



Neighborhood  
Planning  
Initiative

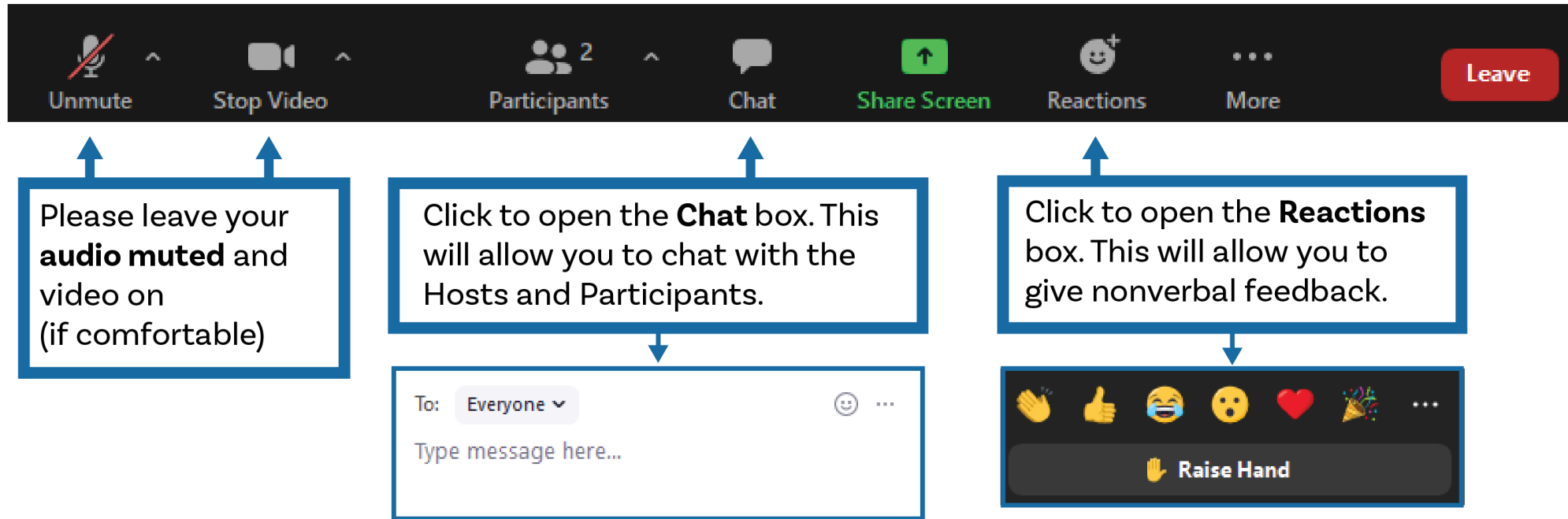
# Second Community Meeting

## Mid-Cambridge

September 20, 2023



# Getting to Know Zoom



The image shows a Zoom toolbar with several icons: Unmute (muted), Stop Video (video off), Participants (2), Chat, Share Screen, Reactions, More, and Leave. Below the toolbar are three callout boxes with arrows pointing to specific icons. The first callout points to Unmute and Stop Video. The second callout points to Chat and has a box below it showing a chat interface with 'To: Everyone' and a text input field. The third callout points to Reactions and has a box below it showing a reactions panel with various emojis and a 'Raise Hand' button.

Please leave your **audio muted** and video on (if comfortable)

Click to open the **Chat** box. This will allow you to chat with the Hosts and Participants.

Click to open the **Reactions** box. This will allow you to give nonverbal feedback.



For Zoom-related questions reach out to Lev McCarthy via chat or email [lmccarthy@cambridgema.gov](mailto:lmccarthy@cambridgema.gov)



If you're having connectivity issues, call in at 929-436-2866  
Meeting ID: 832 0424 0505



We're recording!

# Meeting Purpose, Outcome, & Process



## PURPOSE (Why)

- Share emerging priorities from engagement so far
- Hear your reactions and ideas!

## OUTCOMES (What)

- City staff takes away: refined goals and direction for actions
- Community members take away: Increased awareness of City initiatives and policies, and ideas for actions

## PROCESS (How)

- A presentation and 2-part breakout group discussion

Connect with your  
Neighborhood  
Planner!

GARY CHAN,  
Neighborhood Planner  
[gchan@cambridgema.gov](mailto:gchan@cambridgema.gov)  
617-349-4603

# Outreach & Engagement



We acknowledge that the entire community isn't present tonight

- Project mailings, signage, focus groups, and online engagement will help us reach members of the community who aren't here tonight
- Let us know your suggestions for how to reach a wider audience!

There will be more opportunities to engage!

- We'll post a recording of tonight's meeting online, including the presentation slides
- Over the coming months, we welcome your feedback, whether online or in-person

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# Tonight's Agenda

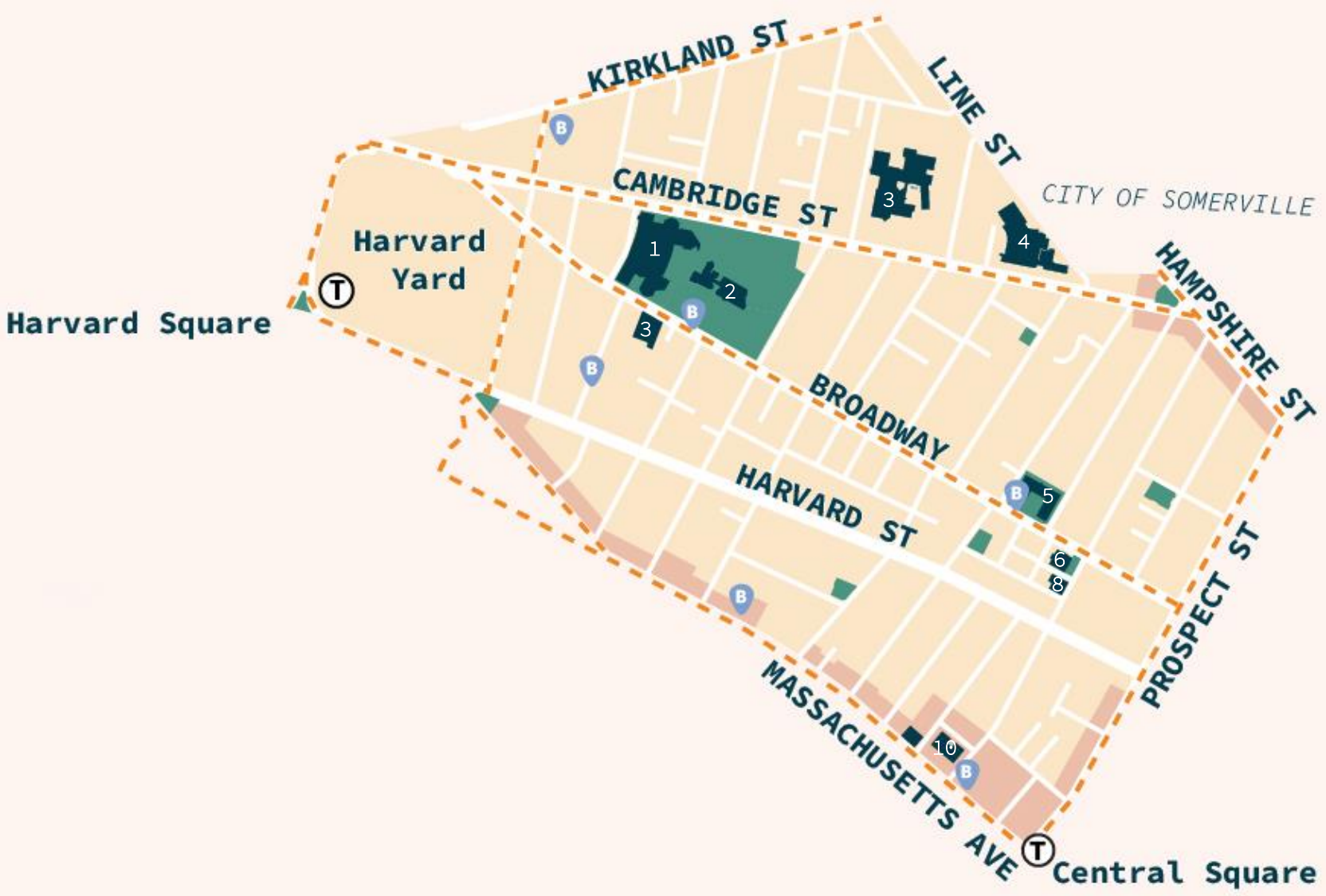
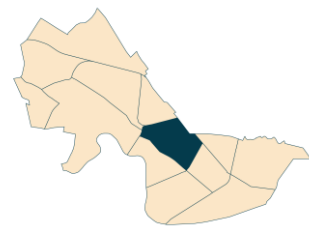


1. Welcome Back + Intro to Neighborhood Planning 10 min
2. What We've Heard So Far 10 min
3. Breakout Discussions 50 min
  - Community and Land Use
  - Mobility (how we travel through the neighborhood)
  - Parks and Public Space
  - Small Group Discussion
4. Report Back and Next Steps 15 min



Reminder!

Intro to Neighborhood Planning



- 1 Cambridge Rindge & Latin School
- 2 Cambridge Public Library
- 3 Spaulding Hospital
- 4 Cambridge Health Alliance
- 5 Old Longfellow School Building
- 6 Cambridge City Hall Annex
- 7 Dept of Human Services Programs
- 10 Cambridge City Hall
- B Bluebike Station
- Commercial District
- MBTA Bus (1, 64, 68, 69, 83, 86, 91)
- T MBTA Red Line (Harvard, Central)

# What is the Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI)?



Cambridge's Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI) gives everyone in Cambridge access to local planning! City staff work with community members to improve the places that are central to daily life.

NPI includes four parts:

Focus for Tonight!





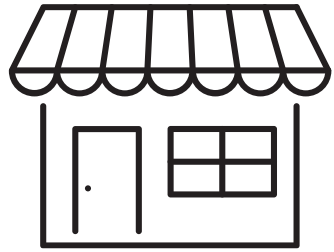
# What Do Action Plans Do?



Community conversations about open space, housing, transportation, economic development, environment, etc.

- > Craft a neighborhood's vision for the future
- > Identify actionable local projects
- > Build relationships with neighbors and with City staff while demystifying City processes

# Example Actions from Past Neighborhood Studies



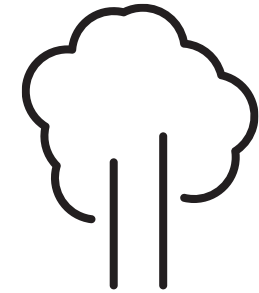
Connect small businesses to financial supports



Make streets safer to cross with signal improvements



Encourage more family-sized housing through the permitting process

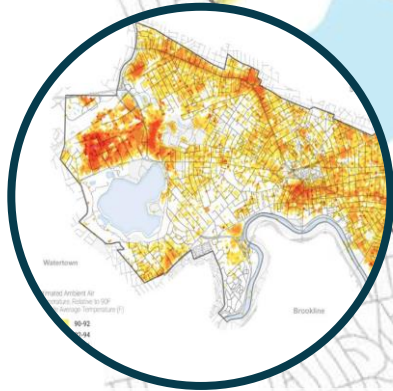


Improve parks and make better access to parks

# How Neighborhood Planning fits in with other City projects



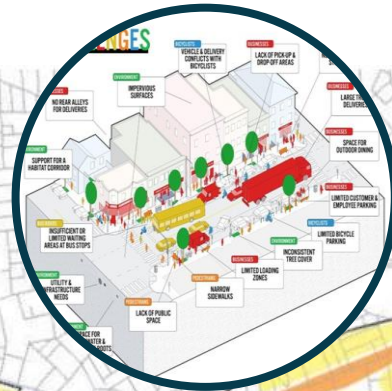
Alewife District Plan



Resilient Cambridge



Urban Forestry Master Plan

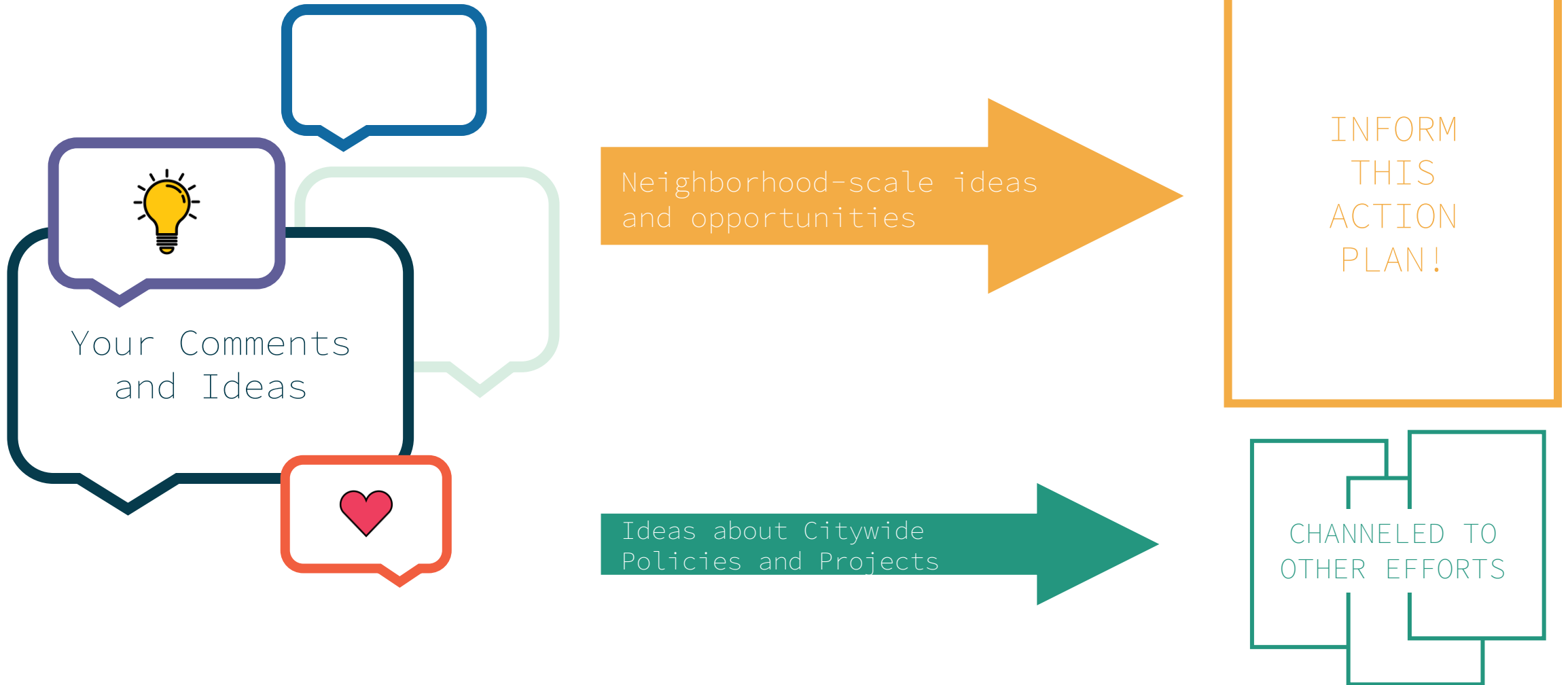


Our Cambridge Street

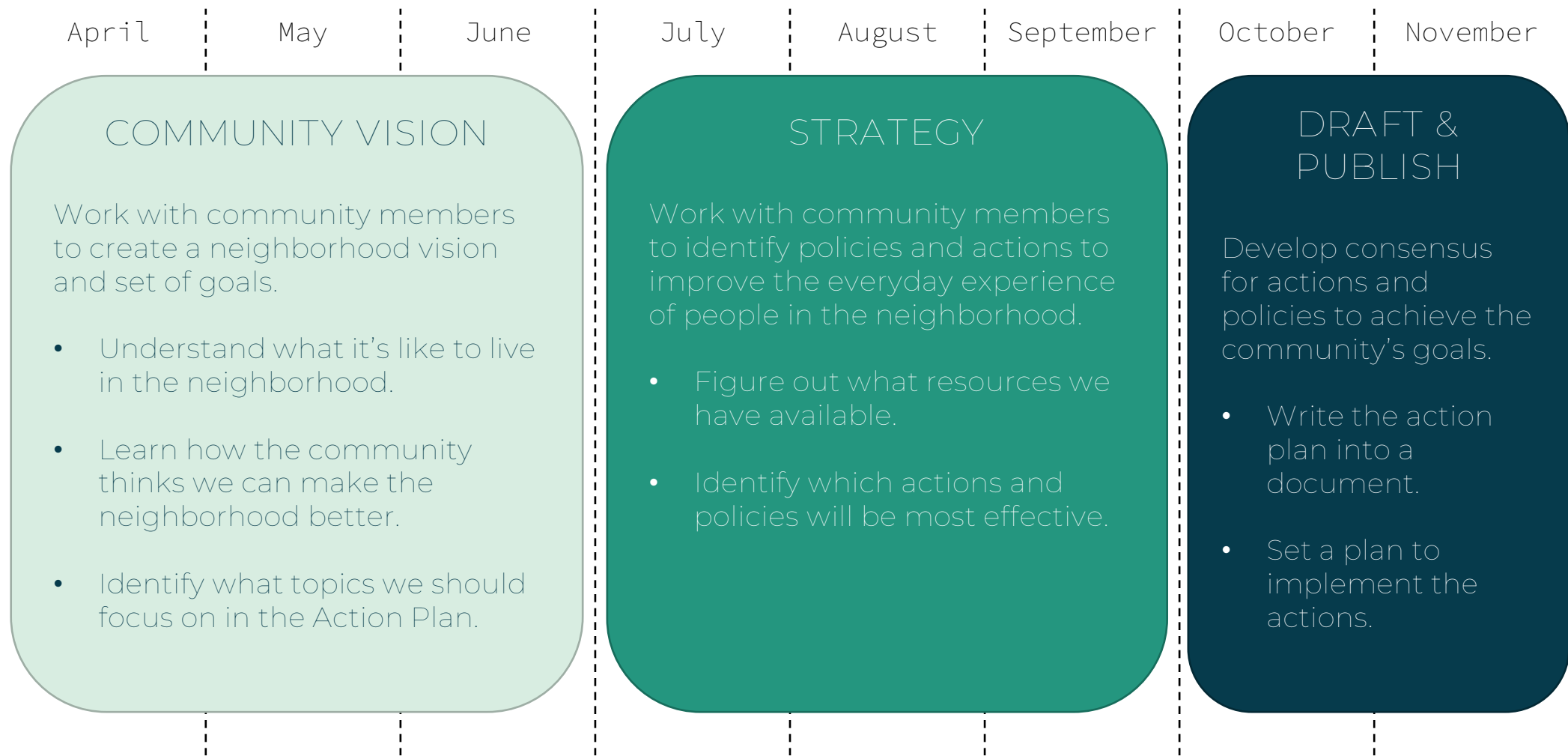


Vision Zero Action Plan

# What's the Focus of the Neighborhood Planning Initiative?



# Action Plan Schedule



# NPI Overall Scheduling

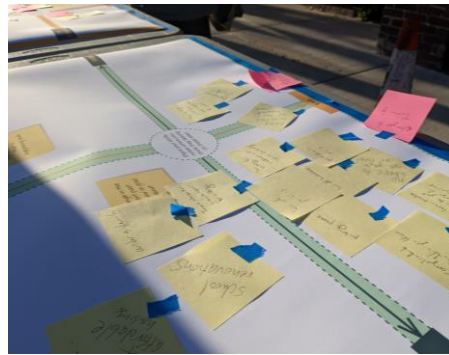
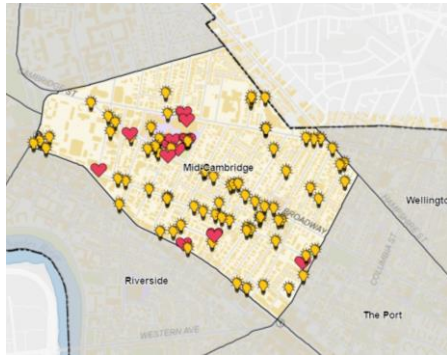




*Mid-Cambridge*

What We've Heard So Far

# Your Input So Far



229 Idea Map  
Comments &  
Responses

Pop-ups & Focus  
Group Input

1<sup>st</sup>  
Public  
Meeting  
June 13,  
2023

317 Online Survey  
Responses

2<sup>nd</sup>  
Public  
Meeting  
Sept. 20,  
2023

*Draft  
Plan!*

*Neighborhood Needs  
Identification*



*Action Plan  
Goals  
Development*



*Action Plan  
Actions  
Development*



*We're Here Now!*



# Who We're Hearing From – Survey Highlights

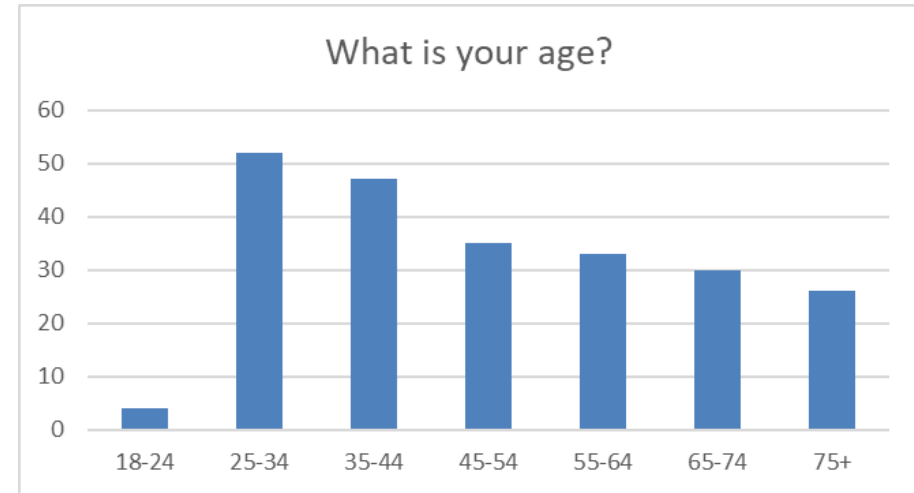


## Different Methods Reach Different Audiences

82% of respondents indicated this survey is their first time engaging with this project

78% indicated they have participated in another way during this process

## A Mix of Ages



## Many residents

87% of respondents indicated they live in Mid-Cambridge

## Highly-educated

96% of respondents who indicated education have a Bachelor's or Graduate degree.



**Make it safer and more convenient for people to walk in the neighborhood.**



**Expand and integrate affordable housing opportunities in the neighborhood.**



**Encourage the reuse of vacant or underutilized lots and closed businesses.**



**Help keep our streets and public spaces clean.**



**Increase opportunities for gathering and community building.**



**Make it safer for people to bike in the neighborhood.**



**Add and improve green spaces and plantings**



**Slow traffic through the neighborhood.**



**Improve access to different types of outdoor activities**

Key

Community and  
Land Use

Mobility

(How we move through the  
neighborhood)

Parks and  
Public Space

# 3 Categories



## Community and Land Use

Expand and integrate affordable housing opportunities in the neighborhood.

Encourage the reuse of vacant or underutilized lots and closed businesses.

Increase opportunities for gathering and community building.

## Mobility (How we move through the neighborhood)

Make it safer and more convenient for people to walk in the neighborhood.

Make it safer for people to bike in the neighborhood.

Slow traffic through the neighborhood.

## Parks and Public Space

Help keep our streets and public spaces clean.

Add and improve green spaces and plantings.

Improve access to different types of outdoor activities



# BREAKOUT GROUPS: Let's Discuss!

- Community & Land Use
- Mobility
- Parks & Public Space

50 minutes

You will spend time with TWO topics of your interest

# Respond to the Poll – Choose A Category!



## Community and Land Use

Expand and integrate affordable housing opportunities in the neighborhood.

Encourage the reuse of vacant or underutilized lots and closed businesses.

Increase opportunities for gathering and community building.

## Mobility (How we move through the neighborhood)

Make it safer and more convenient for people to walk in the neighborhood.

Make it safer for people to bike in the neighborhood.

Slow traffic through the neighborhood.

## Parks and Public Space

Help keep our streets and public spaces clean.

Add and improve green spaces and plantings.

Improve access to different types of outdoor activities

# Today's Discussion



*Let's dig in deeper on each of these goals!*

- What policies, programs, and actions support these goals?
- How can the policies, programs, and actions improve life in Mid-Cambridge?

15 min



1. Expand and integrate affordable housing opportunities in the neighborhood.
2. Encourage the reuse of vacant or underutilized lots and closed businesses.
3. Increase opportunities for gathering and community building.

20 min

# 1. Expand and integrate affordable housing opportunities in the neighborhood



*What we've heard so far...*

- 52% of survey comments about the Affordable Housing goal focus on the high cost of living and unaffordability of Cambridge
- There is desire for more affordable housing in the neighborhood
- Neighbors shared a desire for more apartments and smaller units to allow for more affordable housing opportunities

*4 family house on our street used to house 12 people. Now 2 fancy townhouses - housing 4 adults and 1 baby. 8 people no longer have affordable housing.*

Joan Lorentz Park  
Pop Up

*More apartments to house more people*

June Public Meeting

*For a more diverse neighborhood, affordable housing opportunities must be expanded.*

Goals Survey



# 1. Expand and integrate affordable housing opportunities in the neighborhood



Here are some things the City is doing. What would you like to see in Mid-Cambridge?

**Housing**  
 Housing Development and Preservation  
 For Applicants  
 For Homebuyers  
 Homebuyer Education  
 Credit 101 Workshop  
 Downpayment Assistance  
 HomeBridge  
 Affordable Mortgage Products  
 Limited Equity Cooperatives  
 Homebuyer FAQ  
 For Homeowners  
 For Renters  
 Inclusionary Housing  
 For Developers and Property Managers  
 For Owners of Multi-Family Properties  
 Affordable Housing Trust  
 Resources and Additional

CDD > Housing > For Homebuyers > Homebuyer Education

### Homebuyer Education

#### First-Time Homebuyer Class

Are you tired of renting? Is your goal this year to own a home but the process seems overwhelming? The City of Cambridge can help.

The Housing Division offers a free four-week workshop which provides participants with an overview of the homebuying process from professionals that are involved in the process. Classes include a combination of presentations by City homebuyer counselors and local real estate professionals.

Topics Include:

- Budgeting and Credit
- The Housing Search Process
- Obtaining a Mortgage
- Legal Issues
- Home Inspections
- Insurance
- Successful Homeownership
- Financial Assistance Programs

Classes are open to everyone, including non-Cambridge residents. You do not need to be eligible for other City housing programs to attend the class. Space is limited and preregistration is required. The City of Cambridge offers the First-time Homebuyer Workshop several times each year.

**Registration for First-time Homebuyer Class**

★ Homebuyer Classes & Affordable Housing Education

### 100% Affordable Housing Zoning Overlay

#### Why It's Needed & What It Will Do

Housing in Cambridge is getting less affordable.

A family must earn over \$125,000 per year to afford to rent a 2-bedroom home at market rate.

Affordable Housing helps:  
 Teachers • Healthcare workers  
 Senior citizens • Social workers  
 Small business owners  
 Non-profit staff  
 Maintenance workers

#### How Affordable Housing Is Built

Affordable Housing Partners (Just-A-Start, Homeowner's Rehab Inc, Cambridge Housing Authority) + City Funding & Funding from Other Sources + Available Land & Buildings = Affordable Housing for the Cambridge Community

#### Current Challenges

- Cuts in federal funds for affordable housing
- Rising prices of land & buildings
- Competition between affordable housing developers & market-rate developers (who can afford to pay more)
- Multi-family housing cannot be built in all areas of the city, limiting the supply of affordable units
- Many residents are forced to leave Cambridge as rents continue to rise

★ 100% Affordable Housing Zoning Overlay



★ Attend 100% AHO Project Public Meetings



## 2. Encourage the reuse of vacant or underutilized lots and closed businesses

*What we've heard so far...*

- 15% of survey comments about Vacant Lot comments mention Local Businesses
- Community members would like to see better use of vacant or underutilized spaces

*Would love to see the City support more small/local/independent businesses in the empty storefronts, and more smart density in the vacant lots*

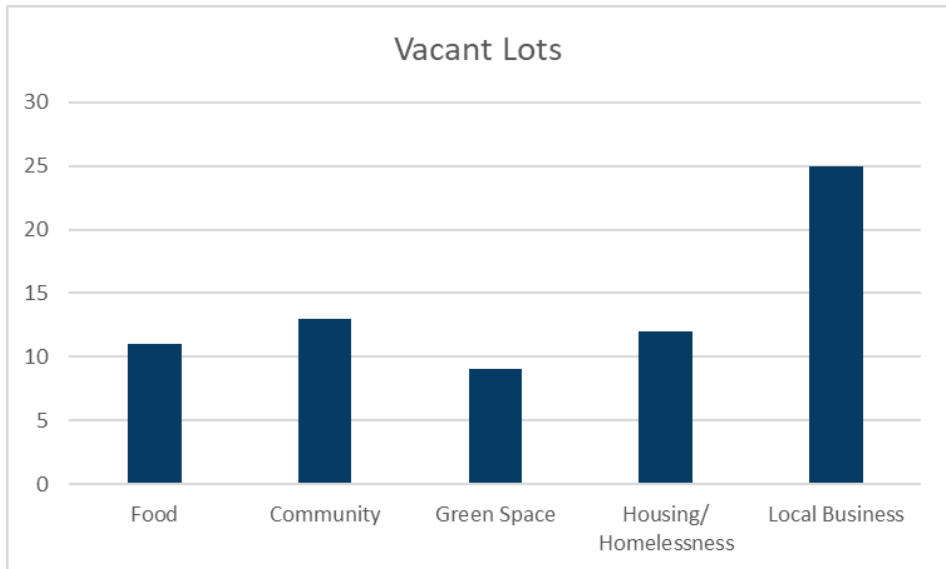
Goals Survey

*So much wasted space - could create shelters, health care centers or child care centers*

Goals Survey

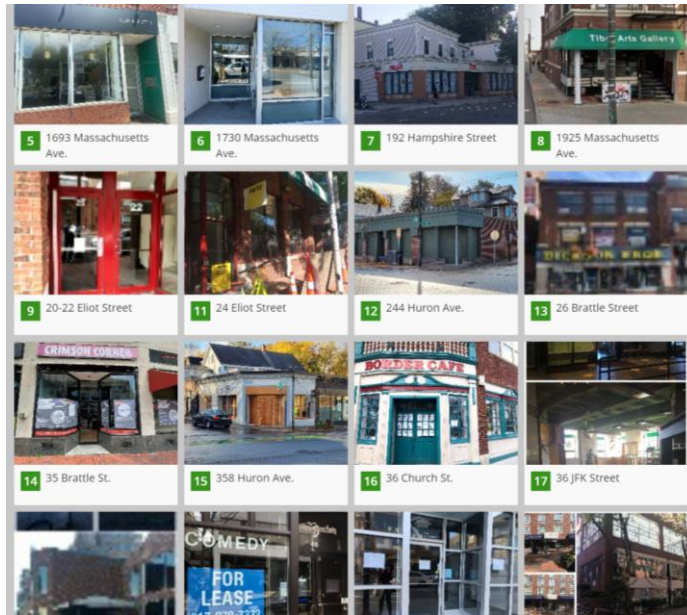
*Thriving (new businesses, not empty storefronts, neighborhood supports small businesses and keeps them open.)*

June Public Meeting



# 2. Encourage the reuse of vacant or underutilized lots and closed businesses

*Here are some things the City is doing. What would you like to see in Mid-Cambridge? What else should be done?*



★ Vacant Storefront Database



★ Storefront Vacancies Best Practices, 2018 (Larisa Ortiz)



Succession Planning Employee Training

### 3. Increase opportunities for gathering and community building



*What we've heard so far...*

- 32% of survey comments about community gathering spaces mention local businesses
- There is appreciation for existing community gathering spaces in the neighborhood
- Community members would like more spaces and events to connect to people through free public gathering spaces, community meeting spaces or third spaces

*We have a mom's group that happens right outside the [Main Branch] library, which brings me a lot of joy.*

Neighborhood Focus Group

*Darwin's - has been vacant for a while. Would be nice to have more common community spaces in Mid-Cambridge*

June Public Meeting

*People need places, especially free public spaces with seating and tables, to gather*

Goals Survey

*Cambridge manages to combine the community feeling of a town with the opportunities of a city. It does so in part by having many places for residents to meet and run into each other.*

Goals Survey

# 3. Increase opportunities for gathering and community building



Here are some things the City is doing, and some ideas from nearby. What would you like to see in Mid-Cambridge? What else should be done?



★ Play Streets Toolkit

City of Cambridge  
**DANEHY PARK FAMILY DAY 2023**

Saturday, September 23, 2023  
11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Rain Date: Sunday, September 24

Free Event for All Ages!

- Activities
- Arts & Crafts
- Amusement Rides
- Food & Giveaways (while supplies last)

CHILDREN'S STAGE:	ROVING PERFORMERS:
11:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. ▶ Trend N Motion Hip Hop Dancers	11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. ▶ Colorful Stiltwalker
12:15 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. ▶ Peter Panic Juggler	12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. ▶ Chinese Lions
1:15 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. ▶ Magician Darren Yong	12:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m. ▶ Trend N Motion Hip Hop Dancers
2:15 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. ▶ Vibe Check	12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. ▶ Balloon Artist
	12:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. ▶ Grooversity Drum Band
	1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. ▶ Spirit of Africa Trio

★ Block Parties in the Neighborhood



Indoor Play, the Well

# Discussion Questions



How can the policies, programs, and actions we just reviewed help Mid-Cambridge:

1. Expand and integrate affordable housing
2. Encourage the reuse of vacant or underutilized lots and closed businesses
3. Increase opportunities for gathering and community building?

Is there a policy, program or action you think could be especially effective?

Is there a specific place in the neighborhood you think could benefit from these actions?

5-10 min

## Recap



For each topic:  
What new or existing action is this group most interested in? Why?

Try to come to a consensus on one action for each topic!

Select one person from the group to share.

5 min

1. Make it safer and more convenient for people to walk in the neighborhood.
2. Make it safer for people to bike in the neighborhood.
3. Slow traffic through the neighborhood.





# 1. Make it safer and more convenient for people to walk in the neighborhood

What we've heard so far...

- 48% of survey comments about Walkability refer to Bricks & Sidewalk Conditions
- 37% of survey comments about Walkability concern Pedestrian Safety



*Regular maintenance schedule, way to report sidewalk needs*

June Public Meeting

*I have a small child and it's difficult to push a stroller on the sidewalk in many places.*

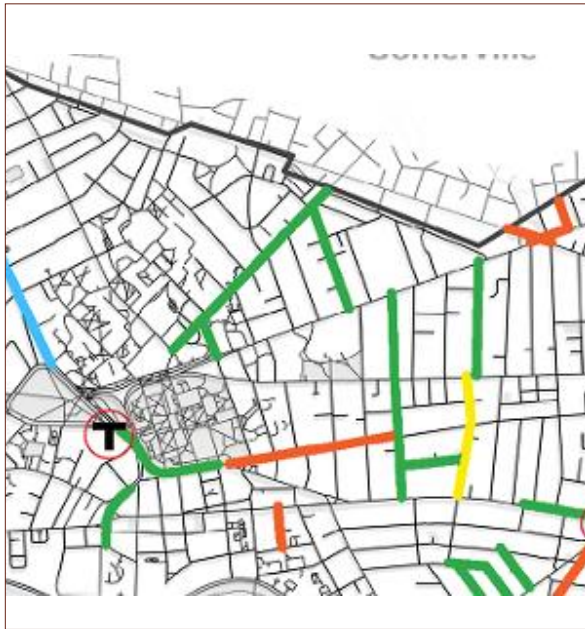
Goals Survey

*More signs reminding drivers they're required to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks*

June Public Meeting

# 1. Make it safer and more convenient for people to walk in the neighborhood

*Here are some things the City is doing. What would you like to see in Mid-Cambridge? What else should be done?*



Five Year Plan for Sidewalk and Street Reconstruction



**Sidewalk Defect**  
 175 Putnam Ave Cambridge MA 02139, United States  
 ● Acknowledged 🕒 9/19/23 10:25:38 AM

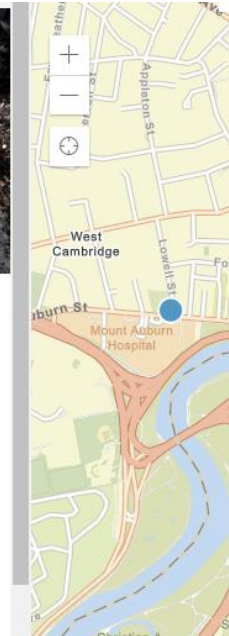
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Uneven sidewalk, tripping hazard.

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👁 Public 📍 SZ  
 📄 #15302970 🏠 Cambridge, MA

See Click Fix for Broken Sidewalks



Citywide Urban Design Guidelines

## 2. Make it safer for people to bike in the neighborhood



What we've heard so far...

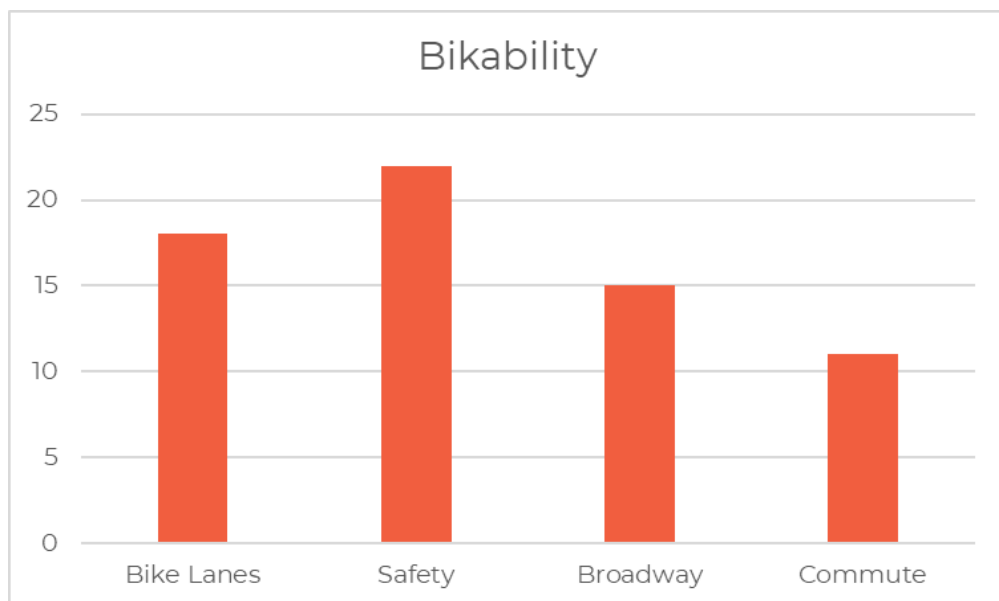
- 42% of survey comments about the bike safety goal mention cyclists' safety
- 29% of survey comments about Bikability specifically refer to Broadway

*Prospect Street could be improved for bikes*

June Public Meeting

*I commute by bicycle and Broadway is dangerous.*

Goals Survey



*Bikeable area and lots of places to park bikes. Bike infrastructure is really improving*

June Public Meeting

*Keep schools in mind in bicycle lane rollout*

June Public Meeting

## 2. Make it safer for people to bike in the neighborhood



*Here are some things the City is doing. What would you like to see in Mid-Cambridge?  
What else should be done?*



**On-Bike Skills Clinic and  
Group Ride Series**



**Blue Bike Access &  
Discount Programs**



Cambridge 2023 Street Code

# 3. Slow traffic through the neighborhood

*What we've heard so far...*

- 46% of survey comments about Traffic Speed mention Pedestrian Safety
- 44% of comments about Traffic Speed specifically mention cars



*People drive very fast down Harvard; faster than the 25mph limit*

Neighborhood Action Plan Idea Map

*Slower speeds on Broadway*

June Public Meeting

*drivers who often just ignore crosswalks, run red lights, and turn right on red where disallowed*

Goals Survey

*During COVID Harvard St had things to slow down cars which was a great idea*

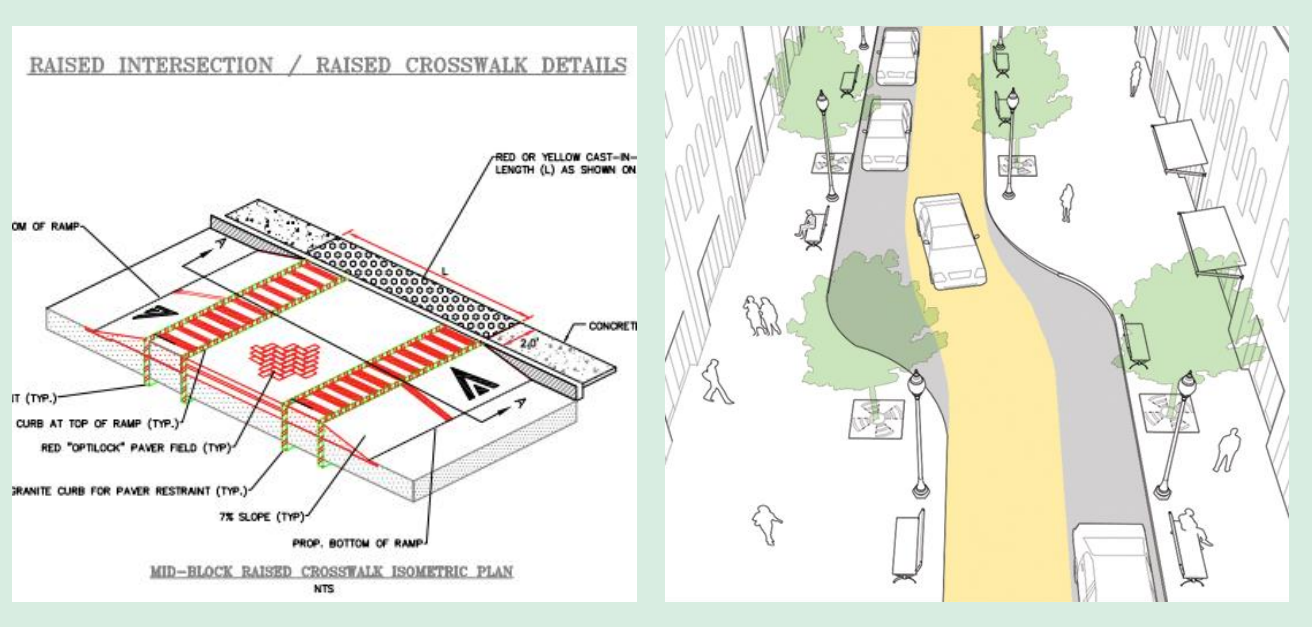
June Public Meeting

# 3. Slow traffic through the neighborhood

Here are some things the City is doing. What would you like to see in Mid-Cambridge? What else should be done?



**Traffic Calming Program/ Traffic Calming Request Form**



**Raised Intersections**

**Chicanes**

# Discussion Questions



How can the policies, programs, and actions we just reviewed help Mid-Cambridge:

1. Make it safer and more convenient for people to walk in the neighborhood.
2. Make it safer for people to bike in the neighborhood.
3. Slow traffic through the neighborhood.

Is there a policy, program or action you think could be especially effective?

Is there a specific place in the neighborhood you think could benefit from these actions?

5-10 min

# Recap



For each topic:

Which action is this group most interested in bringing to Mid-Cambridge? Why?

Try to come to a consensus on one action for each topic!

Select one person from the group to share.

5 min



# Parks and Public Spaces



1. Help keep our streets and public spaces clean.
2. Add and improve green spaces and plantings.
3. Improve access to different types of outdoor activities.

20 min

# 1. Help keep our streets and public spaces clean



*What we've heard so far...*

- 60% of survey comments about cleanliness mention Rat/Rodent Control
- There is desire for cleaner streets in the neighborhood



*Clean Streets*

June Public Meeting

*We need more trash barrels in the city*

Goals Survey

*Rats are pervasive, and it deters me from going out at night or spending time outdoors once it's dark out*

Goals Survey

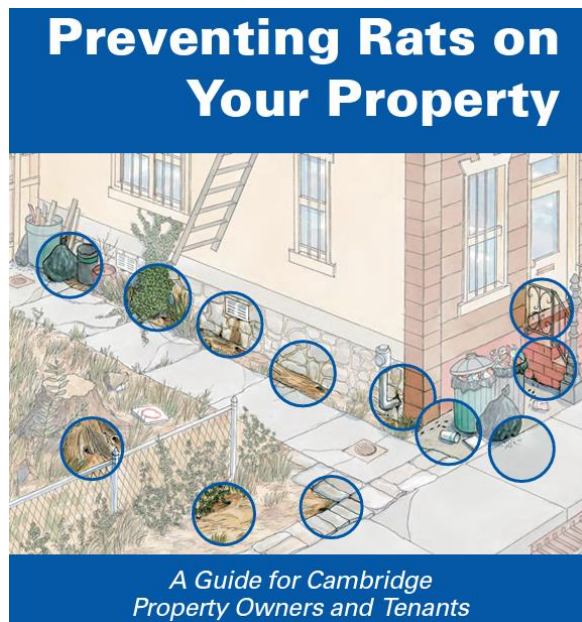
*Clean areas more regularly to prevent rats*

June Public Meeting

# 1. Help keep our streets and public spaces clean



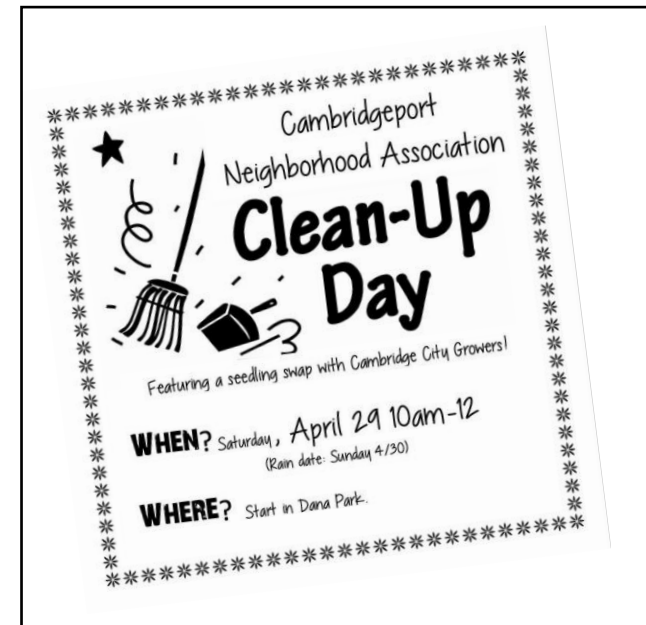
Here are some things the City is doing, and some ideas from nearby. What would you like to see in Mid-Cambridge? What else should be done?



★ **Community Education and SeeClickFix for Reporting**



★ **Waste Receptacles**



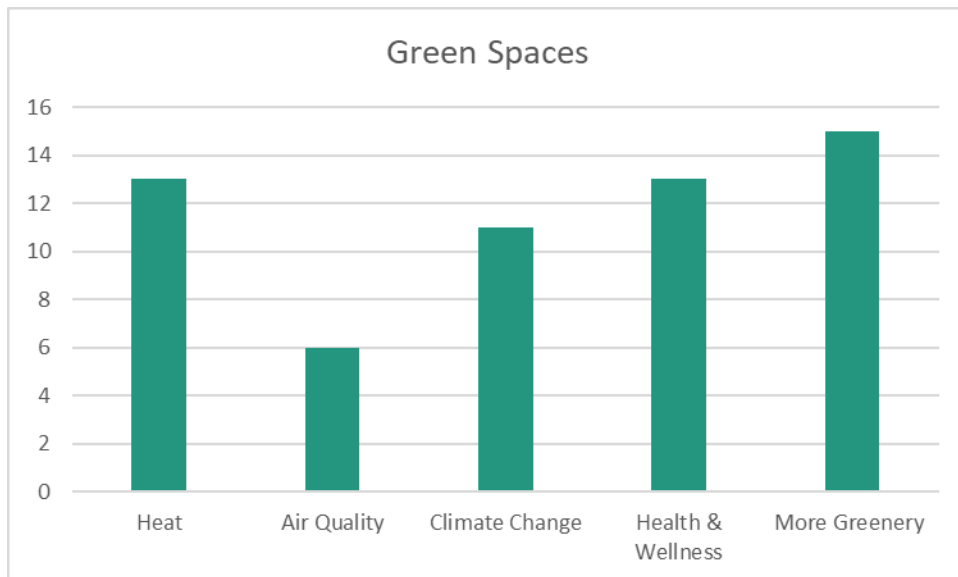
**Community Clean-up Days**

## 2. Add and improve green spaces and plantings



*What we've heard so far...*

- 21% of survey comments about Public Space indicate a desire for more Greenery (trees, plants, etc.)
- There is desire for more open space and better accessibility for all



*There's not enough open space, dog parks especially*

June Public Meeting

*Green spaces and plantings are important for reducing urban heat island effects.*

Goals Survey

*More trees. Street trees and urban forest is great!*

June Public Meeting

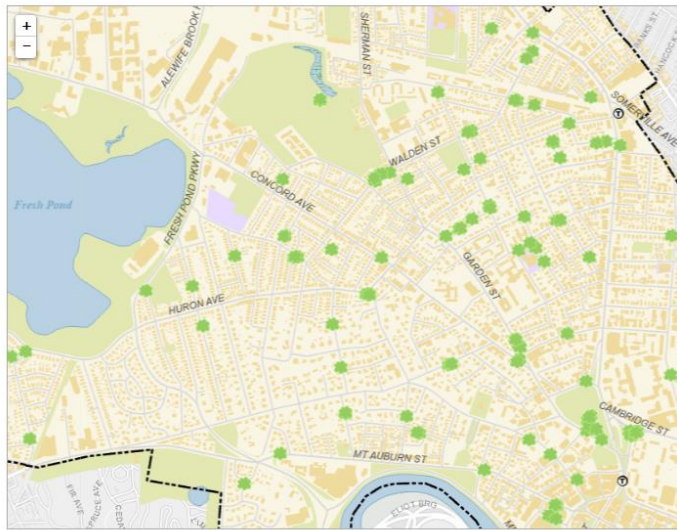
## 2. Add and improve green spaces and plantings



*Here are some things the City is doing, and some ideas from nearby. What would you like to see in Mid-Cambridge? What else should be done?*

### Scheduled 2023 Planting Locations

Locations and species are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.



★ **Urban Forestry Plan & Tree Planting Programs**



★ **Cambridge Urban Forest Friend**



**Pollinator/Meadow Plantings**

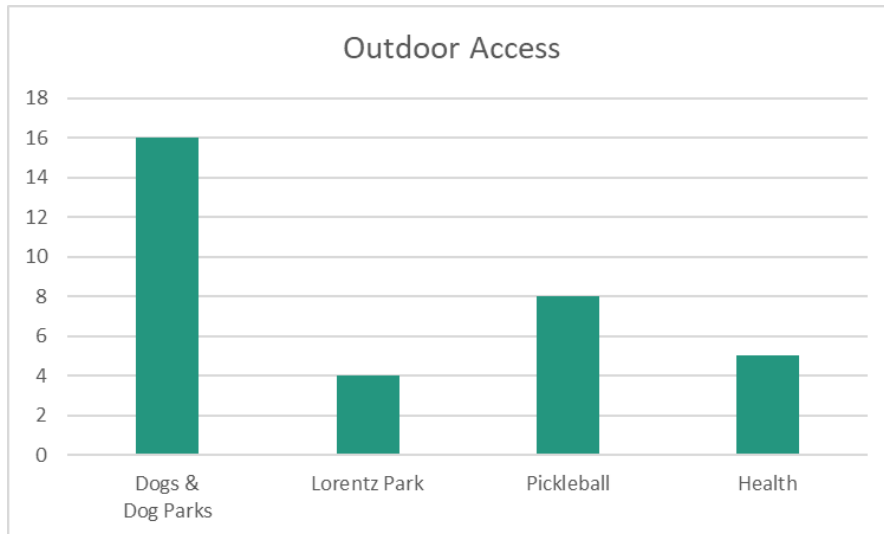
★ Indicates City of Cambridge Example

### 3. Improve access to different types of outdoor activities



*What we've heard so far...*

- 53% of survey comments about Outdoor Spaces & Parks mention Dogs or Dog Parks
- Community members appreciate existing third spaces in the neighborhood to gather



*We lack an outdoor space for events/ classes - a covered outdoor space, protected from the rain*

June Public Meeting

*I have a dog and really want a dedicated space in Lorentz Park for dog play*

Goals Survey

*Real sense of community comes from the park and off leash dog space. It is a social meeting space for people of all backgrounds - whether you have a dog or not*

June Public Meeting

*Third spaces (places where people can gather that are not work or residence, e.g. Darwin's, library, community center)*

June Public Meeting

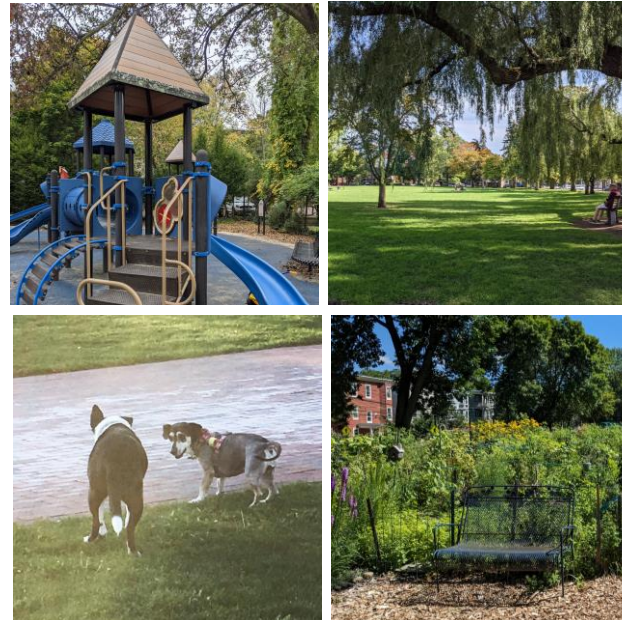
### 3. Improve access to different types of outdoor activities



*Here are some things the City is doing, and some ideas from nearby. What would you like to see in Mid-Cambridge? What else should be done?*



★ **Play Streets and Public Space Activation**



**Framework for park uses across neighborhood to guide park improvements over time**



**Adopt-a-Plot/Plant Bed Program**

# Discussion Questions



How can the policies, programs, and actions we just reviewed help Mid-Cambridge:

1. Help keep our streets and public spaces clean.
2. Add and improve green spaces and plantings.
3. Improve access to different types of outdoor activities.

Is there a policy, program or action you think could be especially effective?

Is there a specific place in the neighborhood you think could benefit from these actions?

5-10 min



## Recap



For each topic:  
Which action is this group most interested in?  
Why?

Try to come to a consensus on one action for  
each topic!

Select one person from the group to share.

5 min

## REPORT BACK

Share a couple of themes from your group's discussion!

10 minutes

# Recap



For each topic:

What new or existing action is this group most interested in? Why?

Try to come to a consensus on one action for each topic!

Select one person from the group to share.

5 min

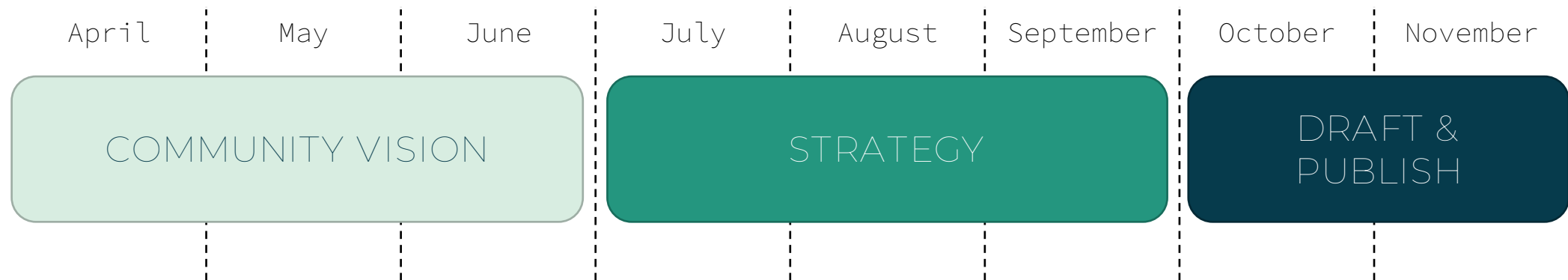
# NEXT STEPS

2 minutes



# What's Next?

- We will share your input with other relevant City processes, where applicable
- Refine Action Items
- Draft Neighborhood Action Plan for Mid-Cambridge
- Public review period for comments on draft plan



# Contact Us



Connect with your Neighborhood Planner!

GARY CHAN, Neighborhood Planner  
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Neighborhood  
Planning  
Initiative

# Thank You!

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