

City of Cambridge Cycling Safety Ordinance Advisory Group

Summary of January 01, 2023 Meeting

Introduction

The City of Cambridge convened a group of stakeholders to provide advice to the City on outreach, implementation, and evaluation regarding the Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO), a policy to build a network of bike lanes and safety improvements on roads in the City. This CSO Advisory Group (AG) hybrid meeting was held on Zoom and in person at the City Hall Annex. There were 11 members in attendance (Appendix A).

This meeting summary captures the key discussion points and advisory group feedback, and actions identified during the meeting. The presentation slide decks and recordings may be found on the CSO AG website: camb.ma/cso-advisory-committee. 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 share and discuss CSO updates, brainstorm options for Phase 4: post-implementation engagement, and discuss the content and approach for sharing a distilled version of the design considerations presentation.

Action items

- City:
 - Ask the Department of Public Works about their coordination with utility companies.
 - Ask the Community Development Department to share information about the distribution of the Street Code pamphlet.
 - Incorporate feedback about Phase 4 engagement activities– emphasize marketing and communication.

City updates

Elise Harmon-Freeman, Communications Manager for the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department, shared updates on the public engagement on the safety improvement projects on Cambridge Street and Main Street, and the partial construction project on Massachusetts Ave. Ongoing projects include the River Street Reconstruction Project, Harvard Square Mass Ave design improvements, and Huron Avenue and Cushing Plaza Improvements. Lastly, Elise shared that a quick-build bike lane installation is planned for Mt. Auburn Street at Aberdeen Ave this spring.

The following questions and comments were shared by CSO AG members. Clarifications and responses from the City are included in italics in sub-bullets.

- Are the Red Line closures impacting CSO project work?

- *The City is tracking these closures closely and working to minimize two disruptive projects occurring simultaneously.*
- Do utility companies notify the City about their planned work?
 - *The Department of Public Works coordinates to some extent with utility companies.*
- Have you noticed more people commenting on projects as a result of new outreach methods?
 - *It is challenging to directly compare projects because each corridor has a different length, population size, and number of businesses. There were more than twice the respondents to the Main Street survey compared to the Hampshire Street survey despite the Main Street project being less than half the length.*

Phase 4: post-implementation letter

Elise Harmon-Freeman reminded participants of the purpose of Phase 4: Post-implementation – to share information about the project and provide resources and guidance to businesses, customers, and residents on how to navigate changes to support integration of the project into the corridor. Elise shared the City’s initial brainstorming on potential engagement activities for this phase, which is divided into three categories: 1) communication support for businesses, 2) partner to encourage business patronization, and 3) public awareness raising, wayfinding, and reorientation for those traveling in the corridor. She invited Phase 4 engagement activity ideas from CSO AG members.

The following questions and ideas were shared by CSO AG members. Clarifications and responses from the City are included in italics in sub-bullets.

- What is the distribution of the Street Code pamphlet? It should be provided to businesses along the CSO corridors.
 - *The Community Development Department (CDD) updated the Street Code pamphlet this fall. It is accessible online and in print, and translated versions are available.*
- Is there ever conflict between residents and businesses for parking spaces?
 - *The City is considering the inclusion of limited overflow business parking spots on side streets of a main corridor. There are some legal and regulatory issues, and consideration of neighbors losing residential parking. Residents are included in the Phase 4 audience.*
- Consider ways to use an in-person presence for this engagement. The City could partner with or use the model of Livable Streets Alliance street ambassadors to answer users’ questions immediately post-installation.
- Consider developing a marketing campaign to advertise the bike network and bring non-residents to the city. Think about networks to tap into, bike lane apps, google maps interfacing, etc. Consider hiring a market consultant and working with tourism offices. People from outside Cambridge should be considered part of the audience for Phase 4 engagement.
- Consider better wayfinding within the city. Valencia, Vancouver, San Francisco, and parts of New York City do this well.
- Develop a map with bike infrastructure and parking options. It could be printed on a small card or be accessible via a website.

- Include CDD and business associations in discussion about partnering to encourage business patronization activities.

Communicating the design process & decision-making around CSO projects

Elizabeth Cooper, facilitator of the CSO AG, introduced the topic of communicating the design process and decision-making around CSO projects to the public. The presentation on this topic at the July CSO AG meeting was informative for many members, and could be developed into materials for the public. Elise Harmon-Freeman shared that some residents incorrectly think the City makes decisions about CSOs arbitrarily. The City struggles to share information about decision-making without getting lost in very technical details. The City is looking for input from CSO AG members for feedback on what information from the design considerations presentation would be helpful to share, and with whom.

The following questions and ideas were shared by CSO AG members. Clarifications and responses from the City are included in italics in sub-bullets.

- General outreach recommendations:
 - The City has done a good job notifying residents about the timeline and conducting engagement.
 - Consider being clearer about what type of meeting the City is hosting. The Cambridge Street meeting was an open house, which was unexpected to many.
 - Consider using multiple methods to share information, e.g., message boards, billboards on Mass Ave.
 - Consider sharing high-level information that is very visual, and QR codes that link to more detailed information.
 - Consider sharing before and after examples (e.g., from Garden and Brattle Streets) in outreach materials. A lot of concepts and terms (e.g., floating bus stops) are new to people and before and after images will help explain them.
 - Where were the Main Street meetings? People likely expected a more standard public meeting, rather than the open house, at the Cambridge Street meeting as it was indoors.
 - *We hosted outdoor open houses at Pisani Center on Bishop Allen Drive and Main Street. It was unfortunate that the weather did not allow for an outdoor Cambridge Street open house, and that the room was too small.*
 - There are a lot of interested but unaffected people at the open houses.
 - Does the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TPT) have a social media account? You could post images of floating bus stops, etc., more freely than what's allowable on the City's social media pages.
 - *TPT does not have a social media page because there is not enough content. Given that we are trying to reach new people less familiar with TPT, it does not help to prioritize developing our own account.*
- Discussion about communicating the design process and decision-making around CSO projects:

- It is challenging to communicate that bike lanes will be installed and that there is an opportunity to influence the process with those that do not want bike lanes. They will be upset regardless of what information is shared, and often do not want to engage more.
- This information should be shared in a distilled manner.
- Share information from this presentation tailored to different audiences with different levels of information. For example, abutters may want more detailed information, members of the public may want high-level information, and others may want to know specifically about engagement efforts. Consider putting this information on foam boards to share at open houses.
- This information should be available online for those wanting it. When I was trying to figure out an outdoor dining solution I was looking for information about street width, snow plow needs, etc. It could exist on the overall CSO page and be linked to on project websites.

Public Comment

No public comment was shared.

Appendix A: Meeting Participants

<p>AG members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Kaleb Abebe● Jason Alves● Mark Boswell● Mercedes Evans● Amy Flax● Debby Galf● Diane Gray● Angela Hofmann● Denise Jillson● Stephen Meuse● Jenny Turner-Trauring	<p>City staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Elise Harmon-Freeman, Traffic, Parking, and Transportation● Brooke McKenna, Traffic, Parking, and Transportation● Chaimaa Medhat, Traffic, Parking, and Transportation● Jeff Parenti, Traffic, Parking, and Transportation● Andy Reker, Community Development● Cara Seiderman, Community Development● Jim Wilcox, Public Works <p>Facilitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Elizabeth Cooper, Consensus Building Institute● Abby Fullem, Consensus Building Institute
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Appendix B: Meeting agenda

- 4:00 PM Welcome
- 4:10 PM City Updates
- 4:25 PM Phase 4: Post-implementation Engagement
- 4:55 PM Distilled Design Considerations Presentation
- 5:20 PM Public Comment
- 5:30 PM Next Steps