard meeting and engagement formats do not work for every resident. This requires us to be nimble in our approach.*
 - *CBI: The City would appreciate your help sharing information such as the survey and open house meeting dates with your broader communities.*
- Is it possible to filter the surveys for Cambridge residents? Feedback from local residents should be prioritized.
 - *Yes, there is a survey question that asks if the participant is a survey resident, so it is possible to filter.*
- Communication around the project has made it seem like the project design is finalized.

CSO Quick-build Project, Design Considerations and Decision-making

Working Group members watched a pre-recorded presentation about quick-build projects that explained how the City of Cambridge weighs decisions and design options for Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO) projects given limited street space.

WG members shared questions and comments about the presentation. They are summarized below, along with clarifications and responses from City staff, which are italicized in sub-bullets.

- What tools, besides separated bike lanes, has the city used for slowing traffic?
 - *There are two basic categories: vertical elements such as raised crosswalks, and horizontal elements like narrowing lanes. We use both throughout the city. We can use both for the Broadway Safety Improvement Project, but some of the vertical element options will be unusable as they impede emergency vehicle response times.*
- Has the city ever used optical illusion elements where the street is painted so that it looks like a speed bump?
 - *I have never used them but have heard that they are less effective after the first time someone encounters them. We have used public art to make a corridor feel more like a neighborhood and thus slow traffic. This group can consider public art.*
- What is the difference between curb cuts and driveways, and why are they highlighted in the presentation?
 - *A curb cut is any access point from the street and a driveway. More curb cuts mean fewer parking spots on any given street side. We often select the side of the road with more curb cuts to host the bike lane as it maximizes parking spots.*
- I am interested in design features that reflect their neighborhoods and involve communities in the process, such as removable planters and concrete barriers with designs cast into them. To what extent can we consider these kinds of creative designs?
 - *We have spoken with the Cambridge Arts Council and are interested in pursuing creative features, especially to the buffer space between bike and traffic lanes, as long as street markings meet national standards.*
- Is there project budget for red light patrolling and enforcement like auto tickets?
 - *Auto tickets are not currently legal in Massachusetts. Our hope is to create a street design that encourages safe behavior. There is no budget for that in this design process.*
- What is the mix of speed humps and raised tables at intersections being considered on Broadway?

- *These elements are not on the table for this Safety Improvement Project because they require construction. That said, there is a speed hump program that will install new speed humps across the city. We will see how many we can install and where, but it is noted that Broadway is of interest.*
- Could we keep parking near crosswalks and curb cuts if we implemented convex safety mirrors to avoid daylighting?
 - *There are clear standards and regulations about the distance to curb cuts and crosswalks, and mirrors are not an approved traffic device.*
- Could the City provide the overall percentage of parking space usage for Broadway and its side streets?
 - *We are still uploading the study results to the open data portal. Once there, you will be able to see this.*

Broadway SIP Working Group

Abby shared key takeaways from WG interviews including commonalities among WG members, what members want for our conversations, and what members envision Broadway to look like after the SIP. Abby reviewed the WG charter and work plan. WG members accepted interim guiding principles for discussion to be in place until the charter review is complete.

The following questions and comments were shared by WG members following the presentation. Clarifications and responses from the City or CBI are included and italicized in sub-bullets.

Working Group Operating Protocols:

- Request for access to data that is relevant to the Broadway WG and an accessible file sharing system for WG meeting materials.
- Request for some guidelines on how the WG will share on behalf of other people.
- Invitation for the facilitators to balance the input from WG members by interrupting and calling on people if necessary.

Broadway SIP Scope:

- The charter mentions on-street dining. Why is this relevant?
 - *The main consideration is that the City can only accommodate on street dining on the side of the street where there is parking.*
- Are signals and traffic lights a part of the quick build project?
 - *We can make changes to signals to a limited extent. We cannot install a large gantry, i.e., large structure over the road to support multiple traffic lights*
- Are pedestrian crossing lights within the scope of this project?

- *They are not in scope for this SIP. However, we can share feedback on the recommendation for additional pedestrian crossing lights to the correct channels in the City.*

Appendix A: Meeting Participants

WG members:	City staff: TPT	Facilitation team: CBI
Amanda Leifer Christopher Cassel David Lyon Diana Yousef Dien Ho Erich Trieschman John White Kenneth Carlson Phoebe Heyman Nate Sharpe Rhonda Greene Tuongvi Nguyen	Chaimaa Medhat Jeff Parenti Andreas Wolfe	Abby Fullem Meira Downie

Appendix B: Meeting Agenda

5:00	Settling in, refreshments and pizza
5:10	Welcome & Introductions
5:35	Relevant Policies and Plans
6:00	Introduction to Broadway Safety Improvement Project (SIP)
6:25	Break
6:35	Q&A on Pre-recorded CSO Quick-build Project Design and Decision Making
6:45	Broadway Street SIP Working Group
7:10	Public Comment
7:20	Closing & Next Steps
7:30 PM	Adjourn