

## APRIL 2026 MEETING AGENDA

**The Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) is holding a meeting online via Zoom on April 9, 2026 from 5:30 – 7:00 PM**

**PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO JOIN BY 5:30 PM**

**\*Please keep your microphone muted when you are not speaking\***

Danielle Jones-McLaughlin  
*Acting Chair*

Nieta Greene  
Cecelia Cobb  
Asherah Davis  
Emma Pan  
Erum Sattar  
Zach Solomons  
Jim Wilcox

Rachel Tanenhaus  
*Executive Director/  
ADA Coordinator*

Kate Thurman  
*Deputy Director/  
Assistant ADA Coordinator*

Maya Friedrich  
*Administrative Assistant*

- 1. Introductions** (5 min)
- 2. Announcements** (2 min) – CCPD Staff/Board
- 3. Board Leadership Roles Description and Nominations** (8 min) – CCPD Board  
*CCPD will discuss the board leadership elections process and open nominations for Chair and Secretary positions. See position descriptions on [page 5](#).*
- 4. Approval of March Minutes** (2 min) – CCPD Board  
*See [pages 13-41](#) of this packet*
- 5. Chair's Report** (8 min) – Danielle Jones-McLaughlin
- 6. Working Groups Planning and Expectations** (45 min) – CCPD Board  
*Board members will decide and vote on working group projects and will discuss expectations of working group members.  
See [page 6](#) for the CCPD Board's current working group ideas*
- 7. Public Works Update** (10 min) – Emily Boyle, Engineer, Department of Public Works  
*See [pages 7-12](#) of this packet for presentation slides*
- 8. Staff Report** (6 min) – Rachel Tanenhaus
- 9. Public Input** (4 min) – General Public  
*See [page 4 of this agenda packet for instructions on providing public comment](#)*

### **CART/closed captioning will be provided for this meeting**

Captions can be turned on within the Zoom platform or streamed in a separate URL at <https://bit.ly/CCPDcaptioning>.

(captions will not appear until the meeting has started)

The City of Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities, does not discriminate, including on the basis of disability. The Commission for Persons with Disabilities will provide auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures to persons with disabilities upon request.

**The next CCPD meeting will be held on  
Thursday, May 14, 2026 from 5:30-7:00 PM.**

Members of the public: [See instructions on pages 3 & 4 on how to watch the CCPD meeting and provide public comment](#) via Zoom

Approved 5/14/2026

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)

# Minutes for Thursday, April 9, 2026 CCPD Meeting

Online via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m.

## Present:

**Members:** Cecelia Cobb, Asherah Davis, Nieta Greene, Danielle Jones-McLaughlin, Erum Sattar, Zachary Solomons, Emily Boyle (serving as Public Works representative in place of Jim Wilcox)

**Absent:** Emma Pan

**Staff:** Rachel Tanenhaus, Kate Thurman, Maya Friedrich

## Announcements:

- The CCPD staff announced that two Board members, Deepti Nijhawan and Danielle Jones-McLaughlin, completed their first 3-year terms last month.
  - Deepti Nijhawan has decided not to stay for a second term, and she joined the beginning of the meeting to say goodbye. The CCPD Board and staff expressed appreciation for her service.
  - A Board member asked if members can serve more than one term. Rachel clarified that members can serve up to two terms, but we seek the member's consent before appointing them to a second term, and not every member wishes to serve more than one term.
  - Danielle will be staying on for a second term!
  - Danielle asked if the same term limits apply for our City staff representatives from the Department of Public Works (DPW) and Department of Human Services (DHSP). Rachel said no, as our City representatives can hypothetically stay on the Board indefinitely and are usually selected by their departments. Our ordinance requires us to appoint one representative from DHSP and another from DPW—currently these representatives are Zach and Jim.
- Kate announced that the Community Development department awarded 11 adaptive bikes for the Cambridge Resident Bike Lottery:
  - The application deadline has passed, but interested participants can visit [the Bike Lottery Program website](#) to learn more before applying next year.
  - While there are a certain number of vouchers specifically for residents with disabilities to receive adaptive bikes, the term "adaptive" includes e-bikes and relatively small accessibility adjustments in addition to more specialized bikes and tricycles.
  - There are income restrictions for lottery applicants.
- The City Manager's office is holding a celebration event for board and commission members on Wednesday, April 29 at the Multicultural Arts Center in Kendall Square.
  - The event will include a speaking portion, dinner, socializing and a program on the history of Cambridge boards and commissions.
  - The City Manager sent invitations directly to CCPD Board members via email.
  - Erum said she is unable to attend and hopes it will happen again. CCPD staff replied that City staff are hoping to make this an annual event, so there will likely be another opportunity to attend next year.

## Board Leadership Role Descriptions & Nominations:

- Our ordinance states that we hold elections every May for Board Chair and Secretary positions:
  - Nominations open in April (they are now open) and will continue until the start of our meeting in May.

- We included brief descriptions of both positions in the agenda packet.
  - We provided these descriptions to help Board members understand the types of activities these positions will involve, especially considering we do not currently have a Secretary or elected Chair.
- CCPD staff explained that our Board operations have been unusual for the past several months, as Danielle stepped up as Interim Chair by default due to our previous Chair stepping down, and that in the past the Chair has been the primary facilitator of the meetings rather than staff.
- Nieta expressed interest in the Secretary position but said she feels hesitant about taking on the Chair role and asked whether someone must run for both.
  - Kate said we take nominations for Chair and Secretary separately, so it is okay for Board members to nominate themselves for just one of the positions.
- Asherah asked whether our newest Board members are eligible for these positions, and whether we can postpone elections for a few months due to the large number of new Board members.
  - Kate said that any voting Board members are eligible to run for either position, although Board members can only serve up to two one-year terms as Chair or Secretary, respectively.
  - In response to Asherah’s suggestion about postponing elections, Kate said the Board can do that but would need to stick to the May election cycle, so subsequent elections will take place in May 2027 regardless of when we hold elections this year.
- Rachel reminded people that Danielle was not elected to her position as Chair but stepped up from her Secretary position after our last Chair resigned. While the Secretary has a less active role than the Chair, that person may be asked to step in if our Chair is no longer able to serve.
- Danielle encouraged other Board members to nominate themselves for positions if they are interested. She said she has felt supported by CCPD staff while entering her new role.
  - Danielle suggested that, while the Board can postpone elections if they do not feel comfortable stepping into these positions yet, CCPD staff and Board members with more seniority can answer their questions and support them if we choose to move forward with elections in May.
- Nieta nominated herself for Secretary.
- Danielle nominated herself for Chair.
- Board members can submit additional nominations until the beginning of our meeting on May 14.
  - To submit nominations, email CCPD staff at [ccpd@cambridgema.gov](mailto:ccpd@cambridgema.gov).

## Approval of March 2026 Minutes:

- The March 2026 CCPD meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

## Chair’s Report:

Danielle Jones-McLaughlin reported:

- CCPD received an email from a community organizer named Benji Kemper from Your Access Advocates, Inc. thanking us for our support letter to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities regarding an initiative requiring that 10% of housing in a building be accessible if it has more than 10 units and an elevator.
  - The initiative passed! It will apply to properties funded by Massachusetts affordable housing grants.
  - Danielle mentioned that our previous Board member Keisha Greaves asked us to put together the letter of support, and we appreciate Keisha’s initiative in bringing it to us.
  - Danielle thanked the Board for putting the letter together and expressed pride in our contribution to furthering accessibility in Massachusetts.
- On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, Governor Healey signed an Executive Order establishing a state advisory council tasked with developing a strategy to eliminate barriers for adults with autism and high support needs:
  - The [Executive Order \(no. 656\)](#) is titled “Establishing a Statewide Strategy To Support Adults With Profound Autism”. Danielle noted she dislikes the term “profound autism”, which is a term rejected by

many autistic advocates, but appreciates the state's initiative to improve accessibility for adults with autism.

- The order will focus on autistic adults over 22 years old who “require 24-hour support and assistance due to significant intellectual disability and limited to no language skills”.
- The advisory council will be meeting with community stakeholders including “individuals with autism, families, advocates, providers, and subject matter experts to create opportunities/eliminate barriers for adults with autism” to develop a report and strategy in areas such as housing, healthcare, and meaningful daily activities.
- Rachel asked if there is information on whether actual autistic people would be represented on the council.
  - Danielle said the Executive Order does not clarify whether any of its members self-identify as autistic.
  - According to the Order, the Advisory Council will include several commissioners and secretaries of relevant state offices (Department of Development Services, Department of Mental Health, etc.) and “up to 10 subject matter experts appointed by the governor” including providers, clinicians, advocates, and family members of “Adults with Profound Autism”.
- Nieta agreed that council's use of the term “profound autism” is offensive and hurtful, and even though this is a state-level council, she believes the council's work will impact the autistic community in our city.
  - She also reiterated concerns about whether the council is including autistic voices, and if they are not, she feels CCPD should speak up about this.
  - She also said we should ask the council to change its name, as the term “profound autism” excludes people who may not have the support needs specified by that diagnosis but still have unmet needs.
  - Nieta pointed out that someone who does not meet the “profound autism” criteria may have lower support needs at some times but have difficulty talking or need more support at other times.
- Maya also noted autistic advocates have criticized the “profound autism” diagnosis label as both stigmatizing and not useful, because the label itself includes a wide range of autistic people with varying needs (see: [“Profound Autism” Label Does Not Predict Strengths or Help Plan Supports - PMC](#)).
- Danielle suggested that the council might benefit from members who are non-autistic or do not have high support needs and can advocate for non-verbal autistic community members.
  - Rachel disagreed about autistic individuals being unable to advocate for themselves, because some non-speaking autistics are still able to communicate through typing or other methods besides talking and suggested the council could make accommodations to include their input.
- Asherah said this discussion seemed appropriate for an advocacy and civic engagement working group, and that creating that group could give the Board the opportunity to challenge or influence similar policy initiatives.

## Working Groups Planning & Expectations:

The CCPD Board discussed working group ideas:

- Danielle discussed the four ideas that previous and current CCPD Board members have brainstormed (see Working Groups List for additional details):
  - Resource Materials
  - Participatory Budget
  - Board Orientation Materials
  - Civic Engagement
- Rachel mentioned that her contacts at the Department of Public Works (DPW) have expressed interest in getting regular input from our Board on placement of accessible parking spaces, and that this was another working group idea she had raised at the last meeting.

- Maya had not added the accessible parking working group to the list because, during our last working groups discussion, this project did not appear to generate interest among Board members. However, there was limited attendance at that meeting so that may have been an incorrect assumption. It is also something that could be incorporated into the Civic Engagement working group.
- Asherah suggested that instead of creating a parking working group, the Board could designate a member as a “parking liaison” who could provide input to DPW on parking-related issues based on their experience and consultation with other Board members and community members.
- Cecelia expressed interest in serving as a “parking liaison” on DPW parking or streetscape related projects.
- Maya clarified she added the Civic Engagement group idea to this list based on Danielle’s suggestion of getting CCPD involved with the state autism strategy project.
  - CCPD staff felt a more general working group that could focus on engaging with external disability-related initiatives could generate more interest from the Board, and the group’s members could select opportunities based on their specialties and interests.
- Asherah suggested creating a working group focused on engagement and outreach, which could include the listed “Resource Materials” project, but also involve events and outreach for getting community members involved with CCPD and aware that we exist.
  - Kate said combining outreach with the resource materials group would be a great idea and reiterated that Board members are welcome to contribute more working group ideas if they have other ones.
  - Asherah said they would be interested in participating in this outreach/resource materials group.
- Danielle said she would be interested in serving on the Civic Engagement and Participatory Budget groups.
- Rachel reminded Board members that if they are interested in more than one group and have the time and energy to commit to both, they are not limited to participating in just one group.
- Nieta expressed interest in serving on the Civic Engagement and Participatory Budget groups.
- Erum mentioned the Board’s previous discussions about sidewalk accessibility and snow-clearing and raised concerns about predictions of extreme heat this year. She said she would love to participate in projects focused on mitigating weather and climate change threats to people with disabilities.
- Asherah asked what the next steps are to create these working groups.
  - CCPD staff said Board members should vote to finalize a list of working groups, and then members can commit to each group.
  - Board members will also need to discuss expectations of one another related to attendance and frequency of meeting.
- CCPD staff clarified that the Board already voted to approve the Resource Materials, Participatory Budget, and Board Orientation groups, although these groups never began meeting and our membership composition has significantly changed since then.
  - Current members can choose whether to move forward with these three groups (and do not have to vote to approve them) or abandon them if there is no longer interest.
  - CCPD staff suggested starting fresh and “disbanding” the previous groups may be helpful since they were not created with the current group’s interests in mind.
    - Nieta expressed procedural concerns about abandoning these projects without a vote since these projects were voted on and approved.
- Asherah made a motion to disband the working groups approved in summer 2025.
  - Danielle asked whether disbanding the working groups would mean starting from scratch to create new ideas.
    - Maya clarified undoing the official “approval” for these ideas does not mean we would have to remove them from the idea list altogether but rather demote them to “idea” status along with other ideas that have not yet been voted on (such as the Civic Engagement group).

- Nieta, who had initially said she would second the motion, withdrew her “second”. She said that having intentional discussions about each approved working group and deciding whether to proceed with them may be better than disbanding them all at once/starting over.
- The motion died.
- The Board unanimously voted to table the working groups discussion until our next meeting.

## Public Works Report:

Emily Boyle requested the CCPD Board’s feedback on design proposals for an upcoming reconstruction of accessible parking spaces next to bike lanes on Massachusetts Avenue (see attached slides titled “Accessible Parking by Separated Bike Lanes”):

- Emily showed two maps of accessible parking designs proposed by DPW consultants (see slide titled “Mass Ave Proposed Accessible Parking”):
  - These designs propose to keep the Mass Ave bike lane along the curb line and have “floating” accessible spots (like the other parking spots).
  - The accessible spots would be larger than other spots (24 x 10 feet) and would have a 5-foot access aisle in the back, a 3-foot buffer between the parking spot and bike lane, and a crossing marked in the bike lane to an accessible ramp onto the sidewalk.
  - Emily clarified this is not the current design of accessible parking spots in the City; it is a new design DPW is proposing as an option.
- She showed a map of the City’s current accessible parking design along bike lanes (see slides titled “Current Layout on Main Street”):
  - On current streets such as Main Street, accessible parking spots are placed along the curbside, while the bike lane comes around them.
  - In designs like Main Street, the bike lane is next to the curb while non-accessible spots sit between the bike lane and street, while accessible spots are adjacent to the curb.
- Emily showed a map and photograph of the current accessible parking layout on Hampshire Street as another example of curb-adjacent accessible parking (see slides titled “Current Layout on Hampshire Street”).
- Emily requested the Board’s feedback on whether the current curb-adjacent accessible parking spots or the newly proposed “floating” spots would better meet the needs of Cambridge residents with disabilities:
  - Cecelia thanked Emily and DPW for bringing these designs to us for feedback and pointed out two key differences between the design that she invited other Board members to consider:
    - In the new proposed version, the inclusion of a curb cut and ramp could improve accessibility for wheelchair/mobility device users. She also appreciates the flex post buffers around the parking space itself in this design.
    - Cecelia expressed concern about the 3-foot buffer between the parking and bike lane itself in the new design, as she does not believe 3 feet would provide enough space for large mobility devices, and that 3.5-4 feet would be more ideal. She also noted currently accessible parking spaces provide no buffer at all, so this is a potential improvement.
    - Emily clarified that because the proposed accessible spots are wider than the current curb-adjacent spots (10 feet instead of 7-8 feet), there would be additional buffer space.
- Erum asked why these two design options have been proposed—what motivated DPW to propose the new design?
  - Emily said DPW’s recent bike lane projects are promoting consistency in keeping bike lanes on the curb and have been exploring new layouts with Massachusetts Avenue.
  - The proposed “floating” design would also keep current accessible spots in their current locations as the bike lane is moved along the curb, whereas the spots would need to move to accommodate the bike lane curving around them.

- Because these spots are often requested by residents with disabilities based on their needs, keeping the spot adjacent to the curb could move the spots further away from them. For example, spots that are currently mid-block may move to an edge of a block if the City maintains the curbside accessible parking.
- Erum asked Emily to show photographs of the two designs again, and Emily clarified that the City does not currently have floating accessible spots, so she does not have a photo of the new design.
- Erum said she prefers disability parking spots be placed closer to the curb, as cyclists are more mobile than people using accessible parking spots, and that it would be easier for them to navigate safely moving around the parking spot than for a disabled person to navigate crossing bike traffic.
- Asherah said they appreciate the new designs' flex barriers and additional space for mobility aids but also agreed that having spaces against the curb may be helpful and safer, although without a curb cut/space for a ramp that might not provide full accessibility. She also wondered how the presence of flex barriers and other features of the new design would affect snow removal (such as by making it more difficult to clear or easier by preventing snow from being dumped in there).
- Nieta said having larger spaces, such as in the floating designs, would benefit drivers who use motorized wheelchairs, and also mentioned that users of the Ride program are usually dropped off in these spaces and may require the additional room.
  - She said it is dangerous to get out of a car with a mobility device regardless of whether you are in an accessible spot or not, and it is more dangerous when there is no barrier protection, and that she has had risky experiences with bikers.
- Kate said she agreed with some of Nieta's points but disagreed with the idea that floating spots would benefit drivers with disabilities.
  - For drivers who use wheelchairs/require ramps, it is easier to park next to the curb. The City is very careful about not placing accessible spots next to street furniture and making sure there is clear space for the deployment of a ramp and drivers don't have to roll down from the car and then up a curb cut to get to the sidewalk.
  - People with disabilities often move more slowly, and a ramp being deployed could inevitably cause conflict from a cyclist not being aware or being angry about a disabled person slowing them down.
  - Kate pointed out the City has given a lot of attention to the needs of cyclists, often at the expense of people with disabilities and she would advocate very strongly for the spots to be kept near the curb.
  - She also mentioned the new design could be dangerous for service dog users like herself, as her dog could jump out into the bike lane and put the service dog user, bikers, and himself at risk.
  - Nieta said she understood Kate's perspective but believed a mix of both types of spots could provide more accessibility to a greater number of mobility aid users. Kate agreed that some people may prefer the floating spots but said it would be safer to have consistency for all the accessible spots.
- Danielle said she agreed with all previous points in support of keeping the spots closer to the curb and noted that although she does not use a mobility device, she has had concerning encounters as a pedestrian crossing bike traffic.
- Emily said she heard CCPD staff and Board members express a strong preference for keeping accessible parking spots adjacent to the curbside and would share this feedback with the project consultants.

## Staff Report

Rachel Tanenhaus reported:

- Since we now have just eight Board members, we will be posting a call for new members. Interested individuals can [apply through the City's Boards and Commissions portal](#).
  - Current CCPD Board members can pass this information along to people in their communities who may be interested in serving.
- Rachel will report on Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) variance request updates at the next CCPD meeting.

- In May, the City is rolling out an updated reasonable accommodations policy for employees.
  - Rachel said that as a city dedicated to serving people with disabilities, we need to ensure our own employees experience accessibility in their workplace.
- CCPD will be tabling at the Community Celebration and Housing Resource Fair event on May 9 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the King Open School.
  - The Cambridge Human Rights Commission and Commission on Immigration Rights and Citizenship are putting on this event, which will combine informational tabling about housing resources with celebration of immigrants and cultural diversity in Cambridge.
  - The event will feature live music, food, and a variety of fun activities.
  - Resource tabling will take place indoors in a less noisy area, where we will set up a booth to talk to people about disability housing rights.
    - If Board members want to table with us, they should let Rachel know.
    - CCPD staff will answer disability rights-related questions, but we will also be advertising our open Board positions, so having a Board presence will be helpful.
- Mass Office on Disability is offering their Community Access Monitor and Advanced Community Access Monitor program:
  - These are free trainings that teach participants how to identify and advocate for accessibility needs in their communities.
  - You can view the upcoming training dates and [sign up for the Community Access Monitor trainings here](#).
- Partners for Youth with Disabilities is hosting their [2026 Youth Leadership Forum conference](#) from June 25-29 in Boston.
  - If you know youth or young adults with disabilities, let them know about this conference, which provides opportunities for community building and workshops on topics such as advocacy, disability pride, college, and employment.
- At our next meeting in May, representatives from Cambridge's Heat Justice Liaison program will speak about their project, which is focused on making Cambridge communities more heat and climate resilient.
  - They are trying to collect input from the most affected and underserved communities and have requested our feedback about how people with disabilities are affected by and cope with extreme heat.

## Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maya Friedrich

# CCPD Chair & Secretary Job Descriptions

## Chairperson

Responsibilities Include:

- Collaborating with staff to prepare meeting agendas and support clear communication
- Attending and facilitating board meetings
- Representing the Commission in an official capacity when appropriate

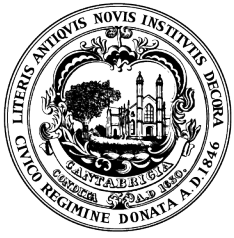
## Secretary

Responsibilities Include:

- Collaborating with the Chair to prepare meeting agendas
- Timekeeping during meetings and interrupting as necessary to keep the agenda moving on time
- Checking in periodically with active working groups to facilitate accountability
- Facilitating CCPD Board meetings in the absence of the Chair

## 2026 Board Working Group Ideas

Working Group Idea	Project Goals	Board Comments/Interest
Resource Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop directories of housing providers and other resources for new Cambridge residents with disabilities and their families</li> </ul>	
Cambridge Participatory Budget (PB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore how to increase the Cambridge disability community’s participation in the PB process</li> <li>• Develop and/or advise on accessibility-related PB projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cecelia expressed interest</li> <li>• Nieta expressed interest— she served as a PB delegate in past years and noticed accessibility issues in the PB process.</li> </ul>
New Board Member Orientation Packet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a welcome packet to orient new members of the CCPD board and formalize the onboarding process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nieta expressed interest</li> <li>• Erum and Danielle validated the need for a streamlined board member orientation process even if it isn’t developed through a working group</li> </ul>
Civic Engagement Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize CCPD board representation at public forums and policy-related engagement opportunities</li> <li>• Attend and report back on meetings/events on topics affecting the disability community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Danielle expressed interested in getting CCPD Board members engaged with <a href="#">Massachusetts Executive Order No. 656 (Autism Support Strategy)</a></li> </ul>



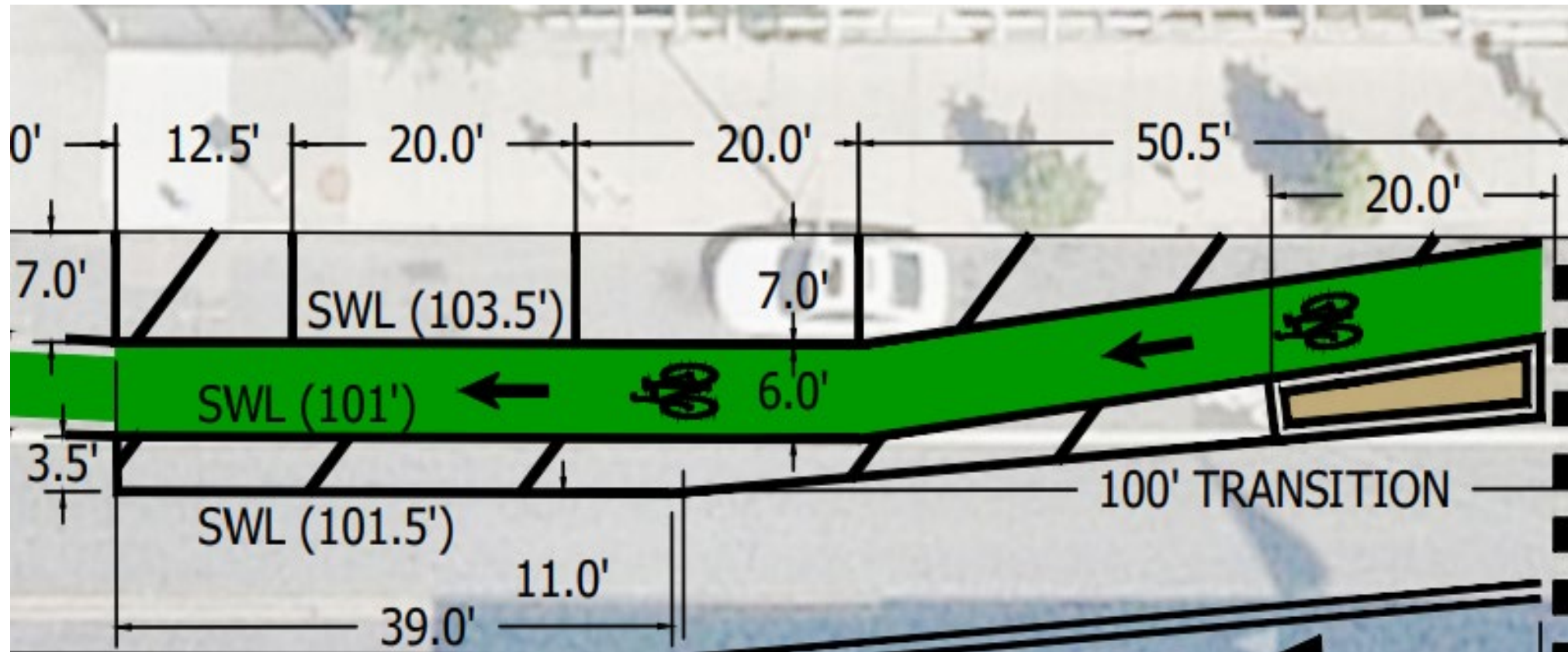
CITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

**THE** CAMBRIDGE  
DEPARTMENT  
OF PUBLIC  
**WORKS**

# Accessible Parking by Separated Bike Lanes



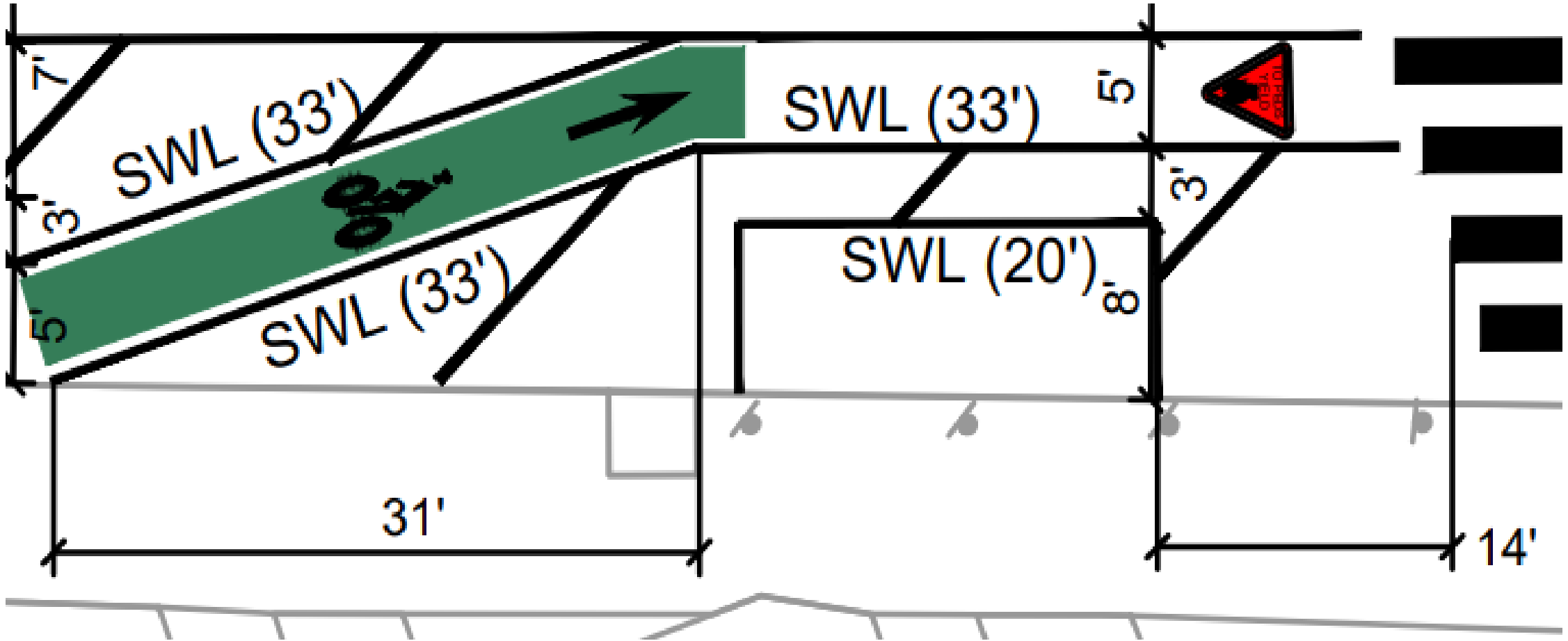
# Current Layout On Main Street



# Current Layout On Main Street



# Current Layout on Hampshire Street



# Current Layout on Hampshire Street

