

Broadway Safety Improvement Project Working Group City of Cambridge

May 20, 2025 | Draft Meeting Summary

Introduction

The City of Cambridge convened the third meeting of the Broadway Safety Improvement Project (SIP) Working Group. 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 9 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 provide an update on Section A design and to review design options for Section C, and to receive feedback on these options.

Actions

- **Consensus Building Institute**
 - Share draft meeting summary for Working Group review and agenda for the next meeting
 - Circulate a poll to confirm next meeting date, to be held late July
- **Working Group Members**
 - Contact CBI if you have further feedback on Section C
- **City of Cambridge**
 - Review and consider WG Section C feedback in ongoing design conversations

Welcome and Introductions

Jeff Parenti, Assistant Commissioner for Street Management in the Department of Transportation (CDOT), welcomed the Working Group (WG) members. Abby Fullem, facilitator with the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) reviewed the agenda.

Project Updates

Jackie McLaughlin, Communications Manager in CDOT, provided an update on Section A. An Open House was held on May 1, 2025 to share the updated Section A design, that reflects input from the Section A Design Survey, previous Open Houses, and Working Group. Paving and side street parking changes have started in preparation for installation.

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.

- Does this design include any raised sidewalks?
 - *This design is a quick build project so raised sidewalks are not included.*
- Is a traffic speed reduction anticipated due to narrower lanes?
 - *Yes, a reduction of speed is anticipated. In other similar projects, we have seen reductions in crashes and some reductions in speed.*
- Could this project be completed before Summer 2026?
 - *The project timeline is charted in relation to the Cycling Safety Ordinance timeline. We don't anticipate being able to speed up the timeline.*

Design Considerations

Andreas Wolfe, Street Design Project Manager in CDOT, presented design considerations for Section C and existing conditions— including driver speeds, street layout and width.

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.

- Did you consider design options that would lower the speed limit to match Vision Zero, which called for 20 km/hr speed limits?
 - *The design is limited by state law, which specifies a city wide speed limit of 25 miles per hour, and certain designated zones with 20 miles/hr*
- Is there a target speed reduction in the design?
 - *There is not a definitive speed reduction goal, but the design adjustments are intended to shift the normal bell curve that captures speed travelled to the left (ie. to reduce all speeds).*
- Does Broadway qualify for the speed hump installation program?
 - *Any raised device on the road is subject to review from the fire department. It is unlikely that speed humps would be approved because Broadway is an emergency response route.*

- Consider other consequences of speed humps, e.g., air quality concerns from increased pollutants created by cars changing speed.
- Increased enforcement would help reduce speeds.
- The speed of e-bikes and scooters in bike lanes is a safety concern. Are speed limits for e-bikes and scooters being considered?
 - *This is an ongoing conversation, but is slowed by state laws, which do not currently designate speeds for different types of vehicles.*
- An important safety consideration is that during morning and evening commuting times, the sun lines up with Broadway creating dangerous windshield glare.

Design Overview

Leah Grodstein, Street Design Project Manager in CDOT, presented design options under consideration for Section C. Leah explained the three main options under consideration: 1) Retaining parking on one side with a narrower than preferred bike lane (4'-5') on the non-parking side, 2) The removal of parking from Section C, with 6' bike lanes on both sides of the road, and 3) A two-way bike lane, with parking retained on the opposite side. The third option is currently the City's preferred option. Leah presented the rationale behind the third option and shared that the City is looking for WG feedback on design.

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.

Clarifying questions:

- Which side of the road would the two-way bike lane be on in option three?
 - The proposal is for the North side of the road, as this will allow more parking spots to be maintained on the South side, where there are more businesses.
- Are these 3 options the only ones being considered?
 - At this time, yes. The road is narrow, which limits the range of options.
- Will there still be jogs in the road around parking spots with the two-way bike lane?
 - No. With a two-way bike lane in this small a section, all parking is on the opposite side.

Feedback: WG member feedback about Section C design is captured in the Site Tour section, below.

Site Tour

Working Group members walked Section C, stopping at key intersections to assess the proposed design and to provide feedback. The feedback from the discussion during the meeting and the site tour has been combined in the summary below. The initial reaction to the 2-way

option was largely negative. However, following the site tour, the group was more open to the 2-way option, while also naming potential challenges and suggestions to strengthen the design.

- Several working members named strong opposition to the idea of two-way bike lanes for the following reasons:
 - Section C would have a different bike lane style than the adjacent sections. Shifting between bike lane designs can be difficult, confusing, and dangerous for cyclists, especially at intersections.
 - Interest in talking about Section B and C design jointly and thinking carefully about transition points.
 - Concern about the amplification of conflict points between cars and cyclists, especially at the parking lot exits at the library and high school, and at the transition point at Ellery street from two-way to single lane bike lane.
- Several working members expressed support for the idea of two-way bike lanes for the following reasons:
 - Positive experiences with using two-way bike lanes in other parts of the city.
 - Observation that two-way bike lanes use space efficiently, and are easy for pedestrians to navigate.

High-Level Feedback on Section C

- **Varied levels of support for two-way design:** Several WG members expressed support for a two-way bike lane, with a few members noting that the two-way design felt more compelling after walking Section C. Other WG members maintained a strong preference for one-way bike lanes.
- **Concern about transition points between sections:** Section C is a relatively short section, and would have a different bike lane design than adjacent sections if the two-way design is implemented. Some WG members questioned if a short two-way section makes sense without broader network integration. Shifting between bike lane designs can be difficult, confusing, and dangerous for cyclists, especially at intersections.
 - Several WG members recommend simple and consistent designs to reduce cyclist confusion
 - Several WG members suggested extending the two-way bike lane to Prospect Street, rather than transitioning at Ellery, which has visibility issues, complex light timing, and winter safety hazards.
- **Preference for a two-way bike lane on the south side of Broadway:** Several WG members shared a preference for installing the two-way bike lane on the south side of Broadway, citing fewer conflicts with right-turning traffic from the high school and the

library when heading westbound. WG members also noted increased pedestrian visibility from the south side of Broadway.

- **Recommendation for increased stakeholder engagement:** Several WG members recommended broader engagement with users of this corridor, including parents, teachers, and students at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, library staff and patrons, local businesses (e.g., Broadway Market)), and cycling organizations (e.g., Broadway Bike School).
- **Need for clear public communication:** WG members noted that clear communication from the City will be essential if they move forward with the two-way design. The rationale for the design was much clearer after going on the site tour. It will be important to make this rationale clear for the general public.

Broadway at Ellery Street

What works well:

- The intersection supports pedestrians: wide sidewalks, good sightlines, short crossing distances across Broadway, and signal crossings with ample time

What feels unsafe or confusing:

- Cars go fast through the intersection
- Bikes turning south onto Ellery from Broadway (Westbound) is difficult. Cars are accelerating downhill
- Children and high school students bike this stretch and often use the sidewalk because of narrow roads and heavy traffic

Feedback on proposed two-way bike lane:

- The westbound transition from a one way bike lane to two way bike lane would be comfortable
- The eastbound transition raised several concerns:
 - Complex traffic light sequencing (separate cycles for N/S Ellery and E/W Broadway) would force eastbound cyclists to wait through multiple light cycles and make potentially dangerous merging maneuvers across moving traffic.
 - Exposes cyclists to traffic on the diagonal transition
 - With the sidewalk bump out, cyclists would start the transition well before the crosswalk
 - Transition anticipated to be confusing for occasional users, leading to use of the sidewalk or road instead of the bike lane

Broadway at Felton Street

What works well:

- Good sightlines if no one is parked near the northeast side of the intersection

What feels unsafe or confusing:

- Without a light, cars pull into the intersection before turning left
- Busy intersection during the day, with CRLS students using the intersection, and cars entering and exiting the lot on the northwest side.

Feedback on proposed two-way bike lane:

- Suggestion to create a four-way stop
- Bollards or precast curbs to prevent parking near crosswalks
- Concern about school drop-offs creating conflicts in a two-way bike lane
- Concern about cars blocking bike lane when pulling out to turn

Broadway at Prescott Street

What works well:

- Good sight lines

What feels safe or confusing:

- Entire intersection noted as problematic
- The jog in Prescott Street creates confusion and unpredictable turns, with vehicles less likely to look right before turning
- Angled crosswalk unsafe for visually impaired users

Feedback on proposed two-way bike lane:

- Offset roadway poses a challenge for safety of cyclists
- Concern about the possibility of an eastbound cyclist getting hit by an eastbound car making a left onto Prescott Street
 - Suggestion to restrict left turns. This also presents a challenge, as cars would need to go to Dana street to get to Cambridge – a significant diversion.
 - Positive reaction to City suggestion of turn-tightening measures

Broadway at Quincy Street

What works well:

- Pedestrian crossings are safer than they once were

What feels unsafe or confusing:

- Limited signage to give direction to cyclists
- Cyclists travelling through the tunnel are in the flow of traffic. Many choose to travel on the sidewalk instead
- Eastbound cyclists coming from the tunnel must be very aware of right-turning cars
- No bike lane up Quincy street, which keeps cyclists from choosing that route

- Intersection needs serious thought about light cycles, turn lanes, and markings, regardless of which bike lane design is chosen

Feedback on proposed two-way bike lane:

- Several favored the two-way bike lane proposal at this location, noting the transition at Quincy would work better than at Ellery.
- Potential challenges included:
 - Westbound cyclists turning south onto Quincy will conflict with southbound Quincy.
 - Northbound from Quincy onto Broadway will require a sharp right turn
 - Bikes coming up from the tunnel may face a challenging entry into the two-way bike lane
 - Potential for bike-only signal phases at intersection, which may worsen already long wait times at the intersection
 - Concern about pedestrian confusion in crossing two-way bike lane. Need for clear pedestrian signage

Public Comment

Members of the public were offered the opportunity to share public comments with WG members. Public comments are summarized below.

Amy Flax: Significant safety concerns about a short segment with a two-way bike lane. This design works on Brattle street, where it is a long, continuous section. A short section is much more difficult, and poses particular risks for high school students, young kids, and older adults, who may not be as attentive to traffic flowing in multiple directions.

Mark Franklin: Want to see more enforcement of cyclist behavior, including stopping at red lights, and the consistent use of lights on bikes.

Working Group Business and Next Steps

Abby Fullem, CBI Facilitator, offered closing remarks including working group business items and next steps.

- The City will consider Working Group feedback in ongoing design conversations
- The Next meeting will be held in late July or early August, and will focus on the design review of draft Section C plans

Appendix A: Meeting Participants

WG members:	City staff: TPT	Facilitation team: CBI
Amanda Leifer Ben Compaine Christopher Cassel David Lyon Dien Ho Erich Trieschman Kenneth Carlson Phoebe Heyman Nate Sharpe <i>Not present:</i> Diana Yousef John White Rhonda Greene Vi Nguyen	Andreas Wolfe Jackie McLaughlin Jeff Parenti Leah Grodstein	Abby Fullem Anika Reynar

Appendix B: Meeting Agenda

5:00	Welcome and Introductions
5:05	Project Updates
5:20	Broadway SIP Section C Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Considerations • Design Overview
6:15	Public Comment
6:25	Working Group Business and Next Steps
6:30	Site Tour of Section C
7:30	Debrief at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School

8:00 PM	Adjourn
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