

Cambridge Street Safety Improvement Project Working Group City of Cambridge

April 7, 2026 | Draft Meeting Summary

Introduction

The City of Cambridge convened a Working Group to advise on the Safety Improvement Project (SIP) on Cambridge Street. Working Group (WG) members are tasked with offering advice, ideas, and concerns about project design, and on the broader outreach about the project. The WG meeting was held at the Cambridge City Hall Annex and on Zoom. There were 11 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 Cambridge Street webpage linked [here](#). 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.

Key Meeting Takeaways

- WG members noted the largest challenges in Section C (Fulkerson Street to Second Street): loading needs and parking reduction.
- With regard to the draft design shared for Section C, WG members:
 - were supportive of maintaining a **bus stop at its existing location on Sixth Street**.
 - **were divided on their preference for a new Bluebikes station** and recommended alternative locations than were proposed.
 - acknowledged the importance of **loading capacity at the funeral home**.

Actions

- **Working Group members:**
 - Attend April 29, 2026, Virtual Information Session, and help advertise to your networks.
- **CamDOT:**
 - Review parking meter restrictions and possibility of meter spots allowing for residential parking overnight.
- **Consensus Building Institute:**
 - Share draft meeting summary for review.

Welcome and Introductions

Abby Fullem, facilitator from the Consensus Building Institute (CBI), welcomed WG members, reviewed the meeting agenda, and facilitated a brief round of introductions. Jerry Friedman,

Supervising Engineer at Department of Public Works (DPW), joined the meeting on behalf of Jim Wilcox, City Engineer.

Project Updates

Jeff Parenti, Cambridge Department of Transportation (CamDOT), gave an update on the status of the three project sections.

- Section A (Prospect Street to Willow Street) is in final design, with construction expected to start in Fall 2026. Due to its pavement condition, Section A will undergo full depth reconstruction which includes surface design and below surface work.
- Section B (Willow Street to Fulkerson Street) is being evaluated for pavement quality to determine the scope and cost of pavement work needed. This section will include traffic signal installation at Cardinal Medeiros, and the intersection with the Grand Junction Path. Section B design work will progress after Section A and C designs are complete.
- Section C (Fulkerson Street to Second Street) has a draft design, which will be shared and discussed during this meeting. Construction is projected to begin in Spring 2027. Jeff then compared the scope of construction and design differences between Sections A and C.

Jackie McLaughlin, CamDOT, shared that the city will host a virtual information session for Cambridge street on April 29, 2026, to share preliminary design plans and present an updated timeline to the public.

Working Group 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.

- Why were the floating bus stops initially planned for Section C removed from the design?
 - *They were not included in the Section C design due to cost and budgetary constraints in the City.*
- What types of pipes are on Cambridge Street now? Will they be replaced?
 - *There are about a dozen steel or lead pipes on Cambridge street that will be replaced with copper pipes at no cost to the property owners.*
- The City should meet with St. Francis of Assisi Church about the Section B design.
 - *We are planning to meet with the Church during Section B design development.*
- Why is the City reconsidering the design near King Open School?
 - *Because we have received many comments about the initial design.*
- Why is there a floating bus stop in Section A but there are none in Section C?
 - *Section A pavement quality is in poor condition and thus requires full-depth reconstruction. There are cost savings when adding a floating bus stop during full-depth reconstruction. Section C does not require full-depth reconstruction so installing floating bus stops would be cost-prohibitive.*
- When will Section B be installed?

- *This is unclear at the moment as we do not know the full scope of work required yet. We will have more details on the timeline once the project goes out to bid and a contractor is hired.*
- Some of my neighbors did not receive postcards advertising the information session. The post card also gives the impression that the design is finalized.
- Communication about the parking impacts of the project have improved. However, the laminated posters do not accurately reflect the amount of parking that is being removed; the City should update the parking loss numbers.

Project Design

Andreas Wolfe, CamDOT, presented the final design of Section A (Prospect Street to Willow Street) and how input from the WG helped shape it. He highlighted the revised design at Tremont Street and updated parking numbers.

Andreas reviewed the design for Section C (Fulkerson Street to Second Street) and outlined the level of cost, benefit, parking numbers, and space requirements across different design options.

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.

- The new outdoor dining area near Tremont Street looks very narrow and congested for both diners and pedestrians.
 - *We are confident that the current amount of seating will fit in the space since the sidewalk is getting widened to incorporate space currently held by meters.*
- What length of the corridor needs full-depth reconstruction? Can more protected intersections be included since this might be our last chance to upgrade them for some time?
 - *The point about future major changes to Cambridge Street is well-taken. We anticipate that Prospect Street to Norfolk Street will require full-depth reconstruction. There is potential for additional work on Columbia Street due to a traffic signal replacement.*
- Are there design options on Prospect Street that offer more protection for pedestrians?
 - *The floating bus stop will help because it hardens turns on that corner.*
- The Windsor Street traffic redirection should not be included in the Section A roll plan because it has not happened and is not being considered as part of the Cambridge Street SIP. If the City advances that project, they should conduct direct outreach with the residential community on Windsor Street.
- The buffers for the precast curbs look narrower than the ones for flex posts. Does the precast curb allow for more street space?

- *On narrow streets, we expect larger vehicles and plows to use the buffer. We are interested in effective width more than the width between lines. Cambridge Street is wider than Broadway, so we can accommodate the precast curbs.*
- Is it possible to use solar power for beacons?
 - *Yes, it is possible. Direct sun exposure is needed.*
- I am concerned cars will double park in the far-side bus lanes on Section C and wonder if automated MBTA enforcement will help the issue. Would the City reconsider the design if cars ultimately use the inner crossing islands as parking?
 - *Yes. We will also use more flex posts around the edges of the crossing islands to discourage double parking.*
- Is it possible to incorporate precast curbs rather than flex posts at the pedestrian islands?
 - *We intend to use precast curbs in straight lines, not curves. We are starting simple and still working through the maintenance logistics.*
- How much does the cost differ among the various design options?
 - *We did not include prices because they are highly site-dependent, as are the considerations for time and utility coordination.*
- It would be helpful to reflect the number of daytime meter spaces in the total number of spaces in the road plans. I think residents would appreciate resident exclusive use at night and potentially extended resident hours in the morning depending on business' hours.
 - *We can look at each location to see if transition meters to residential parking in the evenings works for nearby businesses.*

Draft Section C Design Small Group Discussions

In small groups, the WG discussed key design elements in Section C: Bluebikes station location, parking regulations (i.e., the mix of loading and meters), and the Fifth and Sciarappa intersection. These key elements are listed below, with a summary of the design option(s) and WG feedback, in bullets.

Fifth to Sciarappa

Option 1: This option has parking on the south side of the street and adds a chicane (a shift in the traffic lane) at either end to create space for parking on the south side.

- A WG member appreciated that there would be no stretches without parking on the north or south side given that parking alternates.

Option 2: This option has parking on the north side of the street and creates approximately four more parking spaces on this block. It removes an existing loading zone, which currently serves a funeral home, on the south side.

- WG members recognized the importance of easy loading and unloading for the funeral home.

In both options: Both options include relocated bus stops from Sixth Street to Fifth Street and from Sciarappa Street to Third Street.

- WG members felt strongly that the bus stop should stay at Sixth Street given its proximity to popular destinations and the existing EZRide Shuttle and Galleria Shuttle stops on Sixth Street.
- A WG member highlighted that rush hour traffic could impact the potential bus stop on Third Street.

Bluebikes Station Locations

A Bluebikes station is being proposed at Sixth Street or Sciarappa Street.

- WG members were divided on their preferred location for a Bluebikes station. Some preferred it near Sixth Street so users could easily transfer to other modes. Others preferred it near Sciarappa due to its proximity to the existing network's stations.
- A WG member appreciated having a Bluebikes station on Cambridge Street so that users could easily visit the surrounding businesses.
- Another WG member urged the city to exhaust all options for station locations that do not impact parking or business loading on Cambridge Street.
- WG members suggested exploring alternate locations including side streets, Registry of Deeds, and Gold Star Park.
- A WG member highlighted the proximity of the potential Bluebikes station to existing ones.

Parking Regulations

- WG members encouraged the city to clarify loading zone signage, specifically to indicate if drop-offs and pick-ups are allowed.
- WG members noted that ADA spots at Second Street and the Courthouse are not used frequently and wondered if there was another location for the ADA spots.
- A WG member recommended considering switching the parking between Seventh Street and Sixth Street to the North Side.

“Beyond the Design”: Working Group Discussion

WG members were invited to bring ideas, comments, or reflections on topics related to Cambridge Street not necessarily specific to the Section C design. The WG identified the following topics for future discussion:

- Best practices for multiple road users and separated lanes;
- Neighborhood design and contraflow;
- City outreach and notice practices about roadway projects; and

- Optimizing loading zone time restrictions to ensure efficient vehicle turnover and usage.

Public Comment

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

Zachary: I am curious if there is a way to increase turn hardening in the design. Is it possible to make the bike lane separation concrete rather than flex posts? Consider incorporating concrete protection, like that in Union Square, Somerville, instead of only flex posts.

Leigh: I question the cost-benefit of flex posts. Flex posts do not offer as many physical barriers between cars and cyclists, as drivers can still park in or enter the bike lane.

Jacob: I have seen a rubber, quick build version of a bus bump out in Assembly Square, Somerville. I don't know if that's something that was considered by the city, but I would imagine they are a cheaper option.

Jason: I appreciate the question asked regarding outdoor dining at CASA Portugal. I want to second that comment and ensure that outdoor dining can continue in the same way.

Betty: The city will need to notify people on side streets about any parking changes. The city should consider the lower part of Cambridge Street carefully as it is very narrow. Loading zones are important for store owners especially around the holidays.

Closing and Next Steps

Abby Fullem, CBI, reviewed the next steps including a tentative schedule for the two remaining WG meetings.

Appendix A: Meeting Participants

WG members	City staff:	Facilitation team: CBI
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Carmen Baskauf Charles Hinds Christopher Cassa Christopher Herlich Helen Gibbons Jim McSweeney Joshua Croom Kaleb Abebe Marie Elena Saccoccio Patrick Magee Sky Rose	Jeff Parenti Andreas Wolfe Jackie McLaughlin Jerry Friedman	Abby Fullem Meira Downie
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Appendix B: Meeting Agenda

4:00 PM	Welcome, Introductions, Follow-up Items
4:10	Project Updates – <i>Jeff Parenti, CamDOT</i>
4:25	Project Design – <i>Andreas Wolfe, CamDOT</i> • Brief update on Final Section A (Prospect St to Willow St) • Draft Section C Design (Fulkerson St to Second St) • Q&A
5:10	Public Comment
5:20	Draft Section C Design Small Group Discussions
6:15	Working Group Business, Next Steps, and “Beyond the Design” Working group members are invited to bring ideas, comments, or reflections on topics related to Cambridge St not necessarily specific to the Section A or C design.
6:30 PM	Adjourn